

EPS - Statement by Christophe Rossel, President of the EPS, after UK's decision to leave the EU

Mulhouse, 24 June 2016 - The European Physical Society (EPS) regrets the outcome of the vote by the British people and their decision to leave the European Union. In spite of all possible consequences that might arise from this choice, the popular decision must be respected like in all democratic processes. The result of the UK's referendum will certainly bring the leaders to start a wider discussion on the future of the union. Even if Europe might lose a strong and respected research partner, the scientific community must remain united and aim in fostering further the international collaboration, especially when urgent solutions to global challenges are required. Indeed, one of the strengths of scientific research is its international nature and the free exchange of people and ideas across borders, a policy and philosophy strongly supported by EPS. At a time when the EU Commission wants to develop and implement open science policy to improve the quality and impact of European science, in particular by better interconnecting research infrastructures, it would be unfortunate to see such efforts refrained by political decisions.

The withdrawal of the UK from the EU will indeed have negative consequences for its universities and researchers. Like Switzerland is experiencing it with its status of partial associated country in Horizon 2020 and all the required negotiations to reach bilateral agreements, access to EU funding will become more difficult for UK scientists. In spite of yesterday's vote, EPS will further develop and strengthen its excellent relationship with the Institute of Physics (IOP), and this with the help of all its other national member societies. It is the mission of EPS to advocate for physics research and its contribution to the economic, technological, social and cultural advancement in Europe. Its role is also to represent the European physics community in providing independent input into science policy issues. In this function, EPS calls on the UK Government and the EU governing bodies to act with all respectful means to ensure a smooth transition and maintain the good integration of the UK scientists within the European landscape.

Christophe Rossel

EPS President