



Talks Brexit



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# Brexit

- ▶ On 29 March 2017 the Prime Minister Theresa May wrote to the President of the European Council Donald Tusk to trigger Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union.
- ▶ This sets in motion the two year withdrawal process.
- ▶ Maintaining a world class higher education sector is critical to delivering greater progress on the Government's key economic and social goals.
- ▶ However - sector-wide there is recognition that Brexit will bring significant challenges to tertiary education.
- ▶ There has been a marked absence of sustainability discussion in Brexit discussions so far.

# Dr Jane Davidson

## UK Political Context

The last election saw the two main parties in a close fight, one which may lead to a further election in the near future.

Key points from the two main party manifestos are:

### Conservatives

- ▶ Maintain commitment to be the first generation **to leave the environment in a better state than they inherited it**. They will produce a comprehensive **25 Year Environment Plan** that will chart how they will improve our environment as we leave the European Union and take control of our environmental legislation again.
- ▶ Work with farmers, food producers and environmental experts across Britain and with the devolved administrations to devise **a new agri-environment system**, to be introduced in the following parliament. The Conservatives will help Natural England to expand their provision of technical expertise to farmers to deliver environmental improvements on a landscape-scale, such as enriching soil fertility, planting hedgerows and building dry stone walls.
- ▶ **The Conservative manifesto does not guarantee environmental protections and standards beyond the point at which the UK leaves the EU.**

## Labour

- ▶ the Labour manifesto states that investing in our environment is investing in our future, saying that they will **defend and extend existing environmental protections**. They state that stewardship of the environment needs to be founded on **sound principles and based on scientific assessments**.
- ▶ On Brexit, they will replace the Great Repeal Bill with an EU Rights and Protections Bill, which will ensure that there are **no detrimental changes to environmental protections as a result of Brexit**. Labour state that throughout the Brexit process, they will ensure that **all EU-derived laws that are of benefit - including environmental protections - are fully protected** without qualifications, limitations or sunset clauses.
- ▶ **A Labour approach to Brexit will ensure there can be no rolling back of key rights and protections and that the UK does not fall behind Europe in, for example, environmental standards in the future.**

Both Manifestos provide EAUC members with an opportunity to use their expertise to create opportunities to support environmental commitments.

## Teaching, learning and research

- ▶ Sustainability/ SDGS not dependent upon particular government structure
- ▶ Sustainability is about:
  - ▶ Future thinking
  - ▶ Living with uncertainty
  - ▶ If we cannot look to the future and cope with uncertainty - who can?
- ▶ **We need to be looking for opportunities and not focus solely on challenges**

## Research

- ▶ Impact on funding and partnerships
- ▶ Opportunity for new research topics

## Teaching and Learning

### Challenges:

- ▶ May change precise content
- ▶ May change who our students are
- ▶ May affect our ability to offer international exchanges
- ▶ May affect who can (or who wants to) work in our Universities

### Opportunities:

- ▶ Discontinuities as opportunities
- ▶ Sustainability even more important:
  - Future thinking, global perspectives, evidence centred decision making
  - **A generation who have discovered they care about SDGs**
  - Articulation of values in HE



Alex Bols

## UK Policy Priorities?

GuildHE has highlighted four key priorities for Brexit:

- ▶ Guaranteeing the current status of non-UK EU staff and students in the UK, and that of UK staff and students based elsewhere in the EU
- ▶ Ensuring that UK academics are able to collaborate with researchers across the EU and further afield
- ▶ Securing continued access to EU research and innovation funding streams, such as the Horizon 2020 programme, or gaining adequate alternative funding
- ▶ Fostering globally aware students through [Erasmus+](#) and other exchange programmes

# Thank-you!

- ▶ Thank-you for your time and participation.
- ▶ A copy of the webinar will be made available to members on the EAUC website and the Sustainability Exchange shortly.
- ▶ This is the first in a series of webinars that will enable us to construct a letter to Government and we will update you with its progress. The EAUC advocacy group will be charged with the responsibility of taking this forward.
- ▶ We intend to hold a student-focussed Brexit webinar next in partnership with relevant organisations. If you're interested, we welcome panellist and content suggestions - send them to [rsaban@eauc.org.uk](mailto:rsaban@eauc.org.uk).
- ▶ Please keep an eye on the EAUC website for updates.