

Policy Proposal: Brexit

Submitted by: Edinburgh University Students' Association

On 31st January 2020, the United Kingdom left the European Union; Students and young people overwhelmingly voted Remain in the 2016 EU Referendum. It is clear that leaving the European Union will negatively impact the most vulnerable and marginalised in our communities and will also create a less open and diverse society. The National Union of Students (NUS) should continue to fight to protect the rights and freedoms afforded to us by the European Union, campaign for the rights of migrants in the UK to be protected in any future negotiations and to fight for more open and diverse Universities and communities.

A summary of what the issue is and details of the effect it has on students who define into each of the five Liberation campaigns:

- The Brexit campaign and vote were a disgraceful showcase of fearmongering and misinformation that gave rise to xenophobia (both international and anti-EU) and xenophobic attacks, especially against Muslims and people of colour
- The Brexit referendum has greatly fuelled a rise in racism. Racist and xenophobic hate crime rose by an average of 36% in the two months following the referendum. A report from the Trade Union Congress found that over a third of 'Black, Asian and minority ethnic' people have been racially abused or have witnessed racist abuse since the Brexit vote. Many students of African, Arab, Asian and Caribbean heritage have reported abuse following the Brexit vote, from being told to 'go back home' to having their hijabs ripped off their heads.
- The United Kingdom is no longer covered by the European Union Accessibility Act which will affect the rights and opportunities of disabled people to have access to accessible products and technology in their home and public lives
- The UK consistently ranks the highest on the ILGA rainbow index for its successful upholding and implementation of LGBT+ rights and freedom. While many European countries enjoy similar positive approaches, many still remain regressive in their protection of LGBT+ (and especially Trans) rights and freedoms. Many LGBT+ migrants from countries with more regressive attitudes, including EU migrants, come to Britain in order to enjoy more rights and feel safer.
- Universities are key to ensuring we have a successful post-Brexit UK economy and diverse, multicultural and international society. Universities may not be able to depend on the support from the government to ensure that they can thrive.
- The current immigration system is not suitable for EEA nationals post-Brexit. It would make it much harder for UK universities to attract European staff and students that contribute so much to our campus communities, our research, our teaching and our economy.

Many institutions currently participate in European research programmes that enable access to a pooled financial resource that is essential to collaboration, whilst also incentivising it. We will lose access to these resources and our exposure to networks and contacts across Europe, eroding collaboration opportunities in a post-Brexit environment

What are the solutions?

A summary of changes we want to see made in society to take on this issue and make the change:

Maintain our identity as European citizens and continue to promote a commitment to Security, Quality of Life, Opportunities, Freedoms, and protection of Human Rights
Preserve a workable continuation of the Erasmus+ scheme; a highly esteemed shared asset within both the UK student body and that of other EU states. We must secure

access to Erasmus but recognise the need to grow new mobility partnerships beyond Erasmus too

Protect research funding and opportunities such as the Horizon Europe research and innovation programme

Protect the freedom of movement of all migrants, EU and non-EU.

The UK government to include the Charter of Fundamental Rights in UK law

Ideas for Implementation

The NUS should work with the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association and the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Intersex Youth and Student Organisation to build better communication channels among activists in Europe