

35 top prize winners warn Brexit will damage science

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A staff survey by the biomedical Francis Crick Institute, whose central London building is pictured, found that 75.5 percent agreed the impact of Brexit on UK science would be very negative

Thirty-five Nobel and top mathematics prize winners have warned

British Prime Minister Theresa May and European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker that scientific research will suffer a serious setback without a good Brexit deal.

Their statement coincides with the publication of a staff survey of Europe's biggest biomedical research centre—located in London—showing immense concern about Brexit's impact on research in both the UK and the EU.

The 29 Nobel Prize winners in science and six recipients of the Fields Medal—one of the most prestigious awards in maths—said open European borders had helped the continent make up ground lost to US researchers in the wake of World War II.

"Creating new barriers to such ease of collaboration will inhibit progress, to the detriment of us all," they said in a letter released to the media late Monday.

The 35 academics also wrote that the damage must now be minimised through a Brexit deal that maintains as much cooperation as possible after Britain leaves the European Union in March.

"The challenges we face must be tackled in a manner that benefits everyone and those challenges are better faced together," the letter says.

"Only a deal which allows the closest possible cooperation between the UK and the EU, now and in the future, will make that possible."



Paul Nurse, Nobel Prize-winning head of the biomedical Francis Crick Institute in London, is among leading researchers warning that a Brexit deal must maintain as much cooperation as possible between the UK and Europe

One of the signatories to the letter is Paul Nurse—Nobel Prize-winning head of the biomedical Francis Crick Institute, whose survey showed tremendous anxiety about the future of science among its staff.

The poll, which had 1,053 respondents, found 75.5 percent agree that the impact of Brexit on UK science would be "very negative." Another 21.3 percent said it would be "negative".

And 82 percent said it would be either "negative" or "very negative" for EU research, while around a fifth of them said Brexit had already

negatively or very negatively impacted their work.

Nurse told AFP in 2016 that EU funds accounted for about £5 million a year (\$6.5 million/5.7 million euros) of his annual budget.

The sum represents around five percent of the funds available to the world-renowned institute.

The survey showed only 10 percent of Crick staff are confident in the future of UK [science](#) as a whole after Brexit.

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