

PRESS RELEASE
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The academic world urges publishers to enter a brave new world

Today, 27 January 2016, Prof Alain Beretz and Prof Kurt Deketelaere, Chair and Secretary-General of LERU (League of European Research Universities), presented the signatures to the LERU Statement on Open Access to Commissioner Carlos Moedas and Dutch Secretary of State Sander Dekker. At the end of the meeting of the informal Competitiveness Council in Amsterdam, almost 10,000 signatures* (from individuals and institutions) were handed over, calling upon the policy makers for clear initiatives to guide the development of the Green and Gold routes to Open Access (OA).

Nowadays, European universities pay publishers significant parts of their university budget. Hundreds of millions of euros. Money which is not directly spent on research and education, even though it is largely taxpayers' money. As Harvard University already [denounced in 2012](#), many large journal publishers have rendered the situation "fiscally unsustainable and academically restrictive", with some journals costing as much as \$40,000 per year (and publishers drawing profits of 35% or more). If one of the wealthiest universities in the world can no longer afford it, who can? It is easy to picture the struggle of European universities with tighter budgets. In addition to subscription costs, academic research funding is also severely affected by "Article Processing Charges" (APC), which come at an additional cost of €2000/article, on average, when making individual articles Gold Open Access. As a result, some publishers even get paid twice for the same content ("double dipping").

In the era of Open Science, Open Access to publications is one of the cornerstones of the new research paradigm and business models must support this transition. It should be one of the principal objectives of policy makers to ensure that this transition happens. Further developing the EU's leadership in research and innovation largely depends on it. Therefore, LERU launched on 12 October 2015 a campaign on Open Access, under the title: "Christmas is over". With the statement "[Moving Forwards on Open Access](#)", LERU called upon all universities, research institutes, research funders and researchers to sign this statement and give a clear signal towards the European Commission and the Dutch Presidency of the Council of the European Union. [Carlos Moedas and Sander Dekker immediately reacted in a positive way](#) to this campaign and statement.

For Green OA, the Statement calls for embargo periods to be as short as possible; embargo periods should be the same for the same journal across the globe; and embargo periods should be set according the requirements of the research funder, not the publisher. For Gold OA, the Statement calls for the payment of Article Processing Charges (APCs) in hybrid journals to be offset against subscription payments - so that universities do not pay twice for the same content. As part of such deals, all researchers at the subscribing institutions should be able to publish in Gold OA at no extra charge.

Researchers worldwide, not only from the 21 LERU universities but from many other institutions, have signed the Statement, which represents a sea change in the transition from traditional subscription models to an Open Access future. This future is founded in Open Access swiftly becoming the default way in which research findings are shared and made available to as wide an audience as possible. The inability to pay subscription costs is a barrier to access of information and knowledge. The LERU OA Statement recognises this by calling for a fundamental move to OA publishing backed by a business model which is forward-looking and sustainable.

*9,337 signatures (more than 200 of which are coming from universities and research organisations) on 21 January 2016. For the current situation, please visit <http://www.leru.org/index.php/public/extra/signtheLERUstatement/>.

“A move to OA publishing is part of a bigger transition to Open Science, a flagship of Commissioner Moedas and the Dutch Presidency in the first half of 2016”, said Professor Kurt Deketelaere, Secretary-General of LERU. “It is generally acknowledged that there is a citation advantage for the author when material appears as Open Access. OA will also help universities contribute to the grand challenges which face society - disease, poverty, migration, global warming - by making all our knowledge available to everyone, thus speeding the development of cures and solutions”.

“European research is influential across the globe”, said Professor Alain Beretz, President of the University of Strasbourg and Chair of LERU. “A fundamental shift to OA in the current publishing market, which is what the LERU Statement calls for, is essential to maintain Europe’s (worldwide) impact and competitiveness”.

The time for action is now. The large number of signatories to the LERU Statement shows that issues around OA have touched an academic nerve. Researchers are looking for a change in publishing models which recognises the sea change which Open Access represents.

LERU calls on Secretary of State Sander Dekker to facilitate with the Dutch Presidency, and with the support of the European Commission, round-table talks between all stakeholders to realise the vision laid out in the LERU Statement on OA. This vision will transform research and help transition society to open forms of sharing and communication for the common good.

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About LERU

The League of European Research Universities (LERU) is an association of twenty-one leading research-intensive universities that share the values of high-quality teaching within an environment of internationally competitive research.

Founded in 2002, LERU advocates education through an awareness of the frontiers of human understanding; the creation of new knowledge through basic research, which is the ultimate source of innovation in society; and the promotion of research across a broad front in partnership with industry and society at large.

The purpose of the League is to advocate these values, to influence policy in Europe and to develop best practice through mutual exchange of experience. LERU regularly publishes a variety of papers and reports which make high-level policy statements, provide in-depth analyses and make concrete recommendations for policymakers, universities, researchers and other stakeholders.

The LERU universities are:

- University of Amsterdam
- Universitat de Barcelona
- University of Cambridge
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Freiburg
- Université de Genève
- Universität Heidelberg
- University of Helsinki
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- Lund University
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