

Joint Statement on Open Access for Researchers via Plan S

[Plan S](#) calls for all scientific publications on the results of research funded by national and European research councils and funding bodies to be published in compliant [Open Access](#) journals or on compliant Open Access platforms by 01 January 2020. The plan was initiated by the Open Access Envoy of the European Commission and Science Europe and will be implemented by cOAlition S. The coalition currently includes [11 national funders](#) and is supported by the European Commission and European Research Council. Plan S consists of [10 principles](#) to be enacted by coalition members. We, representatives of early-career and senior researchers in Europe, commend cOAlition S for taking this bold and ambitious step towards Open Access and offer our support as well as comments on implementing Plan S.

(1) We agree that authors should retain **copyright** on their publications with no restrictions and that all publications should be under an open licence. Publication copyrights should under no circumstances be transferred to publishers. We encourage research performing organisations (RPOs) and research funding organisations (RFOs) to advise using [Creative Commons](#) licences for publications and preferably Attribution CC-BY to researchers. We also encourage publishers to abandon requesting researchers to transfer their copyrights.

(2) We agree that any publication **fees** for Open Access should be covered by RPOs or RFOs and not by individual researchers. It should never be the case that researchers themselves need to pay for publishing their research. We encourage RPOs and RFOs to allocate a standard budget per contracted researcher per year or per funded project for publishing in Open Access. We also encourage publishers to be more transparent with publication fees and to disclose the full breakdown of costs for fees charged for publications in Open Access.

(3) We agree that a funding **cap** should be set on publication fees for Open Access to reduce unnecessary high spending of public funds for access to research. We note that Plan S does not set a specific cap and it is unclear what consequences a cap could have on the scholarly publishing ecosystem. A realistic cap is needed which neither severely restricts publishing options for researchers nor allows exorbitant publication fees but which also ensures high quality processing of publications and the transition by publishers to Open Access. We encourage RPOs and RFOs to set and monitor a reasonable and standard cap on publication fees for Open Access which is based on a realistic and transparent model of publication fees.

(4) We agree with **immediate** Open Access and that there should be no embargo periods on publications. We note a lack of explicit reference to the role of ‘green’ publishing and the relation between green and ‘gold’ publishing in Plan S. We understand that the green route in Plan S refers to self-archiving a final version of a publication without an embargo period whereby the author retains copyright under an open licence. We believe that such a green route is a viable and sustainable alternative to the fee-based gold route and could play a key role in the shift to immediate Open Access. We encourage RPOs and RFOs not to focus solely on the gold route but to adopt an ‘always green optionally gold’ publishing policy. We also encourage publishers to offer a green route option for publications as per criteria in Plan S.

(5) We agree that a funding boycott on ‘**hybrid**’ publishing is needed to ensure full Open Access and to stop any ‘double-dipping’ of subscription and publication fees for the same publications in hybrid venues. We understand that hybrid publishing was only intended to

be a temporary model to help subscription publishers transition to Open Access and which should be phased out of scholarly publishing. We are concerned that a funding boycott on hybrid publishing could again severely restrict publishing options for researchers. We encourage RPOs and RFOs to engage and support publishers in shifting to full Open Access. We also encourage publishers to abandon hybrid models and to switch to full Open Access.

(6) We note a lack of explicit reference to publishing models with **no author-facing fees** for Open Access in Plan S. The majority of Open Access venues do not charge authors fees and we believe that such routes are crucial to ensure equal ability to publish in Open Access. This is highly important for researchers with limited or no funding and where green route options are limited. We encourage RPOs and RFOs to inform researchers of all available publishing options and to support publishing in Open Access with no author-facing fees.

(7) We agree that **books** should be included in plans for Open Access. We understand that it could be more difficult to achieve books in Open Access by 01 January 2020 but believe that the goals should apply equally for journals and books in Plan S. We note a lack of explicit reference to doctoral dissertations and are concerned that overly stringent criteria for Open Access could negatively impact doctoral defences. We encourage RPOs and RFOs to put an extra focus on books and to set fair and realistic criteria for doctoral dissertations in Plan S.

(8) We agree that **policies** for Open Access will need to be aligned and monitored to ensure the effective implementation of Plan S by coalition members as well as in collaborations with non-coalition members. We also agree that the research reward system will need to be urgently revised to remove the current emphasis on journal-based indicators as per the [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#). We note that Plan S should not severely disadvantage the impact and career progression of researchers nor adopt overly stringent sanctions on researchers for non-compliance. We further note a lack of explicit reference to training researchers in Open Science in Plan S. We encourage RPOs and RFOs to set fair and realistic sanctions for non-compliance as well as to fully train and support researchers in Open Science and include Open Science in research and career evaluations. A transparent midterm and final evaluation will be crucial for assessing the success of Plan S.

(9) We agree that **platforms** for publishing in Open Access will need to be established and supported whereby robust criteria for platform services will need to be defined. We note a lack of explicit reference to open infrastructure for such platforms and open peer review in Plan S. We also note a lack of explicit reference to innovative and disruptive platforms as well as to the relation of Plan S to the [European Open Science Cloud \(EOSC\)](#). We encourage RPOs and RFOs to support open and innovative platforms for Open Access which are run on open software under open standards and which incorporate a form of open peer review. These platforms could be integrated into EOSC to create a European hub for Open Access.

(10) We lastly note a lack of explicit reference to **data** and **code** in Plan S. The protocols for data management and for access to the data and code behind a publication are crucial for validating and reproducing research results. We encourage RPOs and RFOs to support the management and open publishing of research data and code according to [FAIR principles](#) in Plan S and to make equally ambitious plans to achieve FAIR Data and Open Source in future.

Signed by Gareth O'Neill [President [European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers \(Eurodoc\)](#)], Matthew DiFranco [Chair [Marie Curie Alumni Association \(MCAA\)](#)], and Marcel Swart [Chair [Young Academy of Europe \(YAE\)](#)] on 24 September 2018.

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