



Brussels, **13 MARS 2017**
rtd.ddg1.a.6(2017)1336708

Declaration of Support on the occasion of the 13th Berlin Open Access Conference

Dear Dr Schimmer, Dear Conference Participants,

The large scale transition to full Open Access to scientific peer reviewed publications is essential to ensure that the results of publicly funded research are made available to society at low costs and within the shortest time frames possible.

For this reason the European Commission is a strong supporter of the OA2020 initiative and the Berlin conferences.

Although in recent years progress has been made, most journals are still based on the subscription business model which means: high costs, limited transparency and restrictions to access and use.

For this reason it remains essential that scientists, research institutions, libraries, funding agencies, policy-makers and publishers continue to meet to make Open Access to publications a reality. The 13th Berlin conference offers a great occasion to take stock, revisit the Roadmap, exchange good practices and network. Where possible, new communities should be brought in. I am therefore very pleased to learn that 74 organisations have signed up and that a further 4 organisations have endorsed your activities. It is also encouraging to see that the signatories come from all over the globe.

In Europe a major political milestone was reached when on 27 May 2016, at the Competitiveness Council, the 28 Member States of the EU unanimously committed to achieving Open Access to publications (that is 100%) by 2020. Since the European Commission wants to lead by example, it has made Open Access to Publications mandatory under the EU flagship programme HORIZON 2020. We are monitoring compliance and will impose sanctions on those not adhering to the rules.

As the experience of the Wellcome Trust and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has shown, funding agencies play a key role to speed up the transition to full Open Access since they hold the purse. For this reason I call upon all funders of research to step forward and take a lead role. The Berlin gathering offers a great occasion for this.

I wish you a successful conference.

Kind regards,



Robert-Jan Smits