



Working together to promote open access policy alignment in Eastern Europe

**Library and Information Centre, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, Hungary
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Over 50 research funders and representatives of research performing organizations from 15 countries (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Myanmar, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and the UK) have met in Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Budapest) on October 29-30, 2015 to revisit the Horizon 2020 Open Access (OA) mandate, examine OA policy developments in Europe, and learn from the best practices in OA policy development and implementation at the national, funder and institutional levels. They have also discussed the importance of aligning national OA policies with the Horizon 2020 OA mandate.

All conference presentations are available here: <http://openaccess.mtak.hu/en/meeting-presentations>.

And as a result of the meeting research funders and research performing organizations in Eastern Europe were empowered to develop/fine-tune their OA policies aligned with the Horizon 2020 OA policy. OA policy developments in most of these countries are still in the early stages and the workshops created a good opportunity to catch up quickly with other EU countries, where OA policies are already a new norm in scholarly communication.

Some highlights from the Eastern European workshop presentations (in alphabetical order by the names of the countries)

László Lovász, the President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, opened the workshop reminding that the term “open access” was coined in Budapest in 2002 ([Budapest Open Access Initiative](#)) and called for a collective action of researchers, publishers and libraries to move on with OA policies development.

Croatia

Rectors Council has issued new recommendations strongly promoting OA and open science and suggesting a new look at research evaluation in the country – Jadranka Stojanovski, Rudjer Boskovic Institute and National Point of Reference (NPR) for OA in Croatia. An overview of OA infrastructure in Croatia is [here](#).

OA mandate at Ruđer Bošković Institute – Bojan Macan ([Slides](#)): On April 14th, 2015 the first

institutional OA mandate in Croatia has been adopted at the Ruđer Bošković Institute (the largest Croatian research institute):

- OA self-archiving mandate in Full-text Institutional Repository of the Ruđer Bošković Institute – FULIR (<http://fulir.irb.hr/>) that currently has >1,500 records with full-text (89% OA) and is OpenAIRE compatible (the first in Croatia), contains citation data from the Web of Science Core Collection, Scopus and InSPIRE-HEP and altmetric scores from Altmetric.com as well as usage statistics.
- It's mandatory to deposit the following digital copies of publications into the FULIR: journal articles and conference proceedings, book chapters, monographs and other book types, thesis, presentations and posters, learning materials, technical and other reports (accepted manuscripts or published versions) and OA should be ensured according to publishers' policies; the policy encourages authors to retain certain rights (using Author Addendum); deposition is required at the moment of acceptance for publishing and/or presentation date and there is a possibility for opting-out

Before the OA mandate has been introduced, 31% of researchers' journal articles were OA (in Croatia as a whole this figure was 44%).

Current challenges of the OA mandate implementation:

1. How to ensure researcher's compliance with the mandate? Some approaches: increasing awareness about benefits of OA; training and education of research staff; carrots and sticks methods: rewards for scientists/departments; promotion of researchers/research groups with the most OA records; only articles deposited in FULIR should be considered for internal research evaluation procedures.
2. Copyright issues: versions of publications to be archived into FULIR; importance of retaining certain rights: Copyright Transfer Agreements, Author Addendum and Creative Commons license.
3. Moving towards open research data: raise awareness among researchers; build infrastructure; provide support.

Czech Republic

OA policy at the Czech Academy of Sciences (CAS) – Martin Lhoták ([Slides](#)): The OA policy has been adopted in 2010 and requires deposit in the repository and make the best effort to provide OA via CAS OpenAIRE compatible repository. Currently 44% articles of CAS researchers are OA (published in 2012-2015).

CAS repository has been used in research assessment and evaluation exercise that covers a five year period – currently 2010-2014 and includes evaluation of selected research outputs (articles and books). CAS repository provides publications to referees.

Estonia

Support from the government and national Open Science consultation – Martin Eessalu, Ministry of Education and Research, Republic of Estonia ([Slides](#)): "OA should be made a prerequisite for research using public funding and OA policies should be aligned in EU," is the position of the government of Estonia. "Open Data developments are to be supported, but the investments in infrastructure have to

be weighed, and Open Data has to have clear added value. But OA should not be taken into account in career evaluation.”

Research, Development and Innovation strategy ‘Knowledge-based Estonia 2014-2020’ encourages OA to public-funded research results and research data /.../ and ensures access to the most important research databases.” For personal and institutional research funding: self-archiving is mandatory (Green OA), but article processing charges (APC) are also eligible costs.

Most scholarly journals in Estonia are OA and all Estonia Academy of Sciences journals are OA. These journals are subsidized by the government, not a single journal charges APCs.

There is no OA national policy document, but there is a layer of openness going through the R&D system. Estonian Research Council has issued draft OA policy recommendations, work in progress. And public consultations on Open Science Recommendations have been launched: <http://www.etag.ee/teadusagentuur/olulised-teemad-ja-dokumendid/avatud-teadus/> (English version is forthcoming).

Flexibility is one of the good practice recommendations: the researcher chooses the way of dissemination (gold or green). And in research assessment/evaluation the Journal Impact Factor is not taken into account.

Hungary

OA mandate at Magyar Tudományos Akadémia (MTA)/Hungarian Academy of Sciences – Gábor Makara, Sándor Soós, András Holl, MTA ([Slides](#)): OA mandate at Magyar Tudományos Akadémia (MTA)/Hungarian Academy of Sciences is the oldest and still the most efficient and the strongest OA mandate in the region with about 60% compliance rate in 2014.

MTA OA mandate (effective since January 1st, 2013) features:

- Deposit mandate for postprints or publishers PDFs in REAL (Repository of the Academy's Library), embargo possible, monitoring is a part of the OA policy;
- Support efforts: advocacy and helpdesk;
- Proposed amendment: longer embargoes for HSS (Hungarian language market is small!), waivers by the directors of institutes and research centres, CC BY NC ND license.

MTA OA policy for journal and book publishing grants:

- OA for journals: mandatory archiving either article by article or for the whole issue, OA with embargo possible – 1 / 2 years or 2 / 3 years;
- OA for books: deposit mandate with long embargoes (closed access is also possible).

Other national OA mandates in the country: Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA) mandate and state mandate for PhD theses. An overview of the OA policy landscape in Hungary is available in PASTEUR4OA [case study](#) and 2015 updates to MTA mandate are described [here](#).

Latvia

Open Science Agenda – Iveta Gudakovska, University of Latvia and NPR for Latvia: The Latvian EU Presidency in 2015 was a good impulse for the Ministry of Education and Science to start thinking

about OA policy and strategy. Policy debates in March 2015 (when EU Member States research ministers renewed Digital Single Market Strategy) resulted into the COMPET Council May conclusions “Towards open and data intensive research as a driver for faster and wider innovation” emphasising a strong support from many EU Member States to the idea of developing a European Open Science Agenda. The ministers highlighted the relation between Open Science and the Digital Single Market and called to reaffirm the broad political support from EU Member States for setting better framework conditions for data-driven research-based innovations. And the Council stressed the need to foster cooperation along the whole data value chain in Europe. The ministers have also recognized a need for further reflection on the current science metrics and incentives for researchers to publish in OA and noted the need to promote innovation driven by Text and Data Mining. They also welcomed the development of the European Science Cloud, and highlighted the importance of open standards, especially in the global research data exchange. Ministers underlined the importance of appropriate e-infrastructure and better coordination. The Council conclusions “Open, data-intensive and networked research as a driver for faster and wider innovation” have been adopted at the Conference OPENING UP TO AN ERA OF INNOVATION BRUSSELS on 22-23 June, 2015.

OA mandate at Riga Technical University (RTU) – Daina Ostrovskā ([Slides](#)): RTU OA policy has been ratified by the Vice-Rector for Research on 10 December, 2012 and requires that RTU researchers deposit their research articles published in peer reviewed journals, conference proceedings and books in the RTU Publication Register ORTUS as soon as possible after they have been published and, where copyright allows, made them publicly available at the RTU OA Repository (complying with publishers embargoes).

RTU uses its Research Information Management System <http://science.rtu.lv> (CERIF compliant, integrated with SCOPUS and ORCID) as an OA repository. Currently it includes 17,022 publications (4,391 are OA), 366 doctoral thesis (138 are OA), 457 patents and 10 commercialization proposals.

RTU also maintains an Open Journal Systems platform that hosts 12 OA journals and four conference proceedings with DOIs and authentication with ORCID.

Lithuania

The Lithuanian Research Council (RCL) OA policy discussions – Rūta Petrauskaitė, RCL ([Slides](#)): RCL is still drafting its OA and Open Research Data Policy and used this meeting as an opportunity to discuss the drafts with the audience: Green OA will be mandatory with 6/12 months embargo periods (sciences/social sciences and humanities) and support will be provided for Gold OA. Legal aspects of re-use and licensing will be addressed as well: search for and re-use of the content of published papers both manually and using automated tools (such as those for text and data mining) provided that any such re-use is subject to full and proper attribution and does not infringe any copyrights to third-party material included in the paper. RCL will require data management plans with strategies/policies for the long-term curation and preservation.

Planned approaches to compliance and monitoring: a certain degree of flexibility in OA policy implementation will be allowed (the length of embargo periods during transition, negotiations with publishers, waiving of OA requirement in some special cases). Evidence-based review of the implementation is planned and there will be subsequent periodical reviews. The RCL has the right to withhold funding if OA policy is ignored.

The policy will be mandatory for RCL, but all researchers and their institutions in the country, regardless of the source of their funding support, will be encouraged to adhere to this policy. RCL maintains a national website on OA: http://www.lmt.lt/lt/atviroji_prieiga.html (in Lithuanian language).

Poland

Recommendations on OA and open data – Ewa Majdecka, Centrum Cyfrowe: The Ministry of Science and Education released OA and open data recommendations ([Kierunki rozwoju otwartego dostępu do publikacji i wyników badań naukowych w Polsce](#)) on October 26, 2015 encouraging universities and research organizations to develop their OA and open data policies.

As a result of FOSTER co-funded training, National Science Centre (one of major research funding agencies in Poland) included mandatory OA into one of its funding programmes.

Romania

OA as a part of Open Government Partnership (OGP) National Action Plan – Nicolaie Constantinescu, Kosson: The National Action Plan for OGP together with the National Strategy for Research, Development and Innovation created a framework for OA policy developments. See a [blog post](#) about the National Strategy's priorities to ensure and sustain OA to research results. The case for OA in the country has been presented using good practice examples from open public sector information and open data.

Slovakia

OA and Open Research Data as a part of OGP initiative – Lubomir Bilsky, Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information ([Slides](#)): OGP Action Plan 2012-2013 had a focus on Open Data and the Open Data Portal has been launched. In 2015, new areas – Open Education and OA to the results of scientific research have been included into the National Action Plan prepared by the Office of the Plenipotentiary for the Development of the Civil Society (more details are [here](#)).

Current activities:

- Mapping of existing OA repositories, evaluating conditions for creation of centralised, nationwide OA repository;
- Identification of barriers to full OA implementation in Slovakia;
- Making major Slovak publications (full texts) recorded in the central registries freely accessible to the public;
- Propose a mechanism for voluntary publication of data related to scientific publications as Open Data;
- Raising awareness on OA benefits to researchers and society;
- Formulation of OA strategy in Slovakia, using experiences of other European countries.
- Slovak Centre of Scientific & Technical Information negotiates OA conditions as a part of subscription negotiations.

Slovenia

A national strategy of OA to scientific publications and research data – Urban Krajcar, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Slovenia ([Slides](#)): [A national strategy of OA to scientific publications and research data in Slovenia 2015-2020](#) has been adopted by the government in September 2015 as a

result of the following strategy development process:

- Nomination of a NPR in 2013 (requirement in EC Recommendation of 17. 7. 2012 on access to and preservation of scientific information).
- Nomination of OA working group (composed of different stakeholders) in 2014.
- The first draft of the Strategy released in May 2015.
- Public consultation (report on the public consultation produced).
- Consultation with all the ministries.
- Adoption of the Strategy in September 2015.

A national strategy is fully aligned with the EC's OA policy in Horizon 2020: publicly funded research beneficiaries must ensure OA to all peer-reviewed scientific publications. The national strategy proposes that 80% of scientific publications resulting from publicly funded research and published in 2017 become OA by 2018. All publicly funded scientific publications, published in 2020, become openly accessible in 2021. A national pilot programme on OA to research data will be carried out and research data presented in research articles must also become openly available. Journal publishers based in Slovenia that receive national public funding for their activities have to make their research articles openly accessible. More details about this are [here](#).

Next steps: further promoting of importance of OA (conferences, workshops); integration into Act on Research and Development Activities; and developing an Action plan (with all measures, responsible entities and deadlines).

Slovenian Research Agency has a mandate that e-versions of publicly co-financed printed Slovenian subscription journals and the final reports of research projects should be deposited in the Digital Library of Slovenia.

Other topics/issues that have arisen from the workshop discussions:

- How to manage the transition from the current publishing system to OA publishing – one of the challenges for OA policy development;
- With the national level initiatives how to make sure that universities participate? And sometimes it's difficult to coordinate national stakeholders, they are afraid of losing their uniqueness in OA;
- How do you start when there is no OA infrastructure: with national OA policies first and then build an infrastructure or with the infrastructure first and then adopt OA policies? It was agreed that it's better to start with OA policies and use shared repository services;
- Open research data – recommendations or requirement, what type of data, where to deposit, for how long should the data be preserved, etc.? It's important to have a clear policy that will be easy to comply with.
- Open Science policy developments.
- Scholarly communication costs should be driven down (e.g. APCs), and other OA models (not-APCs) should be more supported.
- Eastern Europe – green model more viable.
- Most of OA policies in the region are very new and it's not possible yet to measure impact.
- More attention should be paid to independent OA journals and perhaps PASTEUR4OA could develop a briefing paper about this.

- OA publishing funds are allocated only to APC based journals, OA journals from Eastern European countries, which are not charging APCs, remain without any support from the European Commission and other national and international funders, although there is this initiative from the OpenAIRE project: [“Not Just APCs”: the FP7 Post-Grant OA Pilot’s alternative APC-equivalent funding mechanism.](#)
- There is a fear that a lack of such support will switch scholarly communications system in Eastern European countries towards APC business model and all possible consequences are still not known.
- We don't have a guarantee that in the future publishers won't be charging a lot for a publication in “prestige” journals.
- Changing research evaluation procedures: Bernard Rentier (Rector Emeritus, Université de Liège) has shared some reflections on the way forward: as long as there are prestigious journals, the freedom of reading and publishing won't exist. Therefore we need to change research evaluation based on journal prestige and evaluate the real quality of researcher's work (evaluating researchers by the Journal Impact Factor is like judging people by the restaurant where they eat and how much money they have). We are still stuck in the publishing system of the XVIII-XIX century, but at least we already know what the problems are and we have the tools and intelligence to change the way we evaluate research, let's do this now. For example, anonymity in peer-review should disappear. In research evaluation figures are a religion (it's crazy and shame); let's change this using the technology we already have. We still think in terms of papers/articles and we need a public platform/system of evolving research works ([Slides](#))
- Wish for the future is that all types of research work in all media, including data are openly available and different metrics tools and visualizations are used for accessing real impact.

All participants gave a positive feedback on overall workshop satisfaction and relevance of the presentations and workshop materials.

Full report that includes other highlights from the workshop programme: OA in Horizon 2020 and the European Commission Recommendations to EU Member States presented by Jean-Francois Dechamp, European Commission; good practice examples from other regions – Austrian Science Fund (FWF) presented by Katharina Rieck; FCT, Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (Portugal) presented by Eloy Rodrigues (University of Minho); and FRS/FNRS Belgium presented by Bernard Rentier (Rector Emeritus, Université de Liège); a report from PASTEUR4OA Southern Europe regional meeting for the research funders; institutional OA policies in Brno University of Technology (Czech Republic) presented by Jan Skupa, Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania) presented by Natalija Popkova, Liege University (Belgium) OA mandate presented by Bernard Rentier, UCL OA mandate (UK) presented by Paul Ayriss, and University of Minho OA mandate (Portugal) presented by Eloy Rodrigues; as well as comments and feedback from the participants are available here.