Brexit is bad for higher education worldwide

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Last Thursday 52 percent of British voters rejected their option that the United Kingdom should split from the group of 28 member states that form the European Union. The immediate consequences of such a vote—nicknamed Brexit—were striking. Financial markets worldwide plummeted. The British pound halved in value and Prime Minister David Cameron announced his resignation effective in October. All the while the Scottish nationalists renewed calls for secession from Great Britain after nearly two-thirds of Scots voted to remain in the E.U.

All this tumult was the consequence of various factors that combined to form the perfect storm. One was a promise by Cameron himself in 2013 to hold the referendum to allow the European Union and the United Kingdom to negotiate a new relationship. The other was the sustaining of Cameron's career and his legacy but also changing the place of the UK within the world that is more and more globalized and inter-connected. Those are decisions that are more and more complex and that require a long-term perspective.

But what does all this have to do with higher education? Maybe a lot. Both the Brexit vote and the Scottish referendum are part of the same “perfect storm” of factors that combined to form the perfect storm. One of the factors that combine to form the perfect storm is the increasing dissatisfaction among voters with the political and economic establishments, which has already agreed to buy the building. The Brexit process will take some time. First, the United Kingdom has to be approved by the European Council and the European Parliament. Then, according to the Lisbon Treaty, the UK will have to consult their citizens in a referendum of their intention to leave the organization. In the meantime, the Brexit forces are already trying to keep some collaborations going, but they are unlikely to continue.

Alternatives to the Scottish referendum include a vote for the Scottish National Party to get more independence for Scotland. The Brexit forces are also likely to lose in the EU. But overall, the alternat...