

EUA POSITION

Open Access by 2020: EUA supports Plan S for an open scholarly system

September 2018

On 4 September 2018, eleven national research funding organisations in Europe jointly published the so-called “[Plan S](#)” to accelerate the transition towards Open Access (OA) to research publications. Plan S stipulates that “after 1 January 2020 scientific publications on the results from research funded by public grants provided by national and European research councils and funding bodies, must be published in compliant Open Access Journals or on compliant Open Access Platforms.”

The [European University Association](#) (EUA) would like to express its support for Plan S and welcome its ambition. Implementing the plan’s bold vision, in combination with Horizon Europe reinforced OA policies, has the potential to create a critical mass of research funders able to ensure a wider uptake of OA across Europe. Plan S is in line with the EUA recommendations in its [Statement to EU Institutions](#) and National Governments and “[Towards Full Open Access in 2020](#)”. For EUA, the transition to OA requires the coherent and concerted efforts of major stakeholders including researchers, research funders, universities, research performing organisations and governments.

EUA is pleased to see that Plan S urges researchers to retain the copyright of their research outcomes and to publish them using open licenses and platforms. This has the potential to change the business models underlying the research publishing market, and to make them more open and competitive while also enabling a more efficient use of public funds. The engagement of the wider community of researchers is necessary, which it is not the case today, as only around 30% of university researchers have a good knowledge of publishers’ OA policies ([EUA OA Institutional Survey results](#)).

EUA would like to underline that both “gold” and “green” OA routes are important in the transition to full Open Access. Green

OA repositories enrich and link publications and data and provide added-value services with openly available content. Regarding gold OA, beyond capping Article Processing Charges (APCs), which can be an appropriate temporary measure, the OA publishing system must evolve in a way in which costs are affordable for universities, and limit inflation costs. The principle goal of Plan S, to end the phenomenon in academic publishing known as “double dipping” (paying first to publish and second to access the publication through subscriptions), is laudable.

Plan S should effectively support the implementation of Open Science practice, as part of the pre- and post-evaluation of research projects, and, progressively, in national research assessment exercises. Research assessment, career assessment and the recruitment of researchers must be adapted to accommodate Open Science practices and move away from purely quantitative measures such as journal impact factors. EUA provides a framework for such an evolution through its recently adopted [Roadmap on Research Assessment](#). Plan S should also incentivise researchers to adopt Open Science as the default model of conduct for publicly-funded research.

To summarise, EUA supports Plan S, and its vision to accelerate the transition to full OA, while also encouraging more national research funders across Europe to adopt Plan S. In the coming weeks, EUA will further reflect on the implications of Plan S, and how universities can further align their policies to contribute to its implementation. Ultimately, the success of Plan S hinges on turning principles into practice. More details of Plan S need to be fleshed out, and EUA is pleased to offer a platform for dialogue for its implementation.