

From Academia Europaea

A response to a consultation made by the EASSH to a call from the European Commission:

„Stakeholder consultation on the future of scholarly publishing and scholarly communication”

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The members of the Academia Europaea Section of Classes A1 (Humanities) and A2 (Social and Societal sciences) would make the following comments in relation to the proposed policy paper.

The Academia Europaea response is in line with our mission. Which is:

The advancement and propagation of excellence in scholarship in the humanities, law, the economic, social, and political sciences, mathematics, medicine, and all branches of natural and technological sciences anywhere in the world for the public benefit and for the advancement of the education of the public of all ages in the aforesaid subjects in Europe.

The AE shall work for:

The promotion of excellence in research throughout Europe and elsewhere into the aforesaid subjects, and the dissemination throughout Europe and elsewhere of the useful results of such research.

To promote the development of a European identity in scholarship and research, to conduct analyses of issues relevant to Europe and to act as a 'European centre' for scholars.

To encourage interdisciplinary and international studies and research with particular reference to European issues.

To provide independent advice on matters of scholarly interest or concern to legislatures, governments, universities, the communications media, and to professional, industrial and commercial organisations in Europe.

To encourage and assist collaboration between scholars and centres of scholarship in Europe and to promote collaboration in education and training;

To arrange or participate in the arranging of conferences, congresses, exhibitions, meetings, lectures, seminars, and training courses as the Academy shall decide.

In the context of the report: The Academia Europaea wishes to congratulate the panel, and the authors of the report in particular, for the thorough work and the holistic approach taken to the issue of publishing, including all stakeholders under one umbrella [researchers and users, publishers and publication channels, policy makers, and new media agents]. This makes the report a useful tool for research institutions to set up a strategy, and also for policy makers to make national policies to support scholarly publishing.



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The quality and the recognition of scholarly publication is of relevance far beyond the research community and publishing industry itself. There is a growing skepticism in the general public and amongst groupings of politicians in certain parts of the world, toward the importance of science for policy making (vaccine rejection, creationism, climate change denial etc.). It is therefore crucial for social development, that official politics (and policy) both supports scholarly publishing in various way and stresses the value in the use of the results and the knowledge of the researchers for future oriented politics.

We would recommend that the report as it stands, is followed by an EU appeal to member states to make concrete policies in concrete areas to change the dangerous denigration of science which is emerging in Europe and elsewhere.

We wish to highlight three specific points that are of particular interest for individual researchers, who form the membership of AE:

1) We recommend that the use of citation indices and metrics is abandoned or strongly reduced, and that it becomes the official policy of the EU member states never to allow that a metric criterion becomes the decisive criterion in any competitive situation (appointments, awards, grants, funding etc.).

2) We also recommend that a principle to put the researcher as the key party responsible in all scholarly publication, is adopted as a core principle for all EU member (and associated) states. This is to try to avoid that institutions or companies that may have funded or defined the research project in question, also have influence in the process and the results. Moreover, we recommend that it becomes a principle in all EU member states to give researchers the right to publish their results, free from external influence.

Freedom and transparency of research on all levels, from conceptualization to publishing is essential.

3) A particular point of interest is open access. The AE is pleased to endorse the nuanced reflections made by EuroScience in their appraisal of the European Commissions Plan S proposals. These reflections do represent a constructive starting point for a rationalised discussion of all interested stakeholders. However, the AE does strongly urge all engaged parties to actively seek ways to ensure that the specialised Learned Societies' sensitive positions are protected and that any systems are flexible and responsive to diversity of provider and provision. These organisations have a critical philanthropic role in the research landscape, and their curation of fields and disciplines has played a major part in the formation of, and sustained and distinguished position of the European research and scholarly landscape for a substantial time. Any future developments in open access publishing must take full account of the learned Society's position in our collective research ecosystem and seek to maintain their operational model and viability.

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