

EMS on Open Access – update July 2018

The European Mathematical Society is favourable to the open access to scientific publications, but not at any cost.

In the Editorial of the EMS Newsletter published in June 2013, the following statement was made:

“The EMS endorses the general principle of allowing free reading access to scientific results and declares that in all circumstances, the publishing of an article should remain independent of the economic situation of its authors. We therefore do not support any publishing models where the author is required to pay charges (APC)”.

The EMS endorses the goals of the ICSU document *Open access to scientific data and literature and the assessment of research by metrics*¹ that the scientific record should be:

- free of financial barriers for any researcher to contribute to and for any user to access immediately on publication;
- made available without restriction on reuse for any purpose, subject to proper attribution;
- quality-assured and published in a timely manner;
- archived and made available in perpetuity.

The last five years have provided ample experience and overwhelming support by European mathematicians bolstering these positions. While it is too early to tell how many operational or business models will prevail, and among those, which will best serve science, we have accumulated rich evidence that some modalities have drawbacks and that the diversity of approaches has to be preserved and encouraged in these times of transition.

We therefore urge governments, funding agencies, research organisations to support a large number of different strategies in their pathways towards open access (OA) to all scientific results.

Large commercial publishers (and some OA platforms) try to impose the idea that OA cannot be achieved without the payment of APCs (article processing charges), either individually for each publication, or through so-called APC-big deals or offsetting deals where consortia negotiate bulk APCs for a large number of authors.

These ways of covering the costs of publishing might be fit for some disciplines, but cannot be the only solution for some communities, in particular mathematics, without implying a number of problematic bias or creating questionable incentives.

Among recent evidence, we would like to point out that

- UK’s policy following Finch report tried to impose APC-Gold OA to all researchers, but finally gave up on this and accepted other ways (like green OA through institutional repositories deposit), after acknowledging the default mandate didn’t work for all disciplines.²
- France has just announced³ a plan for Open Science supporting the development of alternative OA publishing venues, and encouraging other routes towards OA than APC-Gold, in the spirit of the Jussieu Call for Open science and bibliodiversity⁴.

¹ <https://council.science/publications/open-access-to-scientific-data-and-literature-and-the-assessment-of-research-by-metrics>.

² HEFCE OA policy now requires immediate deposit in subject of institutional repositories, hence favouring Green OA.

See <https://re.ukri.org/research/open-access-research/>.

³ Original announcement and documents:

<http://m.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid132529/le-plan-national-pour-la-science-ouverte-les-resultats-de-la-recherche-scientifique-ouverte-a-tous-sans-entree-sans-delai-sans-paiement.html>.

An English translation is available here: <https://libereurope.eu/blog/2018/07/05/frenchopenscienceplan/>.

⁴ <http://jussieucall.org/>.