North West Europe Meetings of Research Performing Organisations and Research Funders

Fondation Universitaire, Brussels, Belgium
9-10 February 2016

Abstract

On 9 and 10 February, the PASTEUR4OA project hosted the North West Europe Meetings of Research Performing Organisations and Research Funders. The meetings were attended by a total of 53 participants representing universities, research institutions and research funders from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and the UK. The meetings also included the participation of representatives from organisations such as EIFL, LIBER, SPARC Europe, EUA, LERU and Science Europe. The two meetings aimed to bring together key stakeholders from the North West region to discuss ideas and practices around Open Access policy development, effectiveness, alignment and monitoring as well as to promote engagement between policymakers on other Open Access policy related issues. This report overviews the aims of the two meetings and outlines, in separate sections, the programme and the key issues discussed at each meeting.

1. Aims and outcomes from the North West Europe Meetings of Research Performing Organisations and Research Funders

The North West Europe Meetings of Research Performing Organisations and Research Funders sought to bring together representatives in the region to facilitate the exchange of ideas and policy practices. In particular, the meeting sought to promote discussions on policy issues that have been subject to PASTEUR4OA's work and research:

- Developing new or improving existent Open Access policies;
- Implementing effective Open Access policies;
- Promoting policy alignment and discussing the implications resultant from the existence of multiple Open Access policies;
- Best practices in monitoring compliance with Open Access policies;
- Engaging policymakers on Open Access through established networks (Knowledge Net).

The main outcomes from the meetings were that, on the one hand, participants have increased their awareness about the work done by PASTEUR4OA and, on the other hand, they were informed about the support structures and resources that are available in PASTEUR4OA to assist them in implementing or revisiting Open Access policies and strategies. The meetings also provided an opportunity for participants to understand and/or re-examine the Open Access policy landscape in the North West region and what challenges (if any) institutions and funders currently face in further advancing their Open Access policies and strategies.

2. Overview of the Meeting of Research Performing Organisations

The North West Meeting of Research Performing Organisations (9 February 2016) brought together 22 participants from institutions such as the Universities of Strasbourg, Liège, Vienna, Gent, Kent, Luxembourg and Trinity College Dublin. It also included participants from organisations such as the European University Association, Helmholtz Association, EIFL, LIBER, SPARC Europe, the German National Library of Economics, and the Belgium Academy of Research and Higher Education.

The agenda for the meeting included presentations on:
- The PASTEUR4OA project:
    - » Victoria Tsoukala presented the project's aims, objectives, activities and outputs (link);
    - » Alma Swan introduced the results of a PASTEUR4OA study on policy effectiveness and discussed ways to develop effective Open Access policies (link).
- The European Commission's Open Access policy in Horizon 2020:
    - » Jean-François Dechamp outlined the conditions of the Horizon 2020 Open Access policy, the Open Research Data (ORD) pilot, and highlighted the European Commission's (EC) next steps for Open Access and Open Science in Horizon 2020 and beyond (link).
- The European University Association (EUA) and Open Access:
    - » Lidia Borrell-Damian presented the preliminary findings from a survey conducted with European universities and introduced the EUA's Roadmap on Open Access to Research Publications (link).
- Open Access policies implementation (case studies):
    - » Bernard Rentier revisited the University of Liège Open Access policy and discussed the factors that have made this policy succeed (link).
    - » Simon Kerridge introduced the UK funders Open Access policies, explained the role these policies play in driving the transition to Open Access in the UK, and overviewed the policy, infrastructure, workflows and reporting structures that are in place at the University of Kent to enable an effective policy implementation (link).
    - » Niamh Brennan discussed the Open Access policy landscape in Ireland (the National Principles for Open Access Policy Statement, the National Open Access Steering Group, Ireland's Open Access Repository Network (RIAN), the Government's Innovation 2020 Strategy) and presented Trinity College Dublin's Open Access policy, infrastructure and workflows. Brennan concluded by highlighting some of the challenges currently faced in driving Open Access in Ireland (link).

The presentations were followed by:
- A work group session where participants discussed four topics that have been at the centre of PASTEUR4OA's work:
    - » Policymakers engagement (via the Knowledge Net) (link);
    - » Policy effectiveness (link);
    - » Policy alignment (link);
    - » Policy compliance and monitoring (link).
- A panel session with invited speakers who provided an overview of Open Access developments in their institutions and/or countries:
    - » The University of Luxembourg Open Access policy by Marie-Pierre Pausch;
    - » The University of Strasbourg Open Access policy in the making by Alain Beretz;
    - » The Open Access policy landscape in Germany by Christoph Bruch.

Presentations and discussions highlights from the Meeting of Research Performing Organisations:

- **PASTEUR4OA's Knowledge Net**: participants expressed an interest in learning more about the network and

in seeing a greater role being played by its members at the policy level.

- **Policy development**: a series of presentations showed best practices in terms of Open Access policy development. For example, in the cases of the Universities of Liège, Luxembourg, Strasbourg, Kent, and Trinity College Dublin.
- **Policy effectiveness**: Alma Swan's presentation highlighted how to develop effective Open Access policies and illustrated which universities (e.g. Minho, Liège) are doing so. Bernard Rentier's presentation demonstrated how linking Open Access to internal evaluation processes results in more research outputs being deposited in institutional repositories (e.g. University of Liège).
- **Monitoring compliance**: participants discussed issues around how to monitor and report on policy compliance. Simon Kerridge's presentation highlighted how this is being done in the UK. There are lessons that can be learned from the case of the UK and which can be replicated in other countries. However, there was an acknowledgement that the existing systems and services still need to be improved and become more interoperable.
- **Policy alignment**: Simon Kerridge's presentation highlighted how complex the Open Access policy landscape can seem for researchers and academic support in some countries (e.g. in the UK, which Simon mainly focused on). This issue shows the importance of Open Access policies becoming increasingly aligned and the challenges faced in observing compliance with distinct policies requirements on criteria such as date of deposit, version of deposit, licences, embargo periods, etc. Niamh Brennan's presentation, on the other hand, showed how in the case of Ireland the Open Access agenda is more aligned at the national, funder and institutional levels, and there is a shared understanding of the benefits and goals across these sectors. In the case of Ireland, alignment between different organisations' Open Access policies will make it easier to monitor compliance. This example raises the question of what lessons can be learned from Ireland and replicated in other countries.
- **Open Research Data**: discussions were held on how institutions are or could implement Open Access policies which apply both to peer-reviewed articles and research data (e.g. the case of the University of Strasbourg's Open Access policy in the making which will include both elements) and considerations were made on the EC's Open Research Data pilot becoming the default for all Horizon 2020 funded programmes in the near future.
- **Evaluation, peer-review and metrics**: Bernard Rentier's presentation highlighted the concerns some stakeholders in the Higher Education sector share about the current evaluation system, the transparency of the peer-review system, and the reliability of bibliometric data. These concerns were also expressed in other presentations and by various participants. There is a clear understanding that alternative metrics should become part of the career evaluation process.

3. Overview of the Meeting of Research Funders

The North West Meeting of Research Funders (10 February 2016) included 31 participants from funding agencies such as: the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research, the French National Centre for Scientific Research, the Research Foundation Flanders (FWO), Science Europe, the UK Research Councils (MRC and ESRC), the UK's Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the European Commission, the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), the Health Research Board Ireland, the Flanders Department of Economy, Science and Innovation (EWI), the French Institute for Research in Computer Science and Automation (INRIA), the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), the National Research Fund Luxembourg, the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office (BELSPO), the Belgian Ministry of Science, the Irish Environment National Agency, the Belgium National Fund for Scientific Research (FNRS), and the Federation Wallonie-Bruxelles (CFWB). The meeting also included participants from the Max Planck Society, UNESCO, and the Magna Charta Observatory.

The agenda for the meeting included presentations on:
- The PASTEUR4OA project:
    - » Victoria Tsoukala presented the project's aims, objectives, activities and outputs (link);

- » Alma Swan introduced the results of a PASTEUR4OA study on policy effectiveness and discussed ways to develop effective Open Access policies (link).
- The European Commission's Open Access policy in Horizon 2020:
  - » Celina Ramjoue outlined the conditions of the Horizon 2020 Open Access policy, the Open Research Data (ORD) pilot, and highlighted the European Commission's (EC) next steps for Open Access and Open Science in Horizon 2020 and beyond (link).
- FRS-FNRS (case study):
  - » Bernard Rentier discussed FNRS's process in developing and implementing an Open Access policy (link).
- Science Europe and Open Access:
  - » Stephan Kuster introduced Science Europe's role in contributing to advance Open Access at the research funders level;
  - » Georg Botz presented Science Europe's Position Statement on Open Access, highlighted Science Europe's Principles on the Transition to Open Access to Research Publications, and discussed Science Europe's roadmap and next steps towards Open Access.
- Open Access policies implementation (case studies):
  - » David Sweeney introduced the UK's road to Open Access by revisiting the various steps taken towards the implementation of national and funders' policies and discussed, in more detail, HEFCE's Open Access policy (link).
  - » Eric Laureys explained Belgium's federal structure, the process that led to the implementation of BELSPO's Open Access policy, and described the policy's requirements.

The presentations were followed by:
- A work group session where participants discussed four topics that have been at the centre of PASTEUR4OA's work:
  - » Policymakers engagement (via the Knowledge Net) (link);
  - » Policy effectiveness (link);
  - » Policy alignment (link);
  - » Policy compliance and monitoring (link).
- A panel session with invited speakers who discussed Open Access developments in their countries and/or organisations:
  - » Austria and FWF by Falk Reckling (link);
  - » Luxembourg and FNR by Michele Weber;
  - » France and INRIA by Claude Kirchner (link);
  - » UNESCO by Bhanu Neupane;
  - » Magna Charta Observatory by Sijbolt Noorda.

Issues and ideas highlighted at the Meeting of Research Funders:

- **Coordinated actions**: there is a need to engage/involve distinct national stakeholders in coordinated actions to advance the development and effective implementation of Open Access policies. The PASTEUR4OA project has helped in this area but there is still much work to be done.
- **Issues evolving around the implementation of Open Access policies**: there is a need to address issues such as benefit/value, quality, sustainability, licensing, and reward/evaluation mechanisms. There is also a need to request for systematic reporting and to apply sanctions to those who do not comply with policies in order to make Open Access a reality.
- **Funders' role**: it was acknowledged that the challenges faced in advancing Open Access are collective problems and funders can play a role in addressing some of these challenges. They can do this, for example, by acting collectively in imposing short embargo periods (Green OA), in setting funding caps for publication in hybrid journals (Gold OA) in order to drive publication costs down, and by supporting offsetting

mechanisms to avoid double-dipping.

- **Policy effectiveness**: Alma Swan's presentation demonstrated which funders' Open Access policies are effective (e.g. H2020, HEFCE) and what requirements are present in those policies that make them succeed.

- **Monitoring compliance**: UK funders are taking the lead in requesting for policy compliance to be monitored. Other funders could learn about the processes and procedures implemented in the UK and apply some of these practices in their organisations and/or at the national level. Interoperability between national systems and infrastructure can contribute to monitor compliance more effectively but there is a need to commit financial resources in order to make it work.

- **Policy alignment**: it was acknowledged that different funders and institutions and even countries follow different routes to Open Access and that it will be difficult to align all policies in simultaneous. Nonetheless, discussion was stimulated on what PASTEUR4OA's effect could be in terms of policy alignment and how it could help politicians, policymakers and funders in aligning Open Access policies.

- **A platform for Open Access policies:** it was suggested that a non-partisan platform could be created to promote networking among distinct stakeholders (institutions, funders, international organisations, etc), to establish standards, and to monitor policies and make the results visible.