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Access to scientific information: A view from the European Commission

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**Berlin 5 Open Access - From Practice to Impact:
Consequences of Knowledge Dissemination
Padua, 19-21 September 2007**





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Outline

- 1. The European Commission and access to scientific information**
- 2. What has the EC done so far?**
- 3. EC initiatives: what's next?**
- 4. Conclusions**





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The EC and access to scientific information (1)

Pillars of European research policy

- **European Community Treaty, Title XVIII, art. 164**
European Community responsible for “dissemination and optimisation of the results and activities in Community research [...]”
- **Lisbon Agenda (2000, 2005 “re-launch”)**
EU “to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world” by 2010
- **European Research Area (ERA)**
2000 Communication: “Internal market” for research: free movement of researchers, technology, and knowledge





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The EC and access to scientific information (2)

Making the most of the digital revolution

- **Internet: explosion of dissemination and access possibilities**
 - **Scientific publication market trends: debate on pricing, bundling strategies, library budgets, etc.**
 - **Open Access movement: Budapest Initiative (2002), Bethesda Statement 2003, Berlin Declaration (2003), etc.**
 - **Open access publishing model: "author pays"**
 - **Development of repositories**
- **Need to make best possible use of opportunities offered by the digital revolution; perceived room for improvement**





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The EC and access to scientific information (3)

Importance of access to scientific information for EU research policy

- **Reliable and easy access to data and a healthy scientific publication system stimulate research innovation and excellence, and thus support the Lisbon agenda**
- **Multiple payment argument: funding bodies pay multiple times during the scientific publishing process:**
 - **for researchers' salaries**
 - **for salaries of researchers conducting peer review**
 - **for journal subscriptions (e.g. library funding)**





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The EC and access to scientific information (4)

Roles of the European Commission

- **Policy-making body: launching a policy debate at the European level**
- **Research funding body:**
 - **setting access and dissemination rules for the research Framework Programmes**
 - **funding digital infrastructure**
 - **funding relevant research and networking activities**
- **Directorate Generals for Research (DG RTD) and Information Society (DG INFSO) most actively involved**





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What has the EC done so far? (1)

"Study on the economic and technical evolution of the scientific publication markets in Europe"

- **2006 Publication of *Study on the economic and technical evolution of the scientific publication markets in Europe* (Commissioned by Research Directorate-General)**
http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/pdf/scientific-publication-study_en.pdf
- **Results: oligopoly, steep price increase (esp. 1975-1995), bundling strategies, reader-pay model dominant, experiments with new models, new funding body policies**
- **Recommendations in three areas: "access", "market issues", "discussion and study"**
- **One of the most prominent recommendations: "Guarantee public access to publicly-funded research results shortly after publication"**





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What has the EC done so far? (2)

Public consultation on Study

- **31 March – 15 June 2006: public consultation on results and recommendations of Study**
http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/page_en.cfm?id=3185
- **October 2006: Publication of synthesis and individual responses to public consultation**
http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document_library/pdf_06/synthesis-consultation_en.pdf
- **170 responses: 95 from research community and academic organisations, 58 from libraries/information organisations, and 17 from publishers**
- **Support by research and library communities for recommendations dealing with access; criticism by publishers**





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What has the EC done so far? (3)

Commission Communication COM(2007)56

- **14 February 2007: adoption of “Communication on scientific information in the digital age: access, dissemination and preservation” (COM(2007)56)**
ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document_library/pdf_06/communication-022007_en.pdf
- **Commission position:**
 - *“Initiatives leading to wider dissemination of scientific information are necessary, especially with regard to journal articles and research data produced on the basis of public funding.”*
 - *Need for “clear strategies for the digital preservation of scientific information.”*
 - **Stakeholder involvement necessary and desirable.**





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What has the EC done so far? (4)

Actions foreseen by COM(2007)56

1. **Access to Community funded research results**
 - Possibility of Open Access publishing encouraged
 - Guidelines for Framework Programme funded publications
2. **Co-funding of research infrastructures**
 - Linking digital repositories (2007-08: €50 mil.)
 - Research on digital preservation (2007-08: €25 mil.)
 - Research on accessibility and usability (2005-08: €10 mil.)
3. **Input for the future policy debate**
 - Studies on economic aspects of preservation / scientific publishing system
4. **Policy co-ordination and policy debate with stakeholders**
 - Member States, EP, stakeholders





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What has the EC done so far? (5)

Stakeholder conference in Brussels, 15-16 February 2007

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/index.cfm?fuseaction=public.topic&id=550>

- **Joint Research and Information Society: Commissioners J. Potočník and V. Reding**
- **Presentation of Communication COM(2007)56**
- **Stakeholder debate in run-up to conference:**
 - 17 January 2007: Petition by researchers in favour of Open Access to publicly funded research publications (today: over 25.000 individual signatories, around 1.300 institutional signatories)**
 - 13 February 2007: Brussels Declaration on STM Publishing: underlines views and principles of STM publishers (today: 58 publishers/publishers' associations)**
 - Petition and Statement presented to Commissioner on 15 February 2007 in context of Conference**





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What has the EC done so far? (6)

Green Paper on the European Research Area

- **4 April 2007: adoption of "Green Paper – The European Research Area: New Perspectives" (COM(2007)161)**

http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/consultation-era_en.html#greenpaper

- **Knowledge-Sharing axis, question 21: *"Is there a need for EU-level policies and practices to improve and ensure open access to and dissemination of raw data and peer-reviewed publications from publicly funded research results?"***
- **Public consultation 1 May–31st August 2007: KSH2 *"How should data and publications resulting from publicly funded research be shared?"***
- **Results will feed into Portuguese Presidency conference: The future of Science and Technology in Europe, 8-10 October, Lisbon, Portugal**

ec.europa.eu/research/conferences/2007/fst/index_en.htm





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EC initiatives: what's next? (1)

Access to Community funded research results

- **Active encouragement of possibility of Open Access publishing through Framework Programmes → pilot for “gold” open access**
- **Work towards guidelines for Framework Programme funded publications, sector-based approach**

Co-funding of research infrastructures

- **Several projects to start under FP7; information under:**
cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ict/e-infrastructure/home_en.html





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EC initiatives: what's next? (2)

Input for the future policy debate

- **Study on socio-economic aspects of preservation: planned to start in 2008**
- **Planned call for proposals under FP7 (Capacities, Science in Society): Co-ordination and support actions on the scientific publishing system**

Policy co-ordination and debate

- **Continuing debate including all stakeholders**
- **Inter-institutional debate launched through Communication COM(2007)56**





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Conclusions (1)

- **The European Commission has recognised the importance of access and preservation issues for its research and technology policies.**
- **First steps taken: issues of access and preservation are now firmly on the European policy agenda.**
- **Concrete access and preservation policies are in the making, but ... cannot develop overnight.**





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Conclusions (2)

- **Policy solutions must therefore:**
 - **improve access and preservation while rewarding publishers for the added value they bring to the scientific process**
 - **search for a balance between fostering the competitiveness of European industry through protection of IPR and through ensuring the openness of science and wide dissemination of research results**
 - **take into account the different issues and needs for publications, data, different disciplines, etc.**
- **Commission's approach is step-by-step, sector-based, and inclusive of all stakeholder views**

