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#### NOTE

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	DRAFT COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON RESEARCH ASSESSMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF OPEN SCIENCE POLICIES

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Delegations will find attached a presidency text on the draft Council conclusions on research assessment and implementation of Open Science policies with a view to the Research Working Party meeting on 20 April 2022.

Changes in comparison to WK 4049/22 are marked in **bold underline** for additions and in ~~strikethrough~~ for deletions.

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**DRAFT COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON ACCELERATING THE RESEARCH  
ASSESSMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION AND THE IMPACT OF OPEN SCIENCE  
POLICIES AND PRACTICES**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING

- its conclusions of May 2016 on the transition towards an Open Science system<sup>1</sup>, which acknowledged that open science has the potential to increase the quality, impact and benefits of science and to accelerate advancement of knowledge by making it more reliable, more efficient and more accurate, better understandable by society and responsive to societal challenges **and encouraged to further develop the assessment of scientific quality;**
- its conclusions of December 2020<sup>2</sup> on the New European Research Area, which highlighted that Open Science has a crucial role to play in boosting impact, quality, efficiency, transparency and integrity of R&I; which encouraged the Commission, Member States and stakeholders to support and implement Open Science practices in their reward and evaluation systems for research, researchers and institutions;<sup>3</sup> and which recognised that bibliodiversity, multilingualism and the acknowledgement of all scientific output are relevant elements of an ERA policy on Open Science;
- its conclusions of 28 May 2021 on Deepening the European Research Area: Providing researchers with attractive and sustainable careers and working conditions and making brain circulation a reality<sup>3</sup>, which underlined the difficulties of the current reward and assessment practices and the need to evolve towards a more qualitative assessment;

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<sup>1</sup> 9526/16.  
<sup>2</sup> 13567/20.  
<sup>3</sup> 9138/21.

- Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/2122 of 26 November 2021 on a Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe<sup>4</sup>, which recommends that Member States apply the principle of pursuit of excellence in the research assessment system and reward quality accordingly, and sets out as an ERA priority area for action supporting and rewarding a true open science culture across the Union;
  - its conclusions of 26 November 2021 on the Future governance of the European Research Area (ERA)<sup>5</sup>, in particular the ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024, which set out a catalogue of voluntary ERA actions to contribute to the priority areas defined in the Council Recommendation on a Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe;
1. TAKES NOTE of the recommendations made in Commission Recommendation (EU) 2018/790 of 25 April 2018 on access to and preservation of scientific information<sup>6</sup>, the **European Commission's advisory group** Open Science Policy Platform's final report on Progress on Open Science: Towards a shared research knowledge system<sup>7</sup>, the ERAC 'Triangle Task Force' guideline paper on 'Research evaluation in a context of Open Science and gender equality'<sup>8</sup>, which identifies several recommendations regarding research evaluation systems, as well as the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science adopted in November 2021, which recommends a reform of the research assessment system<sup>9</sup>, and the outcome of consultation of stakeholders as laid down in the Commission scoping report 'Towards a reform of the research assessment system'<sup>10</sup>;

<sup>4</sup> OJ L 431, 2.12.2021, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> 14308/21.

<sup>6</sup> OJ L 134, 31.5.2018, p. 12.

<sup>7</sup> [Progress on open science - Publications Office of the EU \(europa.eu\)](https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/36ebb96c-50c5-11ec-91ac-01aa75ed71a1/language-en)

<sup>8</sup> 1201/21.

<sup>9</sup> [UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science - UNESCO Digital Library](https://unesco.org/en/digital-library/unESCO-recommendation-on-open-science)

<sup>10</sup> Towards a reform of the research assessment system: scoping report - <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/36ebb96c-50c5-11ec-91ac-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

2. ~~CONSIDERS~~ **AKNOWLEDGES** that in order to accelerate the implementation and the impact of Open Science policies and practices across Europe, action has to be taken to move towards a renewed approach to research assessment, to put in place a European strategy **in accordance with the Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe**, and strengthen capacities for academic publishing and scholarly communication **of all research outputs**, and ~~to foster~~ **encourage the use of** multilingualism for **the purpose of wider communication of** European **research results** ~~scholarly publications~~.

### **Reform of research assessment systems in Europe**

3. ~~ACKNOWLEDGES~~ that research assessment systems should focus on quality, excellence and impact, ~~and should promote early knowledge sharing and collaboration~~, and ~~RECALLS~~ that the current research assessment systems are, overall, too focused on the use of **some** quantitative **journal- and publication-based** indicators **and the evaluation of a narrow range of research outputs**; ~~CONSIDERS that such~~, an approach **can lead to** ~~which favours~~ negative biases in terms of research quality, reproducibility and integrity; **STRESSES that research assessment should, where appropriate, promote early knowledge sharing and collaboration** ~~and which is generally inconsistent with~~ **to accelerate** the implementation of Open Science practices;
4. ~~UNDERLINES~~ that, while many research funding, ~~and performing~~ **and assessing** organisations are taking steps to improve the way they assess research and researchers, progress remains slow, uneven and fragmented across Europe, and therefore ~~REITERATES~~ the need to advance **in a concerted effort** towards a reforming ~~of~~ the **various research assessment systems and practices** for research, researchers, research teams and institutions to improve their quality, **openness**, performance and impact; **furthermore, EMPHASIZES that applying Open Science principles should be appropriately rewarded in researchers' careers**;

5. STRESSES that such an approach must be designed in an inclusive and collective way, since many actors at different levels are concerned, and HIGHLIGHTS that a European initiative may facilitate and speed up changes to research assessment systems;
6. STRESSES that the transformation of research assessment systems should encompass the assessment of individual researchers, of research teams and organisations, of research infrastructures, of research outputs and projects ~~research proposals~~, and that ~~a coherent system should be established~~ it is important to avoid contradictions between different assessment layers;
7. ~~Considering~~ CONSIDERING the fact that the peer-reviewing principle of research assessment, remains more than ever fundamental, and that researchers are themselves acting as reviewers and evaluators in many configurations; ~~UNDERLINES~~ that researchers themselves should be at the core of this evolution, since it is of utmost importance that they ~~adhere~~ support and implement ~~to new~~ the improved principles for research ~~evaluation~~ assessment and, that they receive appropriate training for this task, ~~and that they promote these new principles~~ in order to ensure broad adoption of the changes by the scientific community; in this respect, BELIEVES that ~~early-career~~ researchers of all career stages should ~~play a particular~~ take an active role as ~~ambassadors of a~~ in the new approach to ~~assessing~~ research assessment;
8. ~~CONSIDERS~~ SUGGESTS that the evolution of the research assessment systems in Europe should be ~~based on~~ guided by the following principles, while respecting the autonomy of research institutions and the freedom of scientific research, as well as the diversity of national and disciplinary contexts:
  - a. moving ~~from~~ to a more balanced approach between the a quantitative ~~to a~~ and the qualitative evaluation of research, ~~and~~ by significantly reducing the use of quantitative indicators such as the journal impact factor and the H-index;

- b. recognising all forms of research and innovation output, including *inter alia*, datasets, software, codes, **methodologies, protocols and** patents, ~~etc.~~ and not only publications; **STRESSES that data should be findable, accessible, interoperable and re-usable, in line with the FAIR principles;**
  - ~~e. focusing assessment on qualitative analysis of the contribution of these outputs;~~
  - ~~ec.~~ **enabling diverse career pathways,** taking into account all research and innovation activities, including mentoring, leadership roles, entrepreneurship, **data management, teaching,** knowledge valorisation, industry-academia cooperation, support for evidence-based policy **making** development, interaction with society, **including citizen science** and public engagement;
  - ~~ed.~~ taking into consideration the specificities of the various research disciplines, research types and the stages of research careers;
  - ~~fe.~~ ensuring that ethics and integrity are accorded **the highest** priority and are ~~never~~ **not** compromised by ~~any~~ counter-incentives;
  - ~~g.~~ **ensuring diversity, including gender equality, and actively promoting women in science;**
9. WELCOMES the ~~Commission~~ **European** initiative which has launched a dialogue with stakeholders at European level in order to collect views on research assessment systems, and which ~~will~~ **aims to** facilitate the establishment of a **broad** coalition of stakeholders willing to **develop and** implement changes, **on a voluntary basis,** through a Memorandum of Understanding ~~that will commit them to take~~ **to foster** concrete actions to reform research assessment systems ~~at the level of their organisation;~~

10. ~~WELCOMES~~ **TAKES NOTE OF** the ‘Paris call on research assessment’ published on the occasion of the Open Science European Conference in February 2022<sup>11</sup>, which invites all stakeholders to become involved in the coalition, with the aim of setting up concrete actions to reform research assessment systems;
11. ENCOURAGES Member States to ~~implement the objectives of the Paris call and the coalition~~ **promote** by making the improvement **reform** of the research assessment system a priority at national and regional level, ~~and by promoting the transformation of research evaluation systems~~, while respecting the autonomy of research organisations, on the basis of the above-mentioned principles ~~for the evolution of research assessment systems~~;
12. INVITES Member States to encourage **research funding organisations and assessment agencies**, universities and other relevant higher education institutions, research and technology performing organisations, ~~research funding organisations and assessment agencies~~, as well as institutions which carry out assessment tasks, to join the ~~Commission~~ **European** initiative, and to ensure **promote** appropriate guidance and support is provided at national level, ~~such as by means of establishing a national action plan or putting in place the appropriate legal and regulatory framework~~;
13. RECOGNISES the need to ensure the sharing of best practices at European and national level in order to implement changes to the **research** assessment systems, and INVITES the Commission to carry out an analysis of legal and administrative barriers at national and transnational level for a modern research assessment system, **to propose actions for removing identified barriers** and to support the exchange of practices and mutual learning at European level;
14. INVITES the Member States, the Commission and stakeholders to ~~ensure~~ **promote** independence, **openness** and transparency of the data, ~~infrastructure~~ and criteria necessary for research assessment and for determining research impacts; ~~Infrastructure~~ **CONSIDERS that data** and tools ~~critical~~ for research assessment should, in particular, be controlled and owned by the research community;

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<sup>11</sup> [Paris Call – OSEC 2022](#)

15. CONSIDERS that European Universities alliances ~~can~~ **could** serve as a testbeds for the transformation of ~~evaluation~~ **research assessment** systems; INVITES them to launch pilot projects to establish assessment procedures in line with the above-mentioned principles ~~for the evolution of research assessment systems~~; and, to this end, ~~CALLS ON~~ **INVITES** the Commission to provide further support to ‘European Universities’ in order to help them move forward in that direction;
16. STRESSES that the transformation of research assessment systems is a key component of the attractiveness of research careers; and INVITES the Commission and the Member States to include research assessment **principles** in the development of the European Framework for research careers, the revision of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the recruitment of researchers, as well as the future establishment of the ERA Talent Platform;

#### **European strategy and capacities for academic publishing and scholarly communication**

17. UNDERLINES that it is in the interest of European citizens and the European economy to ensure a transparent and competitive market that enables private companies, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as well as publicly funded organisations such as universities, ~~and~~ research organisations **and learned societies**, to contribute to, and benefit from, a shared research knowledge system;
18. UNDERLINES that the Covid **COVID-19** crisis has highlighted **the need for Open Science and the benefits of** ~~the need to increase immediate open and immediate~~ access to research publications and to expand open access modalities, which has been key to developing rapid responses to the crisis by permitting quick access to new research results to combat the disease; **RECOGNISES that the crisis has also highlighted the need for an increased access to open research data;**



19. NOTES with concern the financial burden on **research institutions and** Member States' budgets arising from the increasing volume of expenditure for access to scientific publications **and for open access publishing** and ~~WELCOMES~~ **TAKES NOTE** in this context **of** all strategies **which aim** to contain such expenditures, ~~including~~ **such as** the actions taken on this issue by Coalition S **or Open APC, and which aim to ensure transparency as well as fair and equal conditions in contracts with publishers;**
20. UNDERLINES that it is key for the Union and its Members States to establish a common strategy **approach in terms of shared principles** for academic publishing and scholarly communication, since this is an issue of knowledge development and dissemination, sovereignty and proper use of public funds, and that the Union and Member States need to develop their capacities for academic publishing in proper coordination with all existing and future public and private stakeholders in this field, while paying attention to the specific challenges of each scientific discipline, including the humanities and social sciences;
21. ~~WELCOMES initiatives such as the inclusion of the OPERAS research infrastructure (Open scholarly communication in the European Research Area for social sciences and humanities) in the ESFRI roadmap 2021, the setting up of Open Research Europe, the open access publishing platform established by the Commission, as well as similar platforms and open access university presses established by both public and private research funders within the European Union and beyond,~~ **as well as dedicated research infrastructure such as OPERAS (Open scholarly communication in the European Research Area for social science and humanities) in the ESFRI roadmap 2021;** INVITES Members States and research funding organisations to consider **joining the Open Research Europe initiative in order to improve its quality and attractiveness or, if this is not possible, to set up their own open access publishing platforms** ~~the possibility of setting up their own open access publishing platforms or to join the Open Research Europe initiative in order to improve its quality and attractiveness, thereby creating a virtuous circle;~~

- 22. UNDERLINES that the diversity of business models for open access journals and platforms should be encouraged; STRESSES that when open access publication fees are applied, they should be transparent and commensurate with the publication services; CONSIDERS that the publication of any research output should be based on the assessment of its quality, and that any potential bias, inter alia due to expenditure capacities, at researcher or organizational level should be avoided;**
- 23.2.** ASKS the Commission to monitor, together with Member States, the ~~vitality~~ **development and diversity** of scientific publishing in Europe and the practices and costs of scholarly publications, including the transparency of billing costs, taking stock of and sharing existing best procedures developed at national level, and, wherever possible, disclosing the findings, and to this end ~~INVITES~~ **ENCOURAGES** Member States **or, where appropriate, research organisations, in cooperation with the Commission,** to take concrete measures against the proliferation of insufficiently transparent contractual arrangements in their interactions with publishers;
- 24.3.** CONSIDERS that open science practices such as open peer-review and early publication of preprints are **very promising but** challenging ~~but~~ **and** should be further promoted within a coherent framework and should be based on rigorous integrity principles and practices, as they allow better dissemination of research results, ~~while ensuring that they are not misinterpreted by broader society;~~
- 25. NOTES in this respect the need to increase the reproducibility of research results since this contributes to higher quality, a more efficient research processes, more trustworthy results, more effective translation into innovations, and higher return on investments in research;**

264. TAKES NOTE of the ERAC recommendations<sup>12</sup> related to Open Science and integrity, including the issue of preprint practices, and INVITES Member States to **support research organisations** in developing **ing** coherent guidelines on this issue;

### **Development of multilingualism for European scholarly publications**

275. ACKNOWLEDGES that, despite the extensive use of English as a **lingua franca** ~~common language~~ for researchers across the world, scholarly publications deserve to be accessible in many languages, in particular in certain disciplines; and CONSIDERS that the availability of scholarly publications in researchers' and citizens' main languages can ensure a wider access to research results, including in public debate, and enhance their impact **as well as a better science communication and improved science and society linkages beyond academia;**

286. NOTES that in the context of the **COVID-19** ~~Covid~~ crisis, the necessity of having access to new **and reliable** research results was key, and that access to this new knowledge in all European languages represents an advantage in ensuring quick and adequate responses in public policy decisions as well as in enhancing the dissemination of research results in the media, as well as among public and private organisations, public and private professionals, and citizens;

297. AGREES that the dissemination of scholarly publications in more than one language should not **be in the remit of the responsibility of individual researchers nor** be in contradiction with researchers' customs and traditions, nor with the need to publish in specific languages depending on the disciplines;

3028. ~~CONSIDERS that the deepening of a truly operational internal market for knowledge can best be achieved through the further development and integration of the underlying digital infrastructure and services;~~ WELCOMES the promising developments that have recently emerged in the area of automatic translation thanks to the progress of artificial intelligence and CONSIDERS that the semi-automatic translation of scholarly publications within Europe **may** ~~have~~ **yes** major potential in terms of market creation for this new technology and is also an important issue of sovereignty;

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<sup>12</sup> 1207/21.

**3129.** ACKNOWLEDGES that the dissemination of scholarly publications among broader society through the development of multilingualism is key to enhancing the impact of academic results, improving the quality of evidence-based policy making, and helping overall to bridge the gap between science and citizens;~~;~~ ~~and,~~ in this context, WELCOMES initiatives to promote multilingualism, such as the Helsinki initiative on multilingualism in scholarly communication<sup>13</sup>, including in the context of research assessment;

**320.** INVITES the Commission and the Member States to **experiment multilingualism, on a voluntary basis,** ~~develop an action plan to promote and implement,~~ in particular by taking advantage of translation services based on artificial intelligence technologies for a **sample** ~~significant part~~ of the research outputs published by European researchers **selected on the basis on their societal relevance;**

**334.** CALLS ON the Commission to inform the Council on the progress made on these three key topics by the end of 2023, in order to assess the need for further action if necessary.

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<sup>13</sup> *Helsinki Initiative on Multilingualism in Scholarly Communication*, 2019 - [doi.org/10.6084/M9.FIGSHARE.7887059](https://doi.org/10.6084/M9.FIGSHARE.7887059)