**Towards Full Open Access in 2020: EUA recommendations**

**Context**

“Universities and scientists should have adequate and cost-effective platforms for collaborating, disseminating and using scientific publications openly. The European University Association (EUA) aims to contribute to a publishing system that is simultaneously fair and transparent for stakeholders, in particular universities, research institutions, libraries, researchers, research funders, learned societies and commercial publishers.” ([EUA Roadmap on OA to Research Publications](http://eua.be/Libraries/publications-homepage-list/eua-roadmap-on-open-access-to-research-publications.pdf), p. 2)

As the movement towards Open Access (OA) in Europe has considerably gained momentum in the last two years through initiatives led by policymakers, governments, university leaders and researchers alike, such as the European Commission’s [policies](https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/oa_pilot/h2020-hi-oa-pilot-guide_en.pdf) on OA within Horizon 2020 and the activities of the [Open Science Policy Platform](http://ec.europa.eu/research/openscience/index.cfm?pg=open-science-policy-platform), the [Amsterdam Call](https://www.eu2016.nl/binaries/eu2016/documenten/rapporten/2016/04/04/amsterdam-call-for-action-on-open-science/amsterdam-call-for-action-on-open-science.PDF) for Action on Open Science, the [Council conclusions](http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9526-2016-INIT/en/pdf) on the transition towards an Open Science system, the OA 2020 [Expression of Interest](https://oa2020.org/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/Expression%20of%20Interest.pdf) and the [EUA Roadmap](http://eua.be/Libraries/publications-homepage-list/eua-roadmap-on-open-access-to-research-publications.pdf) on OA to Research Publications, EUA as the representative organisation of more than 800 universities in 47 European countries, envisions the following goals for turning OA into reality by 2020:

**Vision**

The long-term goal in the area of open access is the development of a communication system that enables and promotes a seamless flow of knowledge within and beyond academia. This open system is critical for the progress of science, research and society at large. It is bound to enhance the transparency and integrity of science, foster knowledge transfer, increase societal acceptance and engagement with science, create spillover effects in the economy, and facilitate addressing global challenges such as climate change. Achieving a balance of realistic costs and benefits shared by all stakeholders is, at the same time, a critical objective for European universities.

Looking ahead, an open scientific communication system requires online platforms for scientific publishing that must provide essential conditions, namely: guaranteeing the quality of the peer-review; ensuring that the scientific ownership lies with the author and/or institution, with open licenses for reading and unrestricted use and re-use of information; ensuring the right to mine content and data. All these services must be provided with a realistic balance of cost-service ratio in a transparent way.

The publication paradigm is changing and both universities and scientific publishers need to move forward into a model where researchers and their institutions pay for publishing, but are not charged for reading or for re-using content. Full Open Access in 2020 can be achieved if all stakeholders act together. However, aiming at achieving that goal only through Article Processing Charges ‘APC’ implementing a gold OA route is unrealistic given the different needs of researchers in different fields and given the different economic and organisational situation of European countries. It is of outmost importance to find new, appropriate large-scale economic models that ensure sustainability of OA through public funds to move from a mixed system of ‘paying for reading’ and ‘paying for publishing’ to a ‘pay to publish and read’.

Taking into account the vision outlined above, the background information, and the outcomes of EUA’s Open Access surveys of 2015/16 and 2016/17 (#links to be inserted), EUA proposes the following recommendations for turning OA into reality by 2020.

**Recommendations**

1. **Transition to OA**

While scientific journals are available via subscriptions, support is needed for the two main OA routes: green and gold.

* The involvement of researchers is important in research assessment procedures. As long as they are being judged on traditional criteria, such as journal impact factors, there is no prospect of meaningful change. The scientific community must regain its ‘scientific sovereignty’, including economic and financial aspects.
* Cost transparency in the scientific publishing market has to increase as large parts of it are based on public expenditure and the ‘gold route’ is not the only way towards OA.
* For green OA: in each country that has not yet adopted a law limiting embargo periods, measures should be taken to ensure the establishment of embargo periods in accordance with the recommendations of the European Commission (6 months for STEM; 12 months for SSH).
* For gold OA: more transparency on overall and disaggregated costs for and the composition of Article Processing Charges (APCs) is needed, by putting pressure on publishers. Moreover, it is also necessary, at both institutional and collective (e. g. regional, national) level, to know and control expenses of APCs. The evolution of the market for ‘gold OA’ is very uncertain as an increase in costs can be expected.
* The university sector should strive for budget-neutral solutions. In addition, it is critical to ensure that articles published in open access journals are freely accessible for the readers and that the re-use of their content is permitted.

1. **Institutional development of OA**

Institutional leaders should have an active role in leading the transition of the current publishing system to a full OA system. Institutions and their leaders need to promote OA:

* By developing and/or linking platforms for the open presentation of publications, for each institution or groups of institutions (open institutional repositories) and at national, European and/or worldwide levels;
* By developing and implementing institutional policies on OA and thereby creating a nurturing environment for OA to research publications and to research data, in which OA activities are properly recognised;
* By incentivising researchers to publish in OA, including compliance measures with institutional, national and/or European policies.

1. **Mobilisation of researchers**

Furthermore, achieving full OA requires the mobilisation of researchers’ communities at large. This should be based on novel models for research and career assessment. It needs to include robust incentive systems and it is necessary to ensure a quick transition and take-up of OA across disciplines.

1. **Evaluation system**

In researchers’ assessment, metrics (e.g. number of publications, journal impact factors) should not replace a meaningful, qualitative, evaluation of an individual’s work. In the transition for an open publishing system, researchers should get appropriate recognition for their open access and open science practices. This recognition should be reflected in both the evaluation of research funding proposals and research outcomes. In addition, activities such as reviewing, evaluating, curating and managing research data, as well as sharing data and developing open resources, should be explicitly and directly rewarded in the framework of researchers’ evaluation. Universities are committed to safeguarding the career possibilities of researchers in an open publishing system.

1. **Human resources**

A policy on open access to research outcomes must enable the career of researchers. The development of an active policy favourable to open access to research outcomes requires an increase in the competences at both university and country levels:

* In negotiations
* In legal matters (copyright, data property)
* In the management of platforms (access, security, application development)
* In the management of research data
* In training researchers, students and university staff in general

1. **Research Data**

* Establish an institutional policy for the management of research data (validation, conservation, availability).
* Develop clear guidelines and tools for the management, curation of data and metadata.
* Develop institutional capacity in research data management (e.g. improving technical and legal knowledge, developing skills in data management and in TDM)
* Provide legal advice, training and incentives for researchers to deposit their data.
* Provide training and incentives for researchers to develop TDM

1. **Negotiations of ‘big deals’ with publishers**

* During the transition to a full OA system, combine negotiations of subscriptions and APC-related costs. The APC costs should not only refer to hybrid journals, but to all the APC-related costs at institutional or national level.
* It is necessary to obtain a non-restricted usage of journals during and after the contract period and, eventually, the possibility to transfer copies to a national platform. This is particularly needed in case of a subsequent contract breach, takeover or bankruptcy of a publisher. Without these clauses, all previous investment could be lost.
* The ability to perform TDM, using own algorithms, should be guaranteed for all the articles bought, i.e. without being restricted to the use of algorithms provided by publishers, namely APIs (*Application Programming Interface*). Open licenses should, therefore, be actively negotiated.

**Background**

The European University Association (EUA) has been monitoring developments in the area of Open Access since 2007. In early 2015, the EUA Council, which is comprised of the President, the members of the Board, and of the presidents of all of Europe’s National Rectors’ Conferences (NRCs), set up an Expert Group on Science 2.0/Open Science, composed of experts designated by the NRCs. The work of the Expert Group is grounded in EUA’s previous activities, namely the [recommendations on Open Access](http://www.eua.be/Libraries/research/Recommendations_Open_Access_adopted_by_the_EUA_Council_on_26th_of_March_2008_final_1.pdf?sfvrsn=0) (2008), the Task Force on Open Access (2012), the [briefing paper on Open Access to research publications](http://www.eua.be/Libraries/publication/OA_Briefing_Paper_Final.pdf?sfvrsn=2) (2014), [EUA’s Open Access checklist for universities](http://www.eua.be/Libraries/publications-homepage-list/Open_access_report_v3.pdf?sfvrsn=4) (2015) and the annual Open Access survey (since 2014).

The Expert Group focuses on a broad range of issues related to Open Science, such as, Open Access to research publications and data, research infrastructures, researcher assessment and career development, quality of publications, text and data mining (TDM), copyright, data protection and peer-review. Its work is guided by [EUA’s Roadmap on Open Access to Research Publications](http://eua.be/Libraries/publications-homepage-list/eua-roadmap-on-open-access-to-research-publications) and its past activities included, amongst others, a [statement on the copyright framework](http://eua.be/Libraries/publications-homepage-list/eua-statement-on-copyright-framework) of the European Commission (EC) in February 2016, supporting the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment ([DORA](http://www.ascb.org/dora/)) and a [response](http://eua.be/Libraries/publications-homepage-list/updated-eua-response-to-the-european-commission-proposal-for-a-directive-on-copyright-in-the-digital-single-market.pdf) to the EC proposal for a copyright directive in February 2017. The present set of recommendations for OA in 2020 was developed by the Expert Group and validated by the EUA Council.