



SE Europe Regional Workshop for research funders
“Working together to promote policy alignment in Europe”

Host institution/Location: Bilgi University/ Istanbul-Turkey

Date: 1 April 2016

Countries represented: Greece, Cyprus, Turkey, Serbia, and Bulgaria

EKT organized the second PASTEUR4OA South-East Europe Workshop in cooperation with Hacettepe University and Bilgi University as the local host. The Workshop brought together policy makers from research funding organizations such as the General Secretariat for Research and Technology (Greece), the A.G. Leventis Foundation (Cyprus), the Directorate General for European Programmes, Coordination and Development (Cyprus), TUBITAK (Turkey), the Ministry of Education and Science of Bulgaria and Serbia. The meeting also included representatives from universities and research institutions like EKT, the University of Cyprus, Hacettepe University, Bilgi University and Izmir Institute of Technology. In addition, the meeting benefited from the participation of representatives from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office (BELSPO) and the Current Research Information System in Norway (CRISStin).

The workshop's aim was firstly to acquaint participants with the concept of Open Access and the European context, in particular the 2012 European Commission Recommendation on access to and preservation of scientific information and the Horizon 2020 framework requirements on Open Access to publications and research data (the latter through the Open Research Data Pilot). The workshop then discussed key elements for effective funder policies, on the basis of the findings of research conducted in the framework of the project. This was followed by a discussion focusing at practical steps and requirements to facilitate funders for the adoption of such policies. The workshop ultimately aimed at supporting the development of Open Access policies in a group of countries where funder Open Access policies are at a nascent stage, notwithstanding the progress observed over the past years in relation to institutional policies. The workshop was structured around two sessions: the first aimed at familiarizing participants with the European framework and policy developments at global and EU level, while the second focused on the exchange of experiences among participants and on the discussion of key policy elements.

The introductory presentations gave an overview of the project's aims and major achievements, but most importantly highlighted the increase regarding the adoption of Open Access policies at both European and global level. On the basis of research conducted within the project, it is clear that while institutions have adopted more policies than funders, the

latter's policies are more aligned with the Horizon 2020 requirements, even though further effort is still required for strengthening alignment. In addition, the presentations highlighted the three key elements for effective open access policies: mandatory deposit, deposit that cannot be waived and linking of deposit with research evaluation. These elements formed the basis of subsequent discussions among workshop participants.

The first session also comprised short presentations from the Key Nodes focusing on policy developments in their countries, allowing participants to identify common challenges and concerns as well as views on ways of moving forward. Key Node presentations confirmed that in all SE Europe countries progress in relation to the adoption of Open Access policies has mainly taken place at institutional level, while funders have only recently started to discuss the development of related policies. Significant progress is expected in the near future at funder level in Greece, and Turkey, and at national level in Cyprus, Serbia and Bulgaria. Most countries have already developed necessary infrastructure to some extent, with the exception of Serbia where infrastructure is still considered as an important challenge. Participants also acknowledged the key role played by libraries during the initial phase. The results of a survey conducted by TUBITAK in Turkey confirmed a finding common in all SE countries, i.e. the low levels of awareness among the research community in relation to Open Access.

Workshop participants from other countries provided interesting insights in relation to challenges and the degree of development of Open Access policies. In the case of Belgium, the federal system has resulted in the federal level having recently taken steps in the development of Open Access. Belgium will not support publications in hybrid journals, as it does not support double dipping. In the UK, HEFCE's policy entered into force from April 1st. While the policy focuses on journal articles and conference papers, HEFCE would like to extend it to books too. HEFCE is at the same time looking into ways of encouraging Open Access to research data. As to key challenges, HEFCE has grouped them in the following three categories: cultural (acknowledging that Open Access is not a technical issue or one affecting only libraries, but has instead become a concern of top University management), technical (examining the extent at which repositories are fully equipped for undertaking this task) and finally policy related ones. In terms of the Nordic countries, the picture is more complex than initially thought. For example, while Finland has set the goal of becoming the leading country for Open Access, Iceland is currently working on establishing a national repository, while it lacks national-level policies and guidelines in contrast to Sweden and Norway who have already developed national guidelines.

The second session aimed at providing a floor for discussion among participants in relation to key issues highlighted during the previous session as important. The main points are summarized below:

- **The role of funders in the development/ adoption of Open Access policies:** Funders are not yet fully aware of the significance of Open Access. Nonetheless, funders have a key role in supporting Open Access policies during various phases (policy formulation, awareness-raising activities, funding of infrastructure, monitoring of compliance etc.)
- **Policy development/ adoption strategy:** Participants agreed that for the SE region a 'soft' approach, i.e. one in which the introduction of Open Access clauses in funding grants is followed by the development of a comprehensive strategy at national level would be best suited. It was also agreed that Open Access clauses in research grants

do not constitute a national policy. Participants agreed that SE countries might opt for a different approach than that used in other countries involving more “hard-type” approaches, essentially mandating Open Access.

- **Policy Effectiveness:** The majority of the participants agreed that linking deposit to evaluation as most likely the most important element for an effective policy, provided that it is monitored.
- **Incentives:** Incentivizing researchers requires an approach that places more emphasis on rewards rather than sanctions.
- **Training:** Participants discussed the importance of training as a critical element for changing research cultures. The UK’s example brought an interesting insight in the discussion: in particular, while the UK has dedicated significant resources in training, the effect will be low if deposit is not linked to evaluation. Training is expected to raise awareness around Open Access as a significant number of stakeholders involved lack a good understanding of what Open Access is about. It is necessary but not sufficient, and should be complemented by strong policies.
- **Infrastructure:** While the existence of appropriate infrastructure is an important element, for many participants infrastructure is not a real obstacle as infrastructure can be shared through the use of collaborative models.