

POSITION

EUA welcomes Council conclusions on research assessment and implementation of Open Science

June 2022

The European University Association welcomes the adoption by the Council of the European Union of the [Conclusions on research assessment and implementation of Open Science](#). EUA actively supports universities in the transition to Open Science and is pleased to see progress being made at the European level to foster the emergence and sustain the impact of Open Science policies and practices.

In its conclusions, the Council of the European Union identifies three key action areas intended to accelerate the implementation of Open Science across Europe. Firstly, it recognises the need to promote a renewed approach to research assessment, moving towards a more equal balance between the quantitative and the qualitative evaluation of research activities and careers. Secondly, it calls for the improvement of regulatory frameworks enabling Open Access and the reuse of publicly funded research results, publications and data. Thirdly, it identifies multilingualism as a key tool to increase the dissemination and impact of research outputs.

EUA is pleased to see the emphasis in the Council conclusions on the need to promote a concerted European effort towards the reform of research assessment systems and practices as a way to improve their quality, openness and impact. The Association actively advocates for the transition towards more responsible, transparent and sustainable assessment practices, which include incentives and rewards for [Open Science](#) throughout the research process. The reform of research assessment systems, as part of a broader reform of academic careers, also represents a significant step in realising the vision of [Universities without walls](#) that are open, engaged with society and able to uphold their academic freedom, thus providing an open, transformative space for common knowledge production through research, education, innovation and culture.

As reviewing research assessment is a shared responsibility and requires a systematic approach that brings together the main actors, EUA decided to join the [initiative to reform research assessment practices in Europe](#). This initiative was launched by the European Commission as one of the new European Research Area (ERA) actions. It is a bottom-up and co-creative process, working towards a coalition of organisations representing the diversity of the research community in Europe. The Association further reiterates its commitment to this co-creation exercise and appreciates the support for this initiative expressed by EU member states through the Council of the European Union as their support will be essential for the success of the reform.

EUA also welcomes the call for new European approaches to foster the emergence of new and diverse models for academic publishing and scholarly communication, while addressing the need to remove unequal financial, linguistic and geographical barriers that currently impede full Open Access to publicly funded research results across European countries. This is in line with [EUA's call for a just scholarly publishing ecosystem](#) that is transparent, diverse, economically affordable and sustainable, technically interoperable, and steered by the research community.

Furthermore, EUA acknowledges the Council's consideration that authors of research publications or their institutions should retain sufficient intellectual property rights to ensure Open Access. Empowering universities, research performing organisations, researchers, research funders and national libraries to regain academic sovereignty over the publishing process is crucial. It is therefore a missed opportunity that member states do not support [Plan S Rights Retention Strategy](#) (RRS) in the Council conclusions. The RRS enables researchers to retain sufficient intellectual ownership rights of their work to make the Author Accepted Manuscript openly available under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) licence or equivalent, without any embargo. EUA considers the RRS as a [powerful institutional lever for Open Access](#). The Association hopes that member states will support the RRS.

Finally, EUA supports the inclusion of multilingualism among the priorities for Open Science identified in the Council conclusions. In 2019, the Association endorsed the [Helsinki Initiative on Multilingualism in Scholarly Communication](#), which brings forward the concept of "balanced multilingualism" in science communication and advocates for multilingual work to be fully acknowledged in scholarly assessment. Fostering openness in relation to the use of language will also be instrumental in developing successful Open Access policies and in the reform of research assessment systems.

To conclude, EUA supports the Council conclusions and the commitment to promote the systemic, cultural and technical reforms needed to foster the transition to Open Science. Developing new institutional approaches to research assessment and promoting universal and perpetual Open Access to scholarly outputs in a just scholarly publishing ecosystem are [key priorities for EUA](#). The Association is therefore fully committed to Open Science and is determined to play its part in the definition of more responsible, transparent and sustainable research assessment and academic publishing practices, working together with European, national and institutional stakeholders.