

Progress of open access in the Netherlands

Government open science and science with impact policy

On 19 January, State Secretary Dekker sent two letters to the House of Representatives. The first [letter](#) concerns science with impact and valorisation. In this letter, the state secretary writes that one of the mechanisms proposed as a measure of quality of scientific work is the work itself and its impact on society. In Dekker's view, this is more important than the current emphasis on publications.

The second [letter](#) from the state secretary is fully devoted to the progress of open science and describes the importance of open science using several examples. Thanks to contracts concluded with seven of the largest publishing companies, the current state of play surrounding open access is that at least 57% of the articles these companies publish in the Netherlands will be freely accessible in 2018. The key European agreement made in this area is for open access to be the standard choice for scientific publications in 2020. The Netherlands fully backs this objective. To achieve this objective, Dekker believes it is important that financial organisations make open access mandatory and attach consequences to failure to meet this obligation. He also considers it hugely important that universities negotiate and continue to negotiate vigorously with publishers to make open access possible. Dekker is requesting the involvement of multiple parties in order to realise these goals, which is why he has asked a broad coalition of parties to draw up a National Open Science Plan in the near term that is to describe the steps that can be taken in the Netherlands to achieve these ambitious goals. *'The National Open Science Plan will be adopted early this year during a meeting with the stakeholders. The Netherlands Open Science Platform will also be launched during this meeting. The task of this platform is to supervise and monitor the implementation of the agreements made in the National Plan. As a part of the National Plan, the VSNU will report regularly on the growth in the share of open access publications.'*

Open access deals 2017

VSNU and Sage have made [agreements](#) on open access publications from 2017 through to the end of 2019. In 97% of journals, scientists affiliated with a Dutch research institution will be able to publish on an open access basis. This agreement represents a major improvement on the previous agreement, under which 20% of journals allowed for open access publication. Publisher Springer has entered into an [agreement](#) with the VSNU guaranteeing 100% open access. This agreement is identical to the open access agreement these parties concluded last year. In 2017, researchers will again be able to reach a wide audience with freely available publications.

UMCG and RUG push for green open access

As of 1 January of this year, researchers of the University Medical Centre Groningen (UMCG) and the [University of Groningen](#) (RUG) will be asked to deposit all their peer-reviewed articles in the RUG research database Pure. The University Library and the Central Medical Library are taking all further measures necessary to ensure the articles are published on an open access basis via the green route. This new policy is based on the demands of various research funding bodies and is in line with Dutch government policy.

Elsevier and Springer go to court to block university financial transparency

Last year, former Delft librarian Leo Waaijers submitted a request under the Government Information (Public Access) Act to ascertain how much the publication of open access articles costs Dutch universities. Elsevier and Springer have taken legal action to stop the [release](#) of this information. VSNU negotiations of the past few years have resulted in open-access contracts, the costs of which vary depending on the university. Following the instigation of legal proceedings by Elsevier and Springer, the universities decided to submit the objections of the two publishers to objection proceedings, though no ruling has yet been made. The previous newsletter reported on an earlier request under the Government Information (Public Access) Act (WOB), as a result of which the [costs of journal subscriptions](#) were made public.

International developments

Germany, Peru and Taiwan

Researchers in [Germany, Peru and Taiwan](#) will have no access in the new year to articles appearing in journals of Dutch publisher Elsevier. The negotiations in Germany and Taiwan have failed, with Elsevier's price being judged too high by the negotiators. Negotiations in Germany have ground to a complete halt. Taiwan has been allowed a postponement and will retain access to all journals in January. The negotiations will be resumed with a number of Taiwanese universities.

Peru no longer has access to Elsevier's articles because the Peruvian government decided it no longer wished to pay the high subscription fees to the journals.

United States

An international group of researchers headed by John Ioannidis, a professor at the Stanford University School of Medicine, published a list of measures in the journal [Nature Human Behaviour](#). The aim of these measures is to raise the reliability, credibility and effectiveness of science. One of their arguments is that articles should be published under open access arrangements as much as possible. The researchers refer to the combined measures as a manifesto that should appeal not only to researchers, but also to university administrators, journals and grant providers.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation funds much [scientific research](#). The Gates foundation adopted a new open access policy as of 1 January 2017: all research that the foundation has funded or helped fund must be published under open access arrangements. As a result, the researchers concerned are currently unable to publish in journals such as Nature and Science. Discussions are currently ongoing between the publishing houses and the Gates foundation. Any special status arrangement agreed can be seen as a breakthrough in the debate on open access.

Open access in the media

'Open access to research data: the two sides of the coin'

Stefan de Hert and Charles Samama, both affiliated with Ghent University and the Ghent University Hospital, describe why medical research data both should and should not be made freely available via open access. The most important argument in favour is the increased reproducibility and reliability of results, as well as the optimal social gains for improving healthcare. The arguments against are three-fold: the concern that inaccurate conclusions will be drawn from the data, given that the data will be used for purposes other than that for which it was generated; the concern that the data will be used by amateurs who do not apply the data correctly or that the data will be used for commercial purposes; and, finally, that sharing open access data will compromise patients' privacy. The authors do, however, point out that loss of privacy can be prevented legally. The authors end the article with the assertion that stakeholders, industry and researchers must understand that data collected from patients is not private property.

OPEN ACCESS AGENDA

Presentation about open access available

The EU has formulated the ambition that all scientific publications should be 100% open access by 2020. Partly in view of this, the VSNU is giving presentations in the EU about Dutch open access policy, which is internationally seen as being ahead of that of other countries. The VSNU has therefore also made a presentation about this [available online](#).

Relevant upcoming events

7 February 2017: [Meet an open access hero: American Chemical Society](#) – online (webinar)

14 February 2017: [Impact and measurement of open access](#) – Oslo, Norway

20 – 21 February 2017: [Researcher to reader conference](#) – London, U.K.

22 February 2017: [How to build a successful open access books programme](#) – London, UK

23 February 2017: [OpenAIRE services and tools for open research data in H2020](#) – Edinburgh, UK

2 – 3 March 2017: [2017 EUROGEO annual meeting and conference](#) – Amsterdam, Netherlands

MORE INFORMATION

- [FAQs about open access](#)
- [Open access fact sheet](#)
- www.vsnu.nl/openaccess
- www.openaccess.nl

Updated e-zine about open access

The updated e-zine describes the impact of open-access publishing and Dutch accomplishments in this area. The e-zine is also available in [English](#).



Publication details

The open access newsletter is a publication of the VSNU in collaboration with the Dutch university libraries and the National Library of the Netherlands. This newsletter is intended for all people interested in open access, including researchers, university administrators, library staff, knowledge partners, politicians and media representatives.

Tips or suggestions?

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