



Universities UK
International

NORWAY DELEGATION INFORMATION NOTE

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INTRODUCTION

- 1 On 4-5 April 2017, a delegation of representatives from five UK institutions and Universities UK International (UUKi) travelled to Oslo. On the second day, the delegation was joined by the Political and Communications Adviser from the British Embassy in Oslo, Thomas Miskin. During the short visit, UK representatives met with the Research Council for Norway, the University of Oslo and Members of Norwegian Parliament who sit on the Standing Committee for Education, Research and Church Affairs. In addition, the group dined with the British Ambassador to Norway, HMA Sarah Gillett, along with other guests from the Association of Norwegian Students Abroad (ANSA), the University of Oslo, the Ministry of Education and Research and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI). The delegation's objectives were to learn about Norwegian experiences of accessing EU research and educational programmes from outside of the EU, the debates the sector has had with
- politicians and with the public on retaining its relationship with the EU and its advice to the UK sector on negotiating with the EU. It was also an opportunity to discuss ways in which the Norwegian and the UK sectors can work together during the UK-EU exit negotiations and future relationships once the UK has left the EU.
- 2 The delegation was organised by the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions (UHR), the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU), the British Council and UUKi.
- 3 This report provides a summary of meetings throughout the delegation and indication of future UUKi activity.

UK DELEGATES

Name	Title	Organisation
Professor Paul Boyle	Vice-Chancellor	University of Leicester
Timothy Brundle	Director of Research and Impact	University of Ulster
Jo Hagerty	International Exchanges Manager	University of Stirling
Professor Claire Honess	Dean for Postgraduate Research Studies	University of Leeds
Dr Alan Murphy	Associate Dean, Science and Engineering	Newcastle University
Thomas Miskin	Political and Communications Advisor	British Embassy in Oslo
Vivienne Stern	Director	Universities UK International
Stephanie Kleynhans	Policy Officer, Europe	Universities UK International

CONTEXT: HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

- ⁴ Norway's first university – the University of Oslo – was founded in 1811, three years before the country's independence from Denmark. The higher education system now consists mainly of public institutions, but with one rather large private business school in Oslo (BI) and several smaller private institutions in specialised areas.¹
- ⁵ The Norwegian higher education system has traditionally been a binary system, consisting of universities (including specialised universities) and university colleges (Kyvik, 2004). In recent years, this binary structure has been under pressure; due to various merger processes, the sectoral divide has become blurred. All institutions have been governed by the same law since 2005, and covered by the same national funding model. The universities and most university colleges are run by the Norwegian state, and studying at these institutions is free of charge. Students at private institutions pay tuition fees, but many of the institutions also receive financial support from the state. The Ministry of Education and Research has overall responsibility for higher education in Norway.
- ⁶ There are a total of 38 accredited (approved) higher education institutions in Norway (as of January 2017). There are eight public universities, eight specialised university institutions (three private and five public) and 22 university colleges (12 of which are public), including two art academies. In addition, there are 17 non-accredited university colleges offering approved first degree programmes. There are also several relatively small specialised institutions preparing students for work in the police or the armed forces which are not administered by the Ministry of Education and Research. The number of students have risen in the last years, while the number of institutions has decreased as a result of mergers. In 2016 almost 270,000 students, including around 25,424 international students, were registered at Norwegian university institutions.²

SCIENCE AND INNOVATION

- 7 R&D expenditure at Norwegian universities, university colleges and university hospitals amounted to NOK18.7 billion in 2015. This was an increase of NOK2.7 billion from 2013. Adjusted for wages and prices, this implies a real growth of 11% between 2013 and 2015, and close to 9% growth from 2014 to 2015.
- 8 Additionally, the business sector accounts for 46% of the expenditures for R&D in Norway. However, almost half (45%) of those who conduct research in Norway are employed in the higher education sector, and roughly one-third of these hold doctoral degrees. In 2009, 1,148 doctoral degrees were conferred in Norway; women earned 45% of these.

Government Funded Research and Development in the HE Sector

- 9 Government accounted for 90% of total R&D funding in 2015 (89% in 2013). This includes general university funds (GUF), funding from the Research Council, and income from other government agencies and institutions. Funding from the Norwegian Research Council accounted for 15% of total R&D. Funding from abroad, industries, and other sources (grants, gifts and own revenues) funded 3% of the sector's R&D activities. Funding from the EU rose from NOK320 million in 2013 to NOK410 million in 2015.

Norwegian Participation in Horizon 2020

- 10 As of March 2017, there were 4,134 applications to Horizon 2020 funding with Norwegian participants. Through the programme so far, Norway has taken part in 613 funded projects, of which they coordinated 144. Their financial return in Horizon 2020 was €392 million and their return rate was 1.82%; their target return rate is 2% and they have increased this since FP7 where their rate was 1.69%. Norway's most successful area of funding was in the Societal Challenges (Food, Energy and the Environment). Currently, Norway's financial contribution to Horizon 2020 totals €2 billion which makes up 2.6% of the €75 billion total of the Horizon 2020 budget.

Norway and the UK

- 11 The most successful partner countries for Norwegian Horizon 2020 applications are the UK, Germany, Spain, Italy and France. This is based on the number of joint proposals and retained projects as of October 2016. By these figures³, Norway submitted over 1,800 projects with UK partners. Of these, over 300 were successful.

ERASMUS+ AND NORWAY

- ¹² Norway's National Agency is the SIU. In 2015 under the Higher Education strand, Norway received €6.1 million for mobility and then €1.6 million for cooperation projects.
- ¹³ In 2013–14, Norway had 1,666 outgoing students and 4,806 incoming students. The top five countries sending students to Norway were Germany, France, Spain, Italy and the Netherlands and the top five countries receiving students from Norway were the UK, Germany, France, Denmark and Spain. With staff mobility, they recorded 713 outgoing staff and 657 incoming staff.
- ¹⁴ Norway's contribution to Erasmus+ is approximately £310 million for the seven-year period of the programme; this figure includes all actions, not just Higher Education. The government has repeated its commitment to Erasmus+ and has produced a national strategy to this end. Unfortunately, this has not yet been translated into English but the targets have been set at 3,000 outbound students by 2020 and 1,000 outbound faculty and staff. This is in addition to increased participation in the centralised actions. The government recognises the contribution of Erasmus+ to its education and reasserted its commitments in a series of overall aims⁴ for cooperation with the EU in February 2017.

TUESDAY 4 APRIL TO WEDNESDAY 5 APRIL – SET OF MEETINGS THROUGHOUT BOTH DAYS

External Speakers

- Kristin Danielsen, International Director, Research Council of Norway
- Tom Espen Møller, Special Adviser on EU Programmes, Research Council of Norway
- Sarah Gillett, Her Majesty's Ambassador to Norway, British Embassy
- Ole Kristian Bratset, President, ANSA
- Toril Johansson, Director General Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Research
- Kristin Haugevik, NUPI and British Politics Society Norway
- Professor Knut Fægri, Vice-Rector, University of Oslo
- Einar Meier, Senior Adviser in International Affairs, University of Oslo
- Malena Bakkevold, Head of Internationalisation, University of Oslo
- Pål Pettersen, Senior Strategy Adviser, University of Oslo
- Marianne Aasen MP, Labour Party, Standing Committee on Education, Research and Church Affairs
- Kristin Vinje MP, Conservative Party, Standing Committee on Education, Research and Church Affairs
- Anne Tingelstad Wøien MP, Centre Party, Standing Committee on Education, Research and Church Affairs

Summary

- 15 The two days consisted of presentations and question and answer sessions with the various Norwegian representatives. They each provided different perspectives upon the relationship with the EU, albeit largely positive ones.

There were several key learning points from the Norwegian experience:

Norway's relationship with the European Commission

- 16 Norway has had two closely run referenda on joining the EU, both coming out against joining by around 53 to 47. Since the Norwegian public are still against joining the EU as full members, they are generally happy to invest money towards the programmes. They are aware that to maintain their largely positive relationship with the EU, they need to pay for access.
- 17 In terms of the current EU Framework Programme, Horizon 2020, the Norwegian relationship with the European Commission is self-defined as one of a collaborative partnership rather than as an obligated Member State. They see themselves as differently placed to other Member States as they have chosen to be involved in certain programmes. To those involved in the process of negotiating access to the Framework Programmes, this is important because they see themselves as being consulted and listened to, perhaps more so than the Member States as they are choosing to be involved. Although they do not have voting rights on certain issues to do with implementing reform of Horizon 2020, the Norwegian representatives think that the core of the issues are often decided and ironed out through debates and consultation – a process they feel very involved in. The situation is similar on Erasmus+: they are unable to vote on the issues surrounding the Erasmus+ programme and sometimes they are restricted from attending certain meetings. However, they think that, on balance, they gain enough influence through debate and consultation on the main points of contention from within the programme. Generally, the Commission benefits from Norway being involved in the programmes and as a result Norway receives a relatively attractive deal.

Budgetary debate

- 18 Over the course of the seven-year Horizon 2020 framework, the Norwegian contribution totalled €2 billion. The programme has not yet finished, but they estimate they will receive back around €1.6 billion creating a deficit for them of around €400 million. This does not include some of the financial incentives the government also provides for researchers and institutions to apply to the EU framework. However, each representative stressed that, despite this large deficit, the consensus was that the non-financial benefits and opportunities Horizon 2020 provided to institutions and to Norway was justified. The sense among the Norwegian public was also that this was worth the cost, as a fundamental pillar of society in Norway is scientific research. From a political perspective, the Members of Parliament felt that members of the public had very positive feelings towards being involved in EU research and education programmes. In many ways, the Erasmus+ programme is a much easier political win as it is less money invested on their part but the benefits for staff and students are universally accepted. There is very little debate surrounding the issue as there is agreement on the matter.

Difficulties encountered

¹⁹ Largely, the Norwegians view their relationship with the EU and the Commission as a positive one and they wish to continue on the same path. However, they do have some difficulties engaging with the programmes and with the Commission. Firstly, the success rate of their applications to Horizon 2020 is not as high as they would like it to be. They also spend a lot of money incentivising applications. This is working in some areas but they still need to improve their success rate if they want their status as net contributor to become one of a net beneficiary. Secondly, being both inside and outside the EU at the same time can be difficult. While, specifically on Horizon 2020, the Research Council of Norway stated that their relationship with the EU was one of consultation and while they didn't get a vote on specific issues, they did not feel left out. From a parliamentary perspective and in terms of representing Norway in Brussels, the MPs the delegation met with felt that Norway often had to work a bit harder than Member States to ensure they were heard and consulted. They are incredibly aware they should be placing themselves, 'if not in the room, then just outside the door'. They also must be careful not to act on their own national interest. In order to be listened to and gain influence in Brussels, their arguments have to be framed towards the betterment of EU society, rather than putting forward their own national interest. Finally, Norway believes it has been key for them to put extra effort in their lobbying efforts to ensure they have allies on advisory panels which they are restricted from taking part in. They have to work hard with key partners from within the EU to ensure their views are represented on any discussion boards and panels they are unable to take part in as non-EU members.

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3. Page 13 of the following presentation: <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/International/annex4-Norwegian-rd-Horizon-2020.pdf>
4. https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/work_programme_2017/id2536921/?q=strategy#higher