



STATEMENT | 4 September 2018

'Plan S' and 'cOAlition S' – Accelerating the transition to full and immediate Open Access to scientific publications

With the increasing pace of scientific discovery and growing public demand for reliable information, there has never been a greater need for immediate, universal, access to the latest research findings. But with many scientific journals behind paywalls not everyone can get hold of this knowledge. 'Knowledge is power' and I firmly believe that free access to all scientific publications from publicly funded research is a moral right of citizens. Two years ago, on 27 May 2016, all Member States of the European Union committed to achieve this goal by 2020. It is one of the most important political commitments on science of recent times and puts Europe at the forefront of the global transition to open science.

Today – with the launch of 'Plan S' and 'cOAlition S' – a coalition of national research funders, with the support of the European Commission - have committed to accelerate this transition to open access. I very much welcome and support this initiative, which was developed under the auspices of Science Europe and with the support of the Commission's open access envoy, Robert-Jan Smits, and contributions from the ERC Scientific Council. The majority of public funding for research in Europe is controlled at Member State level, and so it is only through a concerted and coordinated approach across national funders that the necessary progress can be made. I congratulate those national funding bodies who have already committed to Plan S and strongly encourage others to follow as soon as possible.

Faster progress is badly needed. Large numbers of scientific articles continue to be published in journals that are only accessible to those able and willing to pay subscription fees. Various barriers – from costs, to research training, to the way we evaluate research outputs – still need to be addressed. I therefore encourage the funding organisations to put the principles of Plan S into practice.

Some of the principles set out in Plan S are already present in Horizon 2020, where all projects are obliged to provide open access to publications. The Commission is taking steps to ensure this obligation is met, both through providing guidance and support, and when necessary we will apply reductions to grant payments. Through the Open Science Policy Platform, we are working with stakeholders to understand and overcome the range of barriers.

Further actions will be needed under the future Horizon Europe programme to complete the transition to Open Access in line with Plan S, and I would urge the European Parliament and

Council to support this approach. And as we start preparing for the implementation of Horizon Europe, the Commission will be working in a concerted effort with national funders to ensure a consistent European approach.

Europe has made a political commitment to open access. Now is the time for us to act collectively to make this a reality.

[ERC Scientific Council joins new effort to push for full open access](#)