

Commenting on the referendum decision for the UK to leave the European Union, Professor Peter Openshaw, President of the British Society for Immunology (BSI), said:

"The announcement that the UK has voted to leave the European Union reflects public opinion, based on many valid concerns. However, immunology shares with other branches of science an in-built internationalism that must continue to thrive, whatever the political climate.

"UK scientists have always been at the forefront of immunology, working in the UK or overseas. We are in the middle of exciting times for immunology, with many treatments for previously incurable diseases emerging from decades of hard investment.

"A great example of internationalism is our annual Congress in December - a joint meeting with Dutch immunologists. This will showcase research from across Europe and the rest of the world. We must continue to celebrate our internationalism, not limiting ourselves to Europe but reaching out world-wide.

"Today's referendum may come as a disappointment for many of us. Indeed, most of our best labs are staffed by a rich mix of talented scientist from around the world and we in turn have great opportunities to work in, and learn from, the best labs overseas.

"We must do all we can to ensure that all these great colleagues continue to feel welcome in our laboratories and that we are free to go wherever we need to do great work. Our members must continue to participate in global teams, many of which have taken years to build.

"Our recent report on the internationalism of immunology makes a number of recommendations that will enable our work to flourish. We urge ministers, policy makers and funders to look at these proposals and consider how they can best work with us to build on our proud heritage in immunology in this new environment.

"The BSI will continue to work with funders and decision makers to ensure that these enormously valuable international collaborations continue to shape the future of bioscience and medicine."

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