



## ALPSP member briefing on Plan S

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On 4th September 2018, Science Europe announced Plan S,<sup>1</sup> a proposal for the transition of European-funded research to a fully open access environment, in line with the principles of open science. The plan is supported by 11 European national funding councils,<sup>2</sup> joined by the European Commission and the European Research Council (ERC).

While the term 'science' is used in the announcement, the word is employed to indicate rigorous disciplines rather than the natural sciences only and the publication of Plan S indicates explicitly that this is intended to include the humanities.

The central feature of Plan S is that from 1st January 2020, publications reporting research funded by grants from signatories and supporters of Plan S must be published in compliant open access journals or platforms with no embargo periods. The detailed requirements for compliance are not yet announced, however the Plan does state that hybrid publications will not be compliant, that authors must retain copyright of their work with no restrictions and that funding for open access fees should be standardised and capped within Europe.

Publishing is a fundamental part of the research process. As community-led publishers, our aim is to facilitate researchers sharing their work to allow the advancement of knowledge for the benefit of society. Considering the needs of researchers in different disciplines is central to ensuring this advancement of knowledge is optimised. For example, in many fields within the humanities and social sciences, the mode of expression of arguments is integral to the scholarly work, an aspect which should be considered when determining mandates for publication licenses.

As the requirements for the implementation of Plan S are developed, we encourage the supporting funders to engage with stakeholders, in particular learned societies given the critical importance of publishing programmes to the vitality of their disciplines and communities. The ability of learned societies to facilitate the development of national and international networks, provide education and training, enable public engagement with their subjects, fund research, and advise government on all aspects of their discipline, must be considered in future funding models.

We are glad to see that the importance of publications in the dissemination of research is acknowledged in the Plan and expect to see the value added by publications in the advancement of knowledge, rather than minimal service standards only, recognised in future drafts. We welcome the acknowledgement of the importance of researchers having the greatest freedom of choice when selecting where to publish their research. We are concerned, however, that as currently written, the Plan will have the effect of placing considerable restrictions on many researchers, who may be unable to select the most appropriate outlet for their publications. We therefore look forward to clarification on aspects of the Plan, including commitment that the funding available will be sufficient to ensure that maintenance of standards in publication ethics, support for the principles of open data and innovation in making research results more widely accessible, can continue.

We welcome engagement with Science Europe, the European Commission and the ERC to maximise the potential for a transition in research culture to offer the best opportunity for the continuing advancement of discovery and support of a vibrant research community both within Europe and beyond.

## References

1. Published simultaneously as follows
  - a) M. Schiltz, available from <https://www.scienceeurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/cOAlitionS.pdf>;
  - b) Schiltz M (2018) Science without publication paywalls: cOAlition S for the realisation of full and immediate Open Access. *PLoS Biol.* 16(9): e3000031. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.3000031>;
  - c) Schiltz M (2018) Science Without Publication Paywalls: cOAlition S for the Realisation of Full and Immediate Open Access. *PLoS Med* 15(9): e1002663. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1002663>;
  - d) Schiltz M (2018) Science Without Publication Paywalls: cOAlition S for the Realisation of Full and Immediate Open Access. *Front. Neurosci.* 12:656. doi: 10.3389/fnins.2018.00656
2. A list of national funders supporting Plan S is available from [https://www.scienceeurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/cOAlitionS\\_National\\_Funders.pdf](https://www.scienceeurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/cOAlitionS_National_Funders.pdf)