

**Economics Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Industry, Innovation and Science Portfolio  
2016-17 Supplementary Budget Estimates  
20 October 2016

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**DEPARTMENT:** DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND SCIENCE

**TOPIC:** SKA Project and Brexit

**REFERENCE:** Written Question – Senator Carr

**QUESTION No.:** SI-67

1. Do you anticipate that the impending exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union will have any impact on the project?
2. Has the UK government reaffirmed its commitment to the project – especially given the location of the headquarters in Manchester?
3. The UK government has flagged some fairly stringent rules on immigration and labour. Could this have any impact on the SKA in Manchester given the international nature of the project? Will there be any impact on recruitment or retention of staff in Manchester?
4. Your July update – published on the SKA Australia website – says that the SKA has been declared a Landmark Project by the European Commission. What does this mean for the project?

**ANSWER**

1. The SKA is not an EU project and as such the UK's decision to leave the EU will have no significant impact.
2. At the SKA board meeting in July 2016 the UK representative made the following statement:  
  
“The UK's position has not changed. We are still deeply committed to the SKA and its success. The Minister for Universities and Science, Jo Johnson re-iterated the UK's support for world class research and innovation at a speech to the Wellcome Trust on 30th June. This included specific reference to the SKA.”
3. As an intergovernmental organisation the SKA and its staff will be granted privileges and immunities as set out in the Convention establishing the SKA Observatory, which all SKA members must sign and ratify. Although still under negotiation, the Convention is likely to include measures to facilitate free movement of SKA staff and representatives.
4. This refers to the fact that the European Strategic Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) has identified the SKA as a project of pan-European importance. This is designed to help inform EU members' national research infrastructure priorities.