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THE PRIME MINISTER

16 March 2017

Dear Professor Adger

Thank you for your letter of 16 February, regarding language teaching and research in the UK following our departure from the European Union (EU).

The Government is committed to the teaching of foreign languages in schools as part of a core academic curriculum. Since September 2014, maintained primary schools in England must teach a modern or ancient foreign language to pupils at Key Stage 2. We are also committed to increasing the proportion of the population gaining language qualifications.

Thanks to the English Baccalaureate the number of students studying a language at GCSE has increased from 40 per cent in 2010 to 49 per cent in 2016. In addition, the Teaching Schools Council is considering how to further support schools to engage with the recommendations of its recent report of modern languages teaching practice, with the aspiration of increases in the number of students choosing to study languages beyond Key Stage 3.

The Government is fully committed to making sure that we get the best possible outcome for the Higher Education sector from the negotiations with the EU. We are working with the sector to understand the risks and opportunities that Brexit presents. We recognise that the sector is concerned about how it will maintain its excellent record of world class research and collaboration, as well as UK students studying abroad. These issues will need to be considered as part of wider discussions about the UK's relationship with the EU.

We have not ruled out continuing to participate in some European programmes such as Erasmus+ after we leave the EU, but this is a matter for the negotiations which will follow the triggering of Article 50. As part of our vision for the UK as a global nation, we will want to look at how opportunities for international education, training and collaborative opportunities can be perpetuated in the future.

Thank you again for writing to me on this important matter.

Yours sincerely  
R.M.

Professor David Adger