

**Europe Evolve Roundtable**

**College Life & Brexit**

**European Commission, Europe House, London**

**Friday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2017**

**SUMMARY OF POINTS MADE DURING THE DISCUSSION**

On the state of the negotiations:

- It may be a mistake to believe the EU will act as a coherent block; differences may emerge during the Article 50 negotiations.
- The rights of EU nationals living in the UK and Britons living in other Member States is a major concern.

Student studies:

- Students have the impression that their EU fellow students are less tempted to further their studies in the UK. They are finding alternatives in Europe, cheaper and offering better prospects.
- University officials have not as yet observed a significant drop in EU student numbers. Optimists argued that the drop in EU students will be replaced by international students, aided by the weaker pound.
- Some potential international applicants raised questions about the 'safety' of studying in the UK (possibly linked to the perceived rise in 'hate' crimes or a sense of foreigners feeling 'unwelcomed'). There has, however, been little evidence of worries expressed by students currently studying in the UK.

Research

- Universities don't doubt their capacity to keep in the loop for research. They have developed alliances with European universities. For them this is a guarantee that European universities know the importance, level, and capacity of UK universities.
- In response to figures indicating academics leaving the UK, some felt research is a very fluid market and academics come and go; it's normal to see many go, and the real question is how many have arrived in return.

Funding

- The UK government has promised to underwrite any lost income from existing projects, however, there this guarantee does not extend beyond 2020.
- Some felt that universities will continue to get funding from UK government and the EU, however, they will need to fight harder for it.

- Some universities rely extensively on EU funding while others receive little. Universities don't have the same interests towards EU funding

#### Branding

- UK universities offer one of the world's best education models, however, it was counter argued that European universities are replicating it and offering courses in English. For them, Brexit is an opportunity for them.
- Britain is perceived as being less inclusive. Many non-UK European are planning to leave the UK.
- Britain has been traditionally good at re-inventing itself. Some universities will need to innovate and promote themselves more than others. Universities reliant on the EU for funding, academics and students will suffer the most.

#### Overall

- What seems to be the driving thread of this discussion on Brexit was the uncertainty regarding the future of UK universities. It is still a very unsure future and the promises made by the UK government should re-assure universities only in the short run.
- It is vital for the UK to unite if it wants to get a good deal. Negative media comments do not help the cause. Universities must develop post Brexit strategies beyond simply pushing for the protection of their interests within the EU.

Notes recorded by Gaétan Perdoux, Kings College student

*"I was impressed by the persistency of university officials in defending the positive future of UK universities, which doesn't coincide with what some of us expected. However, to be fair, they aren't paid to say everything will go wrong for them."*



Participants	Institution
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Edward Hardy	Kings College
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Pradeep Jethi	Economic consultant
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