

SPARC Europe Statement on Open Access for the Public Hearing on Access to and Preservation of Scientific Information, Luxembourg, 30 May 2011

Preliminary

1. SPARC Europe represents almost 100 organizations - European research libraries, national libraries and research institutes - that support Open Access to scholarly literature (**articles and books**) and **data**.
2. SPARC Europe upholds that Open Access via Institutional Repositories and Open Access via publishing are complementary strategies. We welcomed the FP7 Open Access pilot which secures permanent access via repositories and supports Open Access publishing by making publication costs eligible for reimbursement. The EC Open Access policies can set an example for governments and funding agencies on a national level.
3. SPARC Europe upholds that Open Access in Institutional Open Access Policies should refer to freedom of access + freedom of re-use, in other words "Libre" Access. Open Science needs Libre Access; it is clearly expressed in the "grand challenges of our times" envisioned in the "Renaissance" that is called for in building the European Research Area.
4. SPARC Europe upholds that Open Access means immediate access, thus access without any delaying mechanisms.

Key Messages

I Further implementation of the EC/ERC Open Access policies conducted in the FP7 Open Access Pilot with an outreach to member state level

SPARC Europe recommends the EC to:

1. Extend the Open Access policies to all research areas covered and funded under the forthcoming FP8 and build upon the network of open repositories that has been established through the OpenAIRE project.
2. Ensure researchers compliance with the Open Access policies by focusing on means of communication with researchers and increasing awareness amongst researchers about the benefits of Institutional Repositories and the equal quality of peer-reviewed Open Access publications to toll-access publications;
3. Strive for the shortest embargo periods possible where Open Access is realized via open repositories. We understand that subscription publishers need the embargo periods for sustainability issues but embargo periods in the Open Access Pilot lead to publications not being accessible for the first 6 or 12 months, depending on the research area. We emphasize that Open Access Publishing offers a solution for the embargo dilemma.
4. Support projects and initiatives that aim to provide an infrastructure enabling publisher content to be harvested and deposited into institutional repositories or subject based repositories.
5. Support and encourage projects that aim to develop, implement and monitor Open Access policies by national governments and funding agencies.

II Libre Open Access refers to Open Access Publishing: Boost Open Access publishing

To encourage Open Access publishing SPARC Europe calls for the European Commission and research funders on national level:

1. Make funding available to cover the costs of Open Access publishing by including the dissemination of research as part of the grant requirements and by making publication costs eligible for reimbursement.
2. Recommend Open Access publishing by pursuing efficient and focused communication with grant recipients; communicate that the quality of Open Access peer-reviewed journals is equal to the quality of subscription peer-reviewed journals.
3. Explore in a collaborative approach with the research community how recognition of peer-reviewed Open Access journals can be improved in research evaluation.

SPARC Europe calls for subscription-based publishers:

1. Start the transition of subscription journals towards Open Access.
2. Allow authors and institutions to deposit metadata and publications into Open Access repositories and support Creative Commons licensing of these materials.

III Support a reformation of the Research Evaluation System

The current research evaluation system that is aimed mainly on indirect measures based on average journal performance (e.g. the journal impact factor) is disadvantageous to Open Access. Besides the fact that Open Access journals face difficulties in receiving an impact factor we are convinced that digital research environments offer much more quality and performance indicators than citations alone.

We call for EU funding streams to foster a shift from a research evaluation system that is based on journal level to an evaluation that is based on article level, and to explore together with the research communities which indicators that are emerging from the digital environment could be added to this system. This shift will accelerate Open Access publishing. In addition we suggest:

1. Including Open Access availability of the publication in the criteria for research evaluation.
2. Supporting projects that develop alternative bibliometric tools and services or aim to implement them.

IV Start a pilot on Open Access to Data

To be allowed to reuse publications and data ensures efficient and innovative science and prevents the recollection of already available data. A lot of work in Open Research Data, Data Management Plans and the development of international standards for access to data and the use of applications is currently conducted at different levels.

This calls for further efforts to build up and extend European Infrastructures and we recommend the EC to encourage and fund the openness of research data in order to take the next step towards concrete implementation by starting a pilot on Open Research Data.

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This statement on our website, with endorsing responses: <http://www.sparceurope.org/resources/sparc-eu-materials/written-contributions/>

SPARC Europe has asked some organizations for a response:

EIFL

“EIFL is an international not-for-profit organization dedicated to enabling access to knowledge for education, learning, research and sustainable community development in more than 45 transition and developing countries in Europe, Asia and Africa. Most research is published in commercial e-journals and high subscription costs mean that users in developing and transition countries are disadvantaged. Even the most well endowed research library cannot afford to provide access to all of the content requested by its faculty and students. The situation is even more critical for smaller college and universities and largely unacceptable for institutions in the developing world, with severely limited or no budgets. We welcome this statement and efforts towards Open Access - immediate, online, free and unrestricted availability of peer-reviewed, research literature - that provides the means to maximize the visibility and use of research output and promotes knowledge sharing.”

The National Documentation Centre/NHRF- Greece

”The National Documentation Centre (EKT) is the national organization for the documentation, information and support services on science, research and technology. EKT’s vision is “Access to Knowledge”. To this end, the organization facilitates access to scholarly content and information and supports the research and educational processes in a digitally enabled context by means of highly qualified staff and robust IT infrastructures. EKT facilitates Open Access through its repositories, Open Access journals, participation in significant European-wide projects and awareness-raising.

In line with its mission and vision the EKT endorses SPARC Europe’s Statement on Open Access. The freely accessible and free from most permission barriers research is a desideratum for the European Research Area and for achieving improved conditions in European society and economy. European policy-making and funding enables the development of the sustainable technical, organizational, and economical conditions that will provide Open Access to and preservation of publicly funded research for all citizens, as well as the means to universities and other research organizations more effectively to manage and evaluate their research resources and maximize their ability for innovation.”

Open Access Publishing in European Networks (OAPEN)

“Special attention is recommended for Open Access for scholarly monographs, in particular in relation to the Humanities and Social Sciences. There is a clear need for Open Access publishing and funding models for monographs to bridge the gap with OA articles, but also because the traditional business model for books is losing its sustainability. Regarding monographs Open Access archiving will be less effective than Open Access publishing, as the required embargo periods will be longer than those for articles.”

Tartu University Library – Estonia

“Open Access for research information can be a major breakthrough to the smaller countries and universities, which are often on rather restricted budgets. This means that the researchers do not only have access to the research results, but also to the entire research information gathered within the research. By this the funders can also be sure that the finances are invested in innovative research and not in "re-inventing the wheel". At the same time, the research information and results deriving from the smaller countries and universities would become equally visible with the larger countries and universities.

All in all it can be said that OA is the key to a dynamic scholarly communication system in favour of the common good.”

University of Tromsø - Norway

“The University of Tromsø, a member of SPARC Europe and a participant in the OpenAIRE project, strongly supports and endorses the views presented in this statement.

It is important that the EU, as a leading research funder through FP7 and the upcoming FP8, and through the ERC, puts in place policies and technological and financial support mechanisms to ensure swift transition to Libre OA as the normal model for scientific dissemination.”