



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS
FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DES ASSOCIATIONS DE BIBLIOTHECAIRES ET DES BIBLIOTHEQUES
INTERNATIONALER VERBAND DER BIBLIOTHEKARISCHEN VEREINE UND INSTITUTIONEN
FEDERACION INTERNACIONAL DE ASOCIACIONES DE BIBLIOTECARIOS Y BIBLIOTECAS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ ФЕДЕРАЦИЯ БИБЛИОТЕЧНЫХ АССОЦИАЦИЙ И УЧРЕЖДЕНИЙ
国际图书馆协会与机构联合会

الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات ومؤسسات المكتبات

European Commission,
Directorate-General for Research and Innovation,
Unit B1,
SDME Office 2/53,
B-1049 Brussels,
Belgium

30th November 2011

Dear Sir/Madam

I am pleased to submit the response of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) to the European Commission's *Consultation on the ERA Framework: Areas of untapped potential for the development of the European Research Area (ERA)*. This submission was prepared by the IFLA Open Access Taskforce and has been endorsed by the IFLA Governing Board.

For any further information, the contact persons in relation to this submission are Lars Bjornshauge, Chair of the IFLA Open Access Taskforce (email: elbjoern0603@gmail.com) and the IFLA Director of Policy and Advocacy, Stuart Hamilton (email: stuart.hamilton@ifla.org).

Yours faithfully,

Jennefer Nicholson
Secretary General
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Lars Bjørnshauge, Bonn, November 29th, 2011

IFLA's response to the ERA Framework Public Consultation

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) is the leading international body representing the interests of library and information services and their users. It is the global voice of the library and information profession. As part of its mission, IFLA promotes libraries as vital institutions that enhance people's lives through equitable access to knowledge and information.

IFLA very much welcomes the public consultation on the ERA Framework. The focus of our response relates primarily to the area "Open access to publications and data", but as well to some extent to the area "Knowledge transfer".

IFLA is very happy to see that the European Union is committed to "strengthening its scientific and technological bases by achieving a European research area in which researchers, scientific knowledge and technology circulate freely (...); that the European Council will "address remaining gaps"; and further that the European Commission is "committed to removing obstacles to mobility and cross border co-operation".

IFLA notes that "the topics which must be taken into account" include "dissemination, transfer and use of research results, including through open access to publications and data from public funded research".

IFLA finds it critically important to emphasize that effective and barrier-free dissemination, transfer and use of research results can effectively be safeguarded through open access to research publications and research data.

A growing corpus of documentation provides evidence that barriers to access to scholarly publications are making the job of researchers more cumbersome and less effective. Such barriers make it difficult for libraries to serve researchers and thus have a negative effect on the efficiency of government-funded research. Furthermore, barriers to access have negative effects on innovation, resulting in lost opportunities for knowledge transfer to among others SMEs (small and medium size enterprises), and thus to wealth and prosperity for our societies.

It is no coincidence that the concept of open access has gained momentum during the last decade. Driven by rapidly advancing technologies; new communication tools; decreasing costs for hardware and data storage; and supported by innovative scholars, librarians, libraries and library organizations -- as well as innovative academic publishers -- new infrastructures and innovative business models have been developed and are gaining momentum.

Increasingly research funders, research councils, universities and university associations are embracing open access. Research funders and research councils are mandating open access to maximize the impact of the research, and universities are developing services in order to maximize the visibility and impact of their intellectual output.

Despite initial resistance and continuous (and still existing) lobbying against significant transitions to new publishing paradigms, open access publishing is progressing and making an impact. With a few exceptions, traditional academic publishers are now adapting to open access business models, which will further increase the speed of the transition to a new paradigm.



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But despite the progress, there is still a long way to go before our societies will experience the full impact and benefit of unimpeded access to research results and reuse of research data. In this context it is indeed very helpful and indeed an outstanding example on the global level, if the EU via the ERA-framework implements measures to foster the removal of such barriers.

It is however important to stress that a transition to new paradigms incurs transition costs. It is of utmost importance that research funders realize that the transition requires investments in new business models (for example, support for article processing charges in open access journals and monographs), in infrastructures and curation and long term preservation of research data. European academic libraries are and will be effective partners in these matters.

IFLA is fully aware that open access is “not an end in itself”, but, rather, a necessity if society want researchers to be effective; if the research fund by public research funds is to be efficient and to make an impact; if societies are to realize the full potential of modern communication technologies; if we want our societies to prosper; if we share goals for human health and wealth to increase and for democracy and participation to improve.

As a global organization, IFLA stresses that a full implementation in Europe of open access to research results and research data will not only benefit European research, innovation and societies, but as well will give rise to benefits on a global level. Additionally, by giving a leading example, Europe will benefit by improved access to research results produced and published elsewhere.

IFLA affirms as well the importance of increasing awareness amongst researchers about intellectual property rules and knowledge transfer opportunities, of stimulating the development and implementation of national policies on knowledge transfer, and incentivizing universities and public research organizations to develop and implement strong knowledge transfer strategies and structures, thereby encouraging a broad culture of open access and open innovation. In the current scholarly communication system, private firms may experience difficulties in accessing public research results.

Open access in this questionnaire refers to the practice of granting free online access to research publications and/or data. When possible, the policy should remove permission barriers as well (making content free of unnecessary copyright and licensing restrictions).

IFLA strongly agrees

- that circulation of scientific knowledge via scientific publication and data needs to be approved in the European Research Area. Open access to publications and data will enhance knowledge circulation.

IFLA agrees that potential barriers to enhanced knowledge circulation include the following:

- Researchers are not sufficiently aware of open access to research publications and data;
- Stakeholders working to advance open access fail to negotiate collectively with scholarly publishers;
- Member States’ policies on open access to publications and data are insufficient.
- That repositories for publications across Europe are not sufficiently interoperable



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