

Saturday, February 17. 2007

Impressions from Brussels EC Meeting



My impressions of the [Brussels EC Meeting](#):



- (1) The [petition](#) demonstrating the very broad-based support for the proposed EC OA Self-Archiving Mandate was presented to the EU Commissioner for Science and Research, Janez Potocnik.
- (2) The conference itself (which was organized before the petition) then proceeded with its programme, heavily weighted toward publishing and publishers' concerns rather than the access and impact concerns of the research community.
- (3) Hence, predictably, most of the time and energy was spent on publishing finances rather than on research access and impact.
- (4) Nevertheless, the overall impression (from the minority research and researcher representation at the meeting) was that the relentless focus on publishing finances was not their primary concern, Open Access was.
- (5) The (rather bland) [statement](#) released at the beginning of the meeting had also been drafted before the meeting and the petition (and apparently with some involvement of the publishers, as there was evidence that they had seen it in advance).
- (6) But my impression was that the EU Commissioners, Directors-General and Directors (or rather those of their delegates who were in attendance) were favorable to OA, and that concrete developments can be expected as a result of the conference and the petition. Researcher and industrial support for OA and OA Self-Archiving Mandates will now be very vigorously consolidated.

Stevan Harnad

PS I think a bit of a storm is now brewing in the physics community over the [CERN initiative to promote an immediate transition to Gold OA publishing in particle physics](#). The concern is that this will divert scarce funds from research. I think the concern is warranted: that [it is indeed premature to push toward gold OA when most fields \[including many parts of physics\] don't yet have green OA](#). CERN should work to generalise its own admirable and successful green OA self-archiving mandate to the rest of the world, and meantime make use of the [complementarity between conventional publication and green OA, co-existing in parallel, rather than needlessly pressing for an immediate transition to gold OA publishing](#) at a time when gold OA is neither needed -- publication still being funded by (and potential publication funds still tied up in) subscription expenditures -- nor are funds available to pay for gold OA without taking them from elsewhere, most probably research. Gold fever also distracts from the pressing, immediate basic need for OA itself, as well as from green OA's immediate

availability, at no cost. We need to stop fussing about publishing and publishing costs, and focus on access, and providing it in the fastest and surest way available: by mandating green OA self-archiving.

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