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## HORIZON EUROPE GUARANTEE ANNOUNCEMENT FOR THE UK'S R&D SECTOR

Our government agreed last year, as part of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the EU, that the UK would associate to Horizon Europe. The UK and EU signed a *Joint Declaration on Participation in Union Programmes and Access to Programme Services*, which sets out the parties' shared commitment for the UK to associate to the agreed EU programmes (Horizon Europe, Euratom Research & Technology, Fusion for Energy and Copernicus) at the earliest opportunity.

The Government has been clear that the UK stands ready to formalise our association. UK and EU researchers and businesses have a long history of successful collaboration. The UK's association to Horizon Europe is a win-win for both sides, allowing our researchers and innovators to jointly tackle the great challenges of the 21st century – such as climate change and global health. It is therefore disappointing that there are persistent delays from the EU in processing and formalising our association. However, given the EU's persistence in delaying association, it is only right and responsible that we are prepared for all outcomes, including one where we are not able to associate.

I fully recognise that the delays are causing uncertainty to the research community, and it is my priority to support the UK R&D sector through this period. **This is why I have announced a guarantee for those who have successfully bid for Horizon Europe funded activities in the first wave of calls**, but have been unable to sign grant agreements with the EU due to the delays. The guarantee is a short-term measure intended to cover the first wave of calls and to address the continued delays from the EU to formalise the UK's association to Horizon Europe. The funding will be delivered through UK Research and Innovation, who will publish further details including eligibility, scope and how to apply in the coming weeks. I hope this provides UK researchers, innovators and businesses with the stability and reassurance that they can and should continue to apply for Horizon Europe calls.

We need to be realistic that if we are unable to associate, we have a coherent, compelling and high quality programme to provide the fellowships, collaborations and industry engagement so valued in Horizon.

In the recent Spending Review, the Chancellor committed to the largest increase in HMG R&D investment and announced that if we are unable to associate, the funding

allocated to Horizon association will go to other UK Government-funded R&D programmes instead, including those to support international partnerships. I wanted to use this opportunity to set out more of my thinking about our priorities for supporting the sector if that scenario arises – our Plan B. These build on the UK Research and Development Roadmap, which sets out a solid foundation for our plans in different scenarios. Should we find ourselves unable to associate to Horizon Europe, our immediate priority would be to provide short-term stability to researchers and innovators, and ensure the availability of funding. In the longer-term, we would have the opportunity to shape a bold and ambitious offer that delivers many of the benefits of Horizon association, with additional benefits, through wider global participation, and even stronger industry and SME engagement.

Whilst Horizon Europe gives us access to exceptional talent across Europe, we must not forget that there are other opportunities for collaboration globally. We will look to maintain partnerships with excellent European researchers and innovators, while strengthening our relationships with other partners such as North America and the Indo-Pacific. We also need to focus on areas of key UK strategic science advantage – both where we already lead, and where we want to lead – and strengthen our partnerships here.

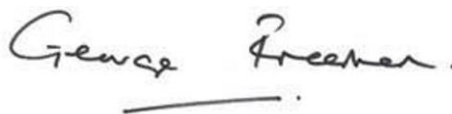
The R&D People & Culture Strategy set out our goal of making the UK the most exciting place in the world for top research and innovation talent. I am keen that we recognise the best of established talent, and the potential talent of emerging young research leaders, to anchor global talent from postgraduates to principal investigators in the UK. If we cannot associate to Horizon Europe, this Government would look at developing a strong & attractive offer to encourage talented individuals to build their careers here, developing the skills and workforce the UK needs.

We would look to deliver this in close partnership with the R&D community, including business, investing in those areas of research and innovation which support tomorrow's economy, including technologies and missions as set out in the Innovation Strategy.

To be clear, our intention is to associate to Horizon, Euratom R&T and Copernicus - I understand and value the huge opportunities and networks that these programmes bring to researchers and innovators in the UK. But we are also responsible and know we must be prepared with a compelling alternative in the event that this is not possible.

We will be engaging with groups and individuals from right across the sector as we continue to build on and develop these plans in more detail.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George Freeman". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a short horizontal line.

**GEORGE FREEMAN MP**  
Minister for Science, Research and Innovation