



Supplementary information regarding the negotiations between VSNU and Elsevier on the subject of open access

Following news reports, the VSNU can confirm that negotiations between the Dutch universities and publisher Elsevier regarding open access have reached an impasse. We understand that this development may give rise to questions about what this will mean for researchers in the Netherlands. In the statement below, we aim to clarify the recent developments regarding these negotiations.

News reports on November 4th have established that negotiations between the Dutch universities and publisher Elsevier have reached an impasse. The negotiations concern the renewal of library subscriptions from Jan 1st 2015 onwards, but also relate to the transition to open access.

Together with the Dutch government, universities in the Netherlands actively support the transition to open access. The position of the VSNU on the need for freely accessible publications is clear and has been communicated to various stakeholders. You may recall a letter by VSNU-chairman Karl Dittrich on this subject (dated July 15th 2014).

Earlier this year, the board of directors of the Dutch universities made the decision to link the negotiations on the renewal of library subscriptions to agreements with publishers on the transition to open access. On behalf of the VSNU, the presidents of Tilburg University and the Radboud University of Nijmegen (Prof. Dr. Gerard Meijer and dr. Koen Becking) were asked to lead negotiations. The negotiations were to take place on the basis of a mandate set by the joint university boards.

It is now clear that the negotiations with Elsevier have reached an impasse. During several round of talks, no offer was made which would have led to a real, and much-needed, transition to open access. Moreover, Elsevier has failed to deliver an offer that would keep the rising costs of library subscriptions at acceptable levels.

Dutch universities and the University Medical Centres cannot accept the offer by Elsevier at this point in time. We are open to renew negotiations as soon as an acceptable offer is put on the table. In the meantime, universities will prepare for the possible consequences of an expiration of journal subscriptions. In case this happens researchers will still be able to publish in Elsevier journals. They will also have access to back issues of these journals. New issues of Elsevier journals as of 1-1-2015 will not be accessible anymore. Universities will explore solutions to this problem.

Stakeholders, such as the State Secretary of Education, NWO and the University Medical Centres, have expressed support for the position of the VSNU. We hope we can count on your support as well for the transition to open access.

More information:

www.vsnu.nl/openaccess
www.openaccess.nl