

WUN Presidents Forum: BREXIT and the International Higher Education Landscape – Strategies and Solutions to Sustain Knowledge Partnership

Thursday 9 February 2017, Venue: Maastricht University Brussels Campus

Summary Report and Outcomes 20.02.17

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This summary distils the objectives, discussion and outcomes of the WUN “Bridges over BREXIT” Workshop, attended by 40 invited experts from universities, government, business, agencies and media.

OBJECTIVES

Review the current status, opportunities, threats and directions arising from BREXIT.
 Explore Europe, UK and international implications, while strengthening relevant knowledge partnerships
 Formulate strategies and actions that will result in evidence/data based policy and influence
 Define higher education and research initiatives and instruments that will be fit for purpose 2017-25
 Find practical ways of monitoring, managing and taking opportunities as BREXIT negotiations develop

DISCUSSION

All agreed that BREXIT is happening now, accentuated with elections in several EU countries during 2017
 Among participants, there was not unanimity that a “soft” or friendly BREXIT is possible.
 Teresa May’s speech (17 January) with a 12 point plan -including Science and Innovation- was optimistic
 A strong contrary view held that BREXIT was due to unaccountable, unelected, intransigent EU officials
 Any future European configuration may require renegotiation of many aspects of the European “project”

OPPORTUNITIES

Universities and stakeholders must grow partnerships, building alliances before the cement sets
 International options for “Global UK” will take time to build, fund and implement, and include Europe
 The “global framework” needs clear understanding when UK-EU has been a major focus for 40 years.
 A “back to basics” approach might salvage the core values and competencies required to mitigate risk
 The ERC should now move to develop extra-EU inks, industry partnerships and funding instruments

THREATS

Risks of immediate reversals in EU-UK cooperation in academic employment, mobility, grants, publication
 Accelerated interpretation of BREXIT could cause damaging actions, ahead of firm policies and practices
 The Academic community may retreat, when it must work together to champion knowledge partnerships
 Individual agreements with countries will greatly increase negotiating time, bureaucracy and costs
 Governments will divert funds invested in higher education and research to more political priorities

OUTCOMES

WUN and other networks have “prepared communities of scholars” for teamwork on defined challenges
 Universities, higher education and research should liaise with business, economics, politics and media
 A European “Knowledge Union” should be developed to transcend the fissures caused by BREXIT
 Existing instruments including Bologna, H2020, ERC and others have further scope for long term benefit
 BREXIT is far from the only threat to European or International cooperation. Teamwork is needed now

Thank you – to all participants, who gave freely and frankly of their opinions and recommendations!
 WUN will implement a program with those at the workshop and other stakeholders as BREXIT unfolds
 We welcome comments and suggestions on this summary, and also further actions for the future.

Steering Group: Martin Paul (Maastricht), Koen Lamberts (York), John Hearn and Mike Hasenmueller (WUN).

WUN Presidents Forum: BREXIT and the International Higher Education Landscape – Strategies and Solutions to Sustain Knowledge Partnerships

Thursday 9 February 2017

Venue: Maastricht University Brussels Campus (opening dinner 8 February)

FINAL PROGRAM

Wednesday 8 February 2017

Opening Dinner (informal and optional): 18.30h drinks for 19.00h start
Montgomery Eurostar Hotel, Tervurenlaan 134, 1150 Brussels

Thursday 9 February 2017

0830	Registration Maastricht University Brussels Campus, Legerlaan 10, 1040 Brussels
	Coffee and tea provided
0900	Welcome and Objectives <i>Steering Group Co-Chairs: Profs Koen Lamberts, Martin Paul, and John Hearn (5 min each)</i>
0915	Session 1 Policies and Projections: Opening Speakers and panelists <i>Chair: Prof Martin Paul, President Maastricht University and Vice Chair Elect, WUN Board</i>
	Opening speakers - 15 min each <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Andreas Schleicher, Director, Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD • Prof Luc Soete, Professor (former Rector Magnificus) University of Maastricht Panel – 7 mins each: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof Rebecca Hughes, Director of Education, British Council • Prof Jo Ritzen, Former President Maastricht and Minister of Education Netherlands Discussion – 30 min. What are the key issues and potential influence points for policy development? What are the economic threats? Discussants include all expert participants.
1030	Morning tea

1100	Session 2 Research collaborations before and through the BREXIT: how can they remain sustainable? <i>Chair: Prof David Hogg, Chair WUN Academic Advisory Group, University of Leeds</i>
	<p>Dr Robert Madelin, Visiting Fellow, University of Oxford - 15 min</p> <p>Panel: (7 min each)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vivienne Stern, Director, Universities UK International • Jessica Cole, Head of Policy, Russell Group of Universities <p>Discussion (30 min). How will BREXIT provide opportunity or threaten international research collaboration? What strategies and key actions could mitigate this risk in building effective partnerships?</p>
1200	Session 3 Panel: Academic and Student Mobility Models after BREXIT <i>Chair: Professor Joseph Sung, President CUHK and Chair, WUN Partnership Board</i>
	<p>Speaker: Professor John Wood, Director General, Association of Commonwealth Universities - 15 min</p> <p>Panel: (7 min each)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tamara Mielke, EU Graduate Student studying in York • Robert Morgan, UK Graduate Student studying in Maastricht <p>Discussion (30 min) What are the strategies and actions required to build talent flow and development around BREXIT? How can research and education teamwork be conserved? What are the broader ripples, opportunities and actions globally? – 30 min</p>
1300	Lunch
1345	Session 4 International education and research networks – catalysts for change? <i>Chair: Prof Dag Rune Olsen, President, University of Bergen</i>
	<p>Speaker: Professor John Hearn, Executive Director, WUN: 'Bridges over Borders' – 15min</p> <p>Panel: (7 min each)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof Andrea Schenker-Wicki, President, University of Basel • Prof Andrew George, DVC Education and International, Brunel, for YERUN • Dr Kurt Deketelaere, Secretary General LERU <p>Discussion (30 Min) What innovative alliances, networks and teams are required to lead rather than react, and to optimise BREXIT in higher education and research?</p>
1500	Afternoon tea

1530	<p>Session 5 – Opportunities and risks. <i>Chair: Prof Colin Grant, Vice President International, University of Southampton.</i></p>
	<p>Forecasting the economic and political climate How might Universities position themselves as fleet and flexible to seize opportunities? How can reputational damage be avoided? A politician, a journalist and an EU policy expert, bring contrasting external perspectives on how the landscape might shift.</p> <p>Panel: (10 min each)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard Corbett, Member of the European Parliament • Tim King, Contributing writer, POLITICO • Peter Van der Hijden, Higher Education Expert, Former head of higher education Policy, EC <p>Discussion (30min)</p> <p>The chair Colin Grant, invites the above panelists, and the Chairs of the earlier sessions Martin Paul, David Hogg, Joseph Sung and Dag Rune Olsen, to define some key questions on the consequences of BREXIT for research projects that WUN should adopt, as a global research universities network.</p> <p>Note: Conclusions will assist in a position paper on BREXIT and its potential impact on international education and research, with emphasis on the role of networks in research and mobility.</p>
1645	<p>Conclusions, Follow up and Focus <i>Chair: Professor Koen Lamberts, President, University of York</i></p>
	<p>Action plan: Professors Koen Lamberts, Martin Paul and John Hearn. We agree priorities from the day and the achievable actions and next steps for WUN and its knowledge partners.</p> <p>Outcomes: (i) a Communique to be released for the media; (ii) a strategic position paper, including evidence based policy options, prepared for release afterwards; (iii) research priorities for future knowledge partnerships; and a WUN European Regional University Network (or “Network of networks”) to maintain future contact and coordination.</p>
1730	<p>End – closing refreshments</p>

Expert Discussants Confirmed: **Julian Blanc**, *Head, Aix Marseille University Brussels Office*; **Paul Davies**, *Head Bristol Brussels Office*; **Dr Mike Hasenmueller**, *General Manager WUN*; **Sebastian Huber**, *Senior Policy Adviser, Guild of Research Intensive European Universities*; **Christina Miller**, *Director, UK Research Office Brussels*; **Martin Muller**, *Co-Head SwissCore Office Brussels*; **Martin Priestley**, *Pinsent Mason*; **Adrian Sellez**, *Policy Adviser, Greater Birmingham and West Midlands Brussels Office*; **Prof Saul Tandler**, *Provost, University of York*; **Prof Gill Valentine**, *DVC University of Sheffield*; **Kristof Vlaeminck**, *Head, University of Bergen Brussels Office*. **John Wyles**, *Director, Science Business Publishing Ltd*.

Participants: please see program for listed speakers, panelists and discussants. Bios (200 words) and summary statements (200 words) [are available on the website](#).

Background: A selected set of evidence based reference papers, along with additional links to current articles [are available on the website](#). All participants are requested to read these papers so that the discussion looks forward and explores opportunities and solutions.

Steering Group: Members of the WUN Partnership Board

Professor **Martin Paul**, President of Maastricht University and Vice Chair Elect, WUN Board; Professor **Koen Lamberts**, Vice-Chancellor & President of the University of York; Professor **John Hearn**, Board Executive Director WUN.

Operations Team: York, Maastricht, WUN Secretariat (Chair – Prof John Hearn)

Maastricht: Aisling Tiernan; **York:** Andrew Brown, (Hilary Layton)

Brussels: Maastricht Centre, Dr Vivianne Heijnen. White Rose Office: Phil Holiday, Natalia Grzomba

WUN Sydney Secretariat: A/Prof Grace Liu, Marije Nieuwenhuis, Dr Mike Hasenmueller

(Primary functions: program, speakers, registration, venue, logistics, implementation)

Note: The capacity is 40 people. All invitees are high level experts. Initial invitations are issued from Sydney. Subsequent follow up is through York (for UK), Maastricht (for EU) and Sydney (Global).

Guideline: Approximately 20 participants from WUN and 20 invited speakers and guests representing universities, government, agencies, media and senior stakeholders. A major part of the program is reserved for discussion, enabling the engagement of all participants. **Please keep strictly to time.**

Note: Some have commented that BREXIT has yet to be actioned. We proceed on the basis that BREXIT is happening, and indeed some symptoms and effects are already apparent in research teamwork, grants, education partnership, mobility in research teams, academic appointments, and student flows.

Outline and status at 6 February:

- **Purpose:** A review of the current status, opportunities and threats, and future projections of BREXIT: strategies for building and strengthening bridges at European-UK and international levels. A special feature is exploring international ripples beyond the UK and Europe.
 - **Focus:** Opportunities for practical approaches and outcomes in research, education, mobility, impact. Consideration of strengthened current and new university networks and alliances.
 - **Framework:** Monitoring and assessment of the BREXIT 2017-20, taking opportunities for co-operation and mitigating the risks in fragmentation. 1-5 potential research programs for WUN.
 - **Workshop Format:** Five sessions with scene setting speaker(s), 2-3 panelist/commentators, and expert discussion towards specific outcomes.
 - **Background:** Selected reference papers are available on the website that present the current status as far as possible, so that discussions can proceed towards options and solutions.
 - **Forum:** Speakers and panelists were asked for a 200-word abstract of their message, and a 200-word biography, available on the website.
 - **Attendance:** We respectfully request that **attendees stay for the whole meeting** as far as possible.
 - **Funding (Sponsorship):** Costs and management time are significant issues in the planning and agreement of venue and participants. We are delighted that the University of Maastricht (Brussels Campus), and University of York (with the White Rose Office in Brussels – York, Leeds, Sheffield), and WUN Central are sponsoring the workshop. Further sponsorship is welcome.
 - **Timing:** Topics and primary speakers have been invited and confirmed.
 - **Program and Preparation:** Please make sure that you consult the website, download the program, bios and statements, and selected reference papers after **1 February** when final papers will be posted. In the interests of environment and cost, we do not intend to provide printed copies at the workshop.
- NOTE:** We have had a mixed response to the earlier suggestion and **will NOT observe Chatham House Rules**. This provision was to encourage participation from senior serving EU officials, who declined on the basis that BREXIT has yet to be activated.

Registration: Eventbrite, managed through White Rose Office, Brussels, via **Natalia Grzomba**, email n.grzomba@whiterose.ac.uk

Forum Dinner: 8th February, at the Montgomery Hotel (3 mins walk from Montgomery Metro Station).

WUN Partnership Board Steering Group Dinner: 9th February, in preparation for the WUN Board Working Group meeting on 10 February.

Accommodation: Montgomery Hotel (3-minute walk from Maastricht Brussels Campus).

Getting there and away: The train from Brussels Airport to Brussels Central, or Eurostar from London St Pancras to Brussels Midi, followed by Metro to Montgomery Hotel; or taxi Airport to the Montgomery Hotel.

With thanks to partners and sponsors:

