



**British
Geological Survey**

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL

Mr Jo Johnson MP
Minister of State for Universities and Science
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

**Professor John Ludden CBE
Executive Director**

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5 July 2016

Dear Mr Johnson

I enclose a letter from the nonUK European staff at the British Geological Survey BGS. I told them that that I would forward their letter to you if they wrote to me with their concerns following the EU referendum result.

We have about 50 permanent staff (about 10% of the total) who are nonUK Europeans and several PhD students and part-time interns. As you will gather from their letter, they are enthusiastic scientists, technicians and administrators who value their role in the Survey and in the UK. It may seem odd that a nationally focussed organisation has a significant number of non UK staff, indeed in some surveys (eg the USGS, BGR Germany) one is required to be a national citizen. We value diversity and the links across Europe help spread best practice among the national institutes and surveys.

I am sure you will be doing your utmost to maintain a strong UK role in the European Research Area and keeping the UK involved in key infrastructure networks across Europe, of which BGS and other UK institutes have a leading role, especially as discussions on FP9 are about to begin in earnest.

Yours sincerely

Professor John Ludden
Executive Director



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Dear John,

Many thanks for taking the time to discuss our concerns regarding the outcome of the UK's EU referendum of 23rd June, 2016. We represent approximately 50 employees of the British Geological Survey (BGS) (about 10 percent of the scientific workforce). We regard ourselves as positive, collaborative and active contributors and leaders inside the BGS raising its reputation on the national, European and international stage. We are writing to you to express our main concerns following the outcome of the UK referendum on membership of the EU.

Geoscience, like other sciences, is international and our work pertains to this global cooperative framework that is based on strong collaboration and cooperation with other organisations across Europe and beyond. Clearly, freedom of movement of scientists is essential for the BGS to attract the best possible people to fulfil its scientific objectives. Collaboration within Europe has enabled significant progress to be achieved in many different areas of our work for example in defining the scientific base for environmental norms around groundwater and soils and setting geoscience data standards across the continent.

On the 28th of June 2016, Jo Johnson, Minister of State for Universities and Science wrote: *"There are obviously big discussions to be had with our European partners, and I look forward to working with the sector to ensure its voice is fully represented and that it continues to go from strength to strength."* Reassuring as this is, it is becoming clear to us that opportunities to collaborate with European partners will be impaired and we already have direct evidence of this. In recent days, we have noted that people and organisations are becoming less willing to include UK partners, especially in lead roles, in their future research development plans. Our status in an ongoing geoscience ESFRI (European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures) project and the EuroGeoSurveys EraNet has been questioned.

Ultimately it is UK commitments that are scrutinised with potentially negative consequences for the BGS. We therefore need clarity about the consequences of the referendum for our organisation and for us as individuals and request a well-formed plan that addresses the following concerns:

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For the organisation:

- How will we address issues of European collaboration and re-build trust?
- How will the BGS be able to access European research funding?
- Will the UK Government provide guarantees that loss of EU income will be matched by UK sources?
- How will the BGS continue to be able to attract the best candidates for jobs?

As individuals:

- Will our contractual and pension arrangements change?
- Will our freedom of movement in Europe continue to be protected?
- What are the plans to incentivise scientists to support their work in the UK with an outward face towards Europe and the World?

The BGS is a prime example of a successful organisation with an international workforce delivering the best available geoscience for a safer and more resilient society. Whilst we are very conscious of the referendum outcome, by entering into constructive discussions about maximising future opportunities we can hopefully move forward to maintain successful relationships with European research and business partners.

We request that you send this letter to the Minister of State to add to the wealth of concerns that we are sure he has been receiving from elsewhere in the science and education base of the UK.

Sincerely yours,

On behalf of the 'non-UK' Europeans at BGS

