

## Press Release:

### **ISMLA urges government to listen to pleas from MPs and Peers regarding impact on language skills during negotiations over Brexit**

As Brexit negotiations begin, the Independent Schools' Modern Languages Association, would like to react as the APPG on Modern Languages releases 'Brexit and Languages - a checklist for government negotiators and officials' today. We, too, urge the government to fight to continue with its participation in Erasmus+ schemes and guarantee residency for EU nationals already living and working in the UK as well as safeguarding future recruitment of EU citizens to address the shortage of language skills. As an organisation dedicated to embracing languages and cultures across the world and to promoting these within the UK, ISMLA is very concerned to ensure the continuation of high quality language teaching, often achieved through engaging foreign nationals and international experience offered by Erasmus+, both of which are vital for the future of the UK within a global world.

Sara Davidson, Chair of ISMLA and Head of Modern Languages at Oundle School near Peterborough, says, *"I do not know of a language department in this country that does not employ native speakers. In my department at Oundle School, our policy is to recruit an even spread of native speakers and non-natives in all seven of the languages on offer. We have seven foreign language assistants and all these native speakers are crucial to our pupils developing their listening and speaking skills. These native speakers often bring with them a different teaching approach, offering skills, knowledge and experiences that non-natives simply do not have. Without them, our department would be a far less vibrant environment, not to mention, I believe, less successful. On a national scale, native speakers are helping us out amidst a major recruitment crisis in modern language teaching. We simply do not currently produce enough linguists in this country to fill the modern language teaching vacancies we have.*

*The Erasmus+ programme also offers participants a highly valuable experience and its loss would be mourned across the country were it to be withdrawn. It provides crucial opportunities for language teachers to continue with their professional development and, most importantly, allows young people to have a cultural and linguistic experience that would otherwise in many cases be impossible. All university students of languages must spend a year abroad and many do this via Erasmus+ schemes. At a time when we are struggling to recruit good language teachers and where there is a need for many to extend their cultural awareness, it is crucial that we do not cut ourselves off from the rest of the world, especially Europe, and reject enriching opportunities on our doorstep. As an organisation, we are proud of both the cultural diversity that exists in our independent schools and our global outlook. Brexit cannot - and must not - result in limitation of our pupils' future careers."*

#BrexitLanguages

**The Independent Schools' Modern Languages Association (ISMLA) represents and supports the Modern Languages Departments in independent schools in the UK. It exists to provide a forum for Modern Languages teachers in Independent schools to meet, share ideas and inform themselves about and contribute to developments in Modern Languages Teaching.**

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