

Statement of ChemPubSoc Europe on Plan S

ChemPubSoc Europe, the publishing body of 16 European chemical societies, is committed to promoting scientific publications and information distribution systems. They therefore support all activities that serve this purpose, in particular Open Access, which provides readers with free access to the digital content of publications, including extended usage and sharing options. Some of the ChemPubSoc Europe societies have made public their positive attitude to Open Access publishing on condition that all such activities serve science in general, do not restrict authors and are based on resilient and sustainable business models.

On 4 September 2018, eleven European research funding organizations (cOAlition S) published Plan S, which defines in ten principles the framework for the transition by 2020 to open access for the research results funded by these organizations.

ChemPubSoc Europe supports the fundamental intention of Plan S and explicitly welcomes some of the principles formulated. However, it sees a need for clarification and is seriously concerned that some of the key issues will have significant adverse effect on the researchers involved and on Europe as a centre for innovative research.

(i) ChemPubSoc Europe endorses the intention of the research funding bodies to support the creation of high-quality open access channels, in those scientific disciplines where there still are no adequate platforms and infrastructures. See principle 3.

(ii) Both the statement that open access publication fees will be borne by the funders or the scientific institutions and not by the individual researchers and the explicit confirmation that all researchers must be able to publish their research results in Open Access publications, even if their institutions have only limited resources address a longstanding concern and are highly welcomed.

However, Plan S does not specify how this should actually be ensured. See Principle 4.

(iii) Chemical societies from Europe and America recently set up the preprint server ChemRxiv. On this platform manuscripts can be made publicly available as preprints before submission to regular journals. There are no costs for the author or the reader. ChemRxiv is financed by the participating societies and other partners. Plan S explicitly states that preprint servers are not sufficient to be compliant. ChemPubSoc Europe greatly regrets this exclusion. See principle 8.

(iv) The stipulation that hybrid journals (subscription journals in which authors can pay the open access publication fee) are not compatible with the Plan S principles is considered particularly critical by ChemPubSoc Europe. About 85% of all journals, including all those renowned and strictly peer reviewed journals in chemistry which are published by nonprofit societies, such as Chemistry A European Journal, Angewandte Chemie, the Journal of the American Chemical Society, and Chemical Communications, RSC, are affected by this and are no longer available for authors bound to Plan S. This will have serious negative effects on authors, readers and the affected societies. See Principle 9.

(v) Standardization and capping of open access publishing fees will inevitably result in great economic pressure on high-quality and selective journals, whose costs per published article are necessarily higher because of their high rejection rates. In the field of chemistry, this also applies first and foremost to the journals published by chemical societies. Journals of average or even lower quality are favored by this business model and the number of so-called predatory journals will increase to the detriment of science. See Principle 5.

(vi) From a current perspective, broad international approval and participation in Plan S, especially from the research-intensive regions is not expected. The impact on the scientists concerned, or the consequences and risks for Europe as a centre for innovative research, if large parts of the global research enterprise do not participate in Plan S, are not addressed.

(vii) We as ChemPubSoc Europe explicitly express our commitment to the freedom of researchers and explicitly reject mandates that oblige scientists to publish in open access journals. The exclusion of hybrid journals formulated in Plan S, the obligation to publish the work under a most liberal open license, preferably CC-BY, and the threatened sanctioning of non-compliance are major interferences with the freedom of the researcher to whom ChemPubSoc Europe cannot agree. See principles 1, 9 and 10.

ChemPubSoc Europe appeals to Plan S supporters to incorporate its concerns and those of more than 70,000 members of the chemical societies forming ChemPubSoc Europe into future considerations and implementation plans. The legitimate aim of making scientific results freely accessible to all must not be thwarted by unintended, science-damaging consequences.

ChemPubSoc Europe is the partnership of 16 European chemical societies with ca. 70 000 members that publishes 15 high-quality journals (hybrid or gold Open Access) and its open magazine ChemViews on ChemistryViews. It both benefits the chemical societies financially and assists in all publishing matters, thus supporting their aim to facilitate the dissemination of chemical knowledge within their (European) countries and worldwide.

Written by the undersigned Learned Chemical Societies of continental Europe:

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- **Koninklijke Vlaamse Chemische Vereniging and**
- **Société Royale de Chimie, both represented by Comité van Beheer van het Bulletin des Sociétés Chimiques Belges, Vakgroep Analytische Chemie R.U.G., Krijgslaan 281, S-12, 9000 Gent, Belgium**
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