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Thank you for your letter of 22 November to my predecessor, Sam Gyimah MP, on behalf of the Science and Technology Committee, about 'No deal' preparations and Horizon 2020.

As you are aware, we have now agreed in principle the terms of the UK's smooth and orderly exit from the EU, as set out in the draft Withdrawal Agreement. This will now need to be agreed by Parliament, and once agreed would ensure UK participation in EU Programmes under the current EU budget (2014-2020) until the close of these programmes and activities. Horizon 2020 is an EU programme under this EU budget. The priority of the government therefore remains the conclusion of the Withdrawal Agreement.

However, whilst we expect the Withdrawal Agreement to be ratified, as a responsible Government we continue to prepare to support the UK research community in all scenarios. As outlined in the Government's technical notice on Horizon 2020, we are committed to preparing for all eventualities and delivering the Horizon 2020 underwrite guarantee if it is required.

The strength of our commitment to delivering the underwrite is evidenced by the launch of the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) online portal in late September. This portal will be used by UKRI to gather the initial information necessary from UK participants to administer the underwrite guarantee, should it be required. As of 6 December, there have been 910 registrations on the portal.

Additional measures have been put in place for UK institutions in receipt of multiple Horizon 2020 grants to submit their information in bulk. 70 organisations have now registered to receive the bulk upload template, therefore we anticipate many more registrations in the coming weeks. We continue to work with UKRI to ensure

our communications reach all UK participants to encourage them to register their details on the portal.

I am aware of the importance of the European Research Council grants, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions and SME Instrument grants to the UK research community. As such, we are actively working with funders in the sector to identify appropriate measures can be put in place in the period immediately after EU Exit to ensure that the UK researchers are supported in the unlikely event of a no deal. Once further details have been finalised, we intend to provide more detail on these measures.

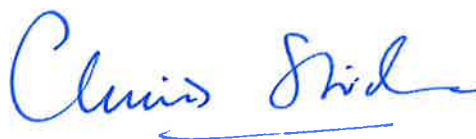
In the longer term the UK would like to explore the option of association to the excellence-based European science and innovation programmes, including the successor to Horizon 2020 (Horizon Europe), as part of our continuing relationship with the EU on science and innovation.

You asked what discussions we have held with the Commission regarding the impact of the UK's change in status following a potential no deal Exit. As yet, the Commission has been unwilling to begin these conversations as negotiations on the withdrawal agreement and political declaration continue. We remain ready to work with the Commission to support impactful, collaborative research across Europe in the unlikely event of no-deal.

Finally, you asked whether UK participants will be eligible to coordinate and distribute funds for new Horizon 2020 projects after Exit. Third country participants are eligible to coordinate projects and distribute funds, and we do not anticipate any issues with the UK continuing to do so after Exit. Additionally, the funding guarantee provided by the underwrite and the extension is in place if required and includes funding for the UK portion of the grant and coordination tasks if they are carried out by a UK coordinator.

I hope this information is helpful and please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to your letter.

Yours sincerely,



**CHRIS SKIDMORE MP**  
**MINISTER OF STATE FOR UNIVERSITIES, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND**  
**INNOVATION**