

## Open Access Policy Alignment

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### Introduction

The benefits of Open Access (OA) are manifold – included among them the increased visibility of research for all parties, potential cross-institutional and cross-national collaboration, higher citations rates and additional funding opportunities. But Open Access does not happen voluntarily since it requires a rather radical change of behaviour on the part of authors. A good policy foundation is needed to ensure that all publicly-funded research is freely available.

The number of Open Access (OA) policies that have been adopted by universities, research institutes and research funders has been growing gradually since 2002 when the first policy was implemented. The Registry of Open Access Repository Mandates and Policies (ROARMAP<sup>1</sup>) records the existing OA policies across the world. At the time of writing there are 749 policies in this database, of which 617 have been adopted by universities and research performing institutions and 132 by funding bodies.

This brief will look at the alignment of OA policies within Europe at an institutional and also a funder level, specifically within the 34 countries which comprise those represented by an expert organisation that has joined the 'Knowledge Net'<sup>2</sup> and which was established by the PASTEUR4OA project. Within this context two key areas will be addressed – first, the current status of both institutional and funder policies in terms of alignment to and divergence from one another and, second, how these policies in turn align or diverge when measured against individual elements set out by the European Commission's Horizon 2020 OA policy.

A strong Open Access policy must include certain key criteria in order to be effective and successfully implemented<sup>3</sup>. Among the most important of these elements are:

- Articles **must** be deposited in an Open Access repository
- Deposit **cannot** be waived
- Deposit is **linked to research evaluation (performance assessment)**<sup>4</sup>.

1 Registry of Open Access Repository Mandates and Policies: <http://roarmap.eprints.org/>

2 The countries which make up The Knowledge Net are Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Serbia, Turkey, Y. R. Macedonia, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Italy, Malta, Portugal, and Spain. **Hereafter referred to as 'Europe'.**

3 Study carried out by the PASTEUR4OA project: Alma Swan, Yassine Gargouri, Megan Hunt and Stevan Harnad (2015) Open Access policy: numbers, analysis, effectiveness.

<http://pasteur4oa.eu/sites/pasteur4oa/files/deliverables/PASTEUR4OA%20Work%20Package%203%20Report%20final%2010%20March%202015.pdf>

4 Swan A, Rodrigues E (2015) Open Access policy effectiveness: A briefing paper for research institutions

<http://www.pasteur4oa.eu/sites/pasteur4oa/files/resource/Policy%20effectiveness%20-%20institutions%20final.pdf>

Certainly, strong and effective policies are necessary to provide a stable foundation upon which to build significant, extensive resources of freely available research, but policy *alignment* is also extremely important. Aligned policies are a key factor in changing author practices and norms. For researchers it ensures a simple and consistent set of requirements, important for those whose work is funded by more than one funder, or who work in interdisciplinary teams where funding comes from different sources at different times. For the research community more generally, aligned policies mean that infrastructure can be created to support policies across the sector. Additionally, aligned policies support the Open Access element of the EU's harmonisation plan for the European Research Area and the Responsible Research and Innovation agenda.

## I. Open Access policy alignment: the European landscape

ROARMAP contains information about 421 European policies – 65 belonging to funders and 356 to research performing institutions. The data recorded in the ROARMAP database provide a wealth of information about the current landscape of European Open Access policies and the following section will address where they align or diverge<sup>5</sup>.

### Alignment

The majority of OA policies across Europe at both funder and institutional level are broadly aligned on the following elements:

Criteria	Funders	Institutions
Mandated deposit of item	75%	63%
Locus of deposit to be a repository	86%	96%
Requirement to make deposit Open Access	65%	38%*

Table 1. Total percentage of policies which stipulate specific criteria in response to individual ROARMAP field

One of the main challenges of the data as they stand is that many policies simply are not as comprehensive as they could be and are not specific enough in their requirements. For example, the asterisked item in Table 1, although relatively aligned on the criteria stated, accounts for almost less than half of all aligned policies when compared to the number of aligned funders policies in this criteria.

### Non-alignment

Where policies are **not** aligned or do not specify particular criteria, the situation is more complex but if steps are taken to rectify this then there is scope to make substantial improvements to European OA policies. Four divergent criteria stand out, of which three are *highly significant*.

The first is the **deposit waiver**. As discussed above and in other PASTEUR4OA Project research<sup>6</sup>, this element is *vital* to the success of a policy and the strength of its implementation. While a proportion of funder policies stipulate that deposit cannot be waived, an almost equal number do not specify either way. Institutional policies meanwhile either do not specify a requirement or are in the position where the question is deemed 'not applicable' since they do not have an OA mandate in the first place (see Table 2).

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix 1

<sup>6</sup> Op Cit (footnote 3)

Field	Response	Funders		Institutions	
		% of policies	Number of Policies	% of policies	Number of Policies
Can Deposit Be Waived?	Yes	8%	5	18%	64
	Not Specified	31%	20	39%	140
	Not Applicable	15%	10	22%	78
	No	46%	30	21%	74

Table 2. Responses to ROARMAP 'Deposit waiver' field

The second is the **date when a deposit should be made OA**. The majority of funder policies ask for this to occur by the end of a policy-specified embargo period, but institutional policies often do not provide guidance on this or simply allow OA to be provided when the publisher permits (see Table 3).

Field	Response	Funders		Institutions	
		% of policies	Number of Policies	% of policies	Number of Policies
Date to be made Open	Acceptance date	5%	3	3%	11
	By end of policy-permitted embargo	49%	32	18%	63
	Not Mentioned	26%	17	43%	154
	As soon as the deposit is completed	3%	2	1%	4
	Other	5%	3	5%	17
	When publisher permits	8%	5	27%	97
	Publication date	5%	3	3%	10

Table 3. Responses to ROARMAP 'Date to make deposit Open Access' field

Table 4 shows the confusion surrounding the third divergent criterion – **Open Licensing conditions**. Many different options appear to be currently favoured by both funders and institutions but with no apparent consensus.

Field	Response	Funders		Institutions	
		% of policies	Number of Policies	% of policies	Number of Policies
Open Licensing Conditions	Requires an open licence without specifying which one	22%	14	16%	56
	Requires a different open licence	0%	0	2%	7
	Requires CC-BY-NC or equivalent	2%	1	4%	16
	Requires CC-BY or equivalent	28%	18	8%	29
	Other	17%	11	13%	47
	Not Specified	11%	7	27%	97
	Does not require any re-use licence	22%	14	29%	104

Table 4. Responses to ROARMAP 'Open Licensing conditions' field

Table 5 shows that the majority of institutions and funders still do not specify or do not **link the deposit of research outputs with research evaluation (performance assessment)** (see Table 5).

Field	Response	Funders		Institutions	
		% of policies	Number of Policies	% of policies	Number of Policies
Link to Research Evaluation?	Yes	8%	5	13%	47
	Not Specified	58%	38	62%	221
	No	34%	22	25%	88

Table 5. Responses to ROARMAP 'Deposit is a precondition for research evaluation'.

The tables above show the disparity between funder and Institutional policy requirements on all four criteria. Not only do they not align, but in many cases there is an absence of any specification whatsoever. The simple act of aligning policies on the question of the **deposit waiver** and the **date deposits should be made open** would have far-reaching impact on the strength of OA policies across the continent.

### The problem with vague and insufficiently precise policies

Many of the policies recorded in ROARMAP do not contain detailed descriptions of their requirement: a large number do not specify or mention some essential elements which are critical to promoting a strong, effective policy. In many cases rectifying this lack of information would be a straightforward and simple way of improving the overall strength and comprehensiveness of a policy. In this analysis several areas were found to be lacking:

- Date when item should be deposited
- Whether Open Access to the deposited item can be waived by the author
- Length of embargo periods for HASS (humanities and social sciences) and STEM (science, technology, engineering and medicine) disciplines, and if the maximal embargo period can be waived
- ‘Gold’ OA publishing options (where Open Access is provided by publishing openly available articles in journals)
- Link to research evaluation (e.g. the ‘Liege / HEFCE’ model, where the policy states that non-compliance will be taken into account in research assessment processes)

The most concerning of these are two *key criteria* referred to in the Introduction of this brief - **Articles must be made Open Access** and **Link to research evaluation**. These are criteria which can drastically improve the quality, strength and effectiveness of a policy and its subsequent alignment with others of a similar variety<sup>7</sup>.

## II. Open Access policies in Europe: alignment with the Horizon 2020 Open Access policy

The European Commission (EC) published three documents on Open Access in 2012<sup>8</sup>. These set the key priorities in the European Research Area and recognised the need for optimising the circulation, access and transfer of scientific knowledge. The EC proposed to “establish open access to scientific publications as a general principle for all EU funded projects in Horizon 2020”, describing the steps that would follow to enable access to scientific information and clarified how OA policies will be carried out in the EU Framework Programme for Research and

<sup>7</sup> Swan A, Rodrigues E (2015) Open Access policy effectiveness: A briefing paper for research institutions

<http://www.pasteur4oa.eu/sites/pasteur4oa/files/resource/Policy%20effectiveness%20-%20institutions%20final.pdf>

Swan A, Rodrigues E (2015) Open Access policy effectiveness: A briefing paper for research funders

<http://www.pasteur4oa.eu/sites/pasteur4oa/files/resource/Policy%20effectiveness%20-%20funders%20final.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> A Communication: A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth (2012:13),

[http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/research\\_policies/era-communication\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/research_policies/era-communication_en.pdf)

A Communication: Towards Better Access to Scientific Information: Boosting the Benefits of Public Investments in Research,

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document\\_library/pdf\\_06/era-communication-towards-better-access-to-scientificinformation\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document_library/pdf_06/era-communication-towards-better-access-to-scientificinformation_en.pdf)

Recommendation on Access to and Preservation of Scientific Information,

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/sciencesociety/document\\_library/pdf\\_06/recommendation-access-and-preservation-scientific-information\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/sciencesociety/document_library/pdf_06/recommendation-access-and-preservation-scientific-information_en.pdf)

Innovation 2014-2020 (Horizon 2020). Ultimately, these guidelines were announced in December 2013<sup>9</sup> and apply to projects funded under Horizon 2020. They describe under what terms OA to scientific publications and research data must be made.

Table 6 (below) sets out the requirements stipulated by the H2020 OA policy and shows the degree of alignment of European policies recorded in ROARMAP to each individual element of the H2020 policy. Policies are considered based on individual criteria, as opposed to combinations of elements. Alignment in this instance, therefore, is calculated on the number of policies which match each isolated element. In this way one can see an overview of the areas in which policies are generally lacking, rather than considering the alignment of each policy individually.

Field	Horizon 2020 policy requirements	Number of Institutional policies	Number of Funders policies	% Institutional policy alignment to H2020	% Funder policy alignment to H2020
Locus of Deposit	Any suitable repository	341	56	96%	86%
Making Deposit Open	Required / Recommended	273	52	77%	80%
Deposit of item	Required	225	49	63%	75%
Journal Article Version	Author final / published version	169	36	47%	55%
Gold Options	Green (or Gold acceptable if necessary to ensure OA)	149	36	42%	55%
Date of Deposit	At acceptance / publication	94	13	26%	20%
Date to be made OA	At acceptance / deposit / publication / end of policy permitted embargo	88	40	25%	62%
Can Deposit be waived?	No	74	30	21%	46%
Can Open Access be waived?	No	65	14	18%	22%
Embargo HASS	0 / 6 / 12 months	53	32	15%	49%
Precondition for research evaluation	Yes	47	5	13%	8%
Embargo STEM	0 / 6 months	30	44	8%	68%
Open Licensing Conditions	CC-BY or equivalent	29	18	8%	28%
Can Embargo length be waived?	No	11	15	3%	23%
<b>Number of European policies registered in ROARMAP</b>		<b>356</b>	<b>65</b>		

Table 6. Ranking of alignment of European policies to individual H2020 policy elements

The graphic below shows a different view of the information in Table 6. Funder policies seem to be, in general, more aligned to the H2020 criteria than institutional policies. It is clear that only one of the three critical policy elements as identified in PASTEUR4OA research – **Deposit of item is mandatory** – shows significant alignment with the conditions set out by the H2020 policy. There is still space for progress but overall the outlook appears positive. The second critical element – **Deposit cannot be waived** – is an area where there is potential for great improvement. Currently 46% of funder policies stipulate that deposit cannot be waived but only 21% of Institutions hold the same position. And the third critical element – **Linking deposit to performance evaluation** – is poorly aligned across European policies, with only 13% (institutions) and 8% (funders) of policies aligning on this criterion.

<sup>9</sup> Guidelines on Open Access to Scientific Publications and Research Data in Horizon 2020, [http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants\\_manual/hi/oa\\_pilot/h2020-hi-oa-pilot-guide\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/oa_pilot/h2020-hi-oa-pilot-guide_en.pdf)

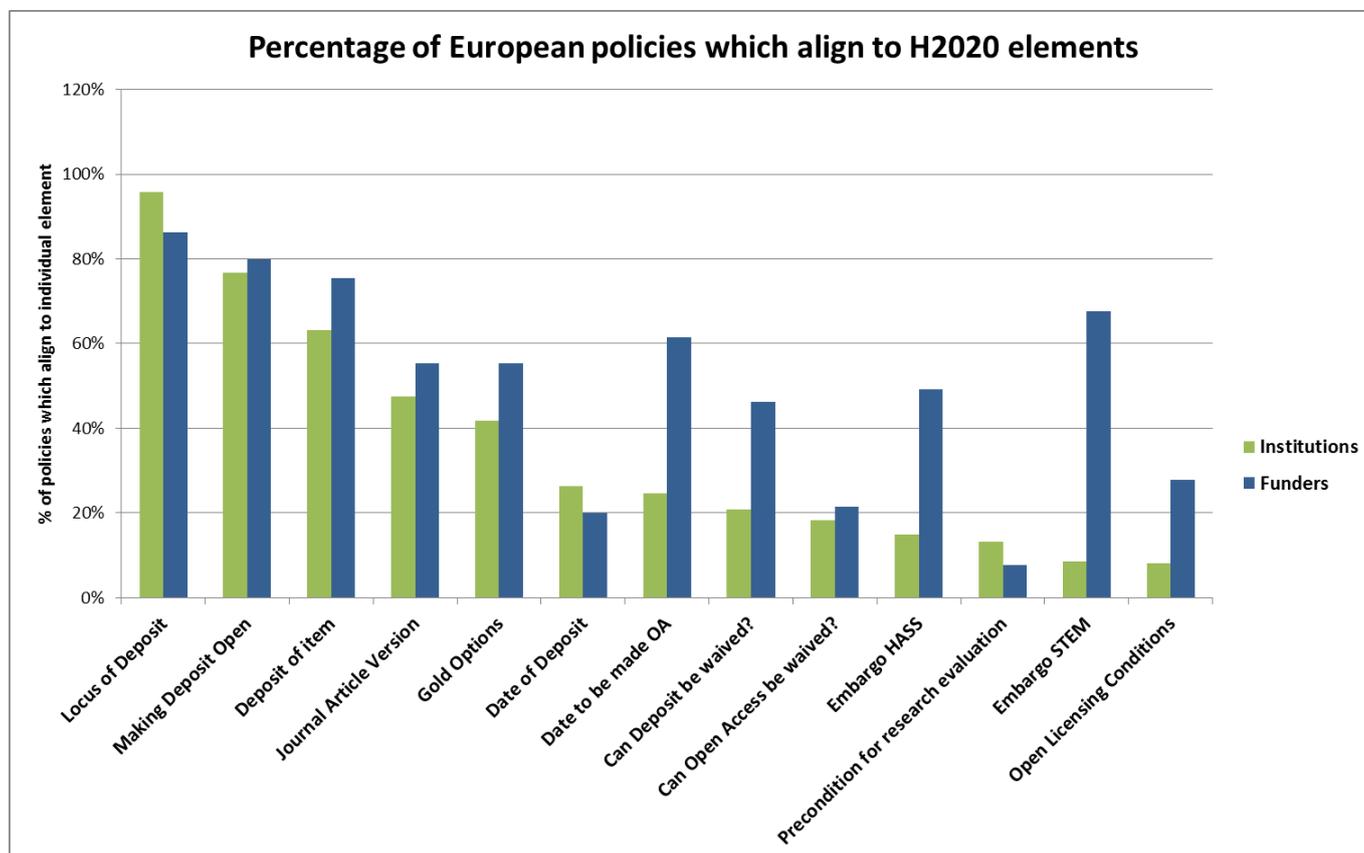


Figure 1. Graph showing disparity between institutional and funder policies with regards to individual elements of H2020 policy.

### III. Conclusion/The way forward

The Open Access policy landscape in Europe is developing in a positive direction and has much to gain from a resolution to become more closely aligned. Recommendations for the future include following guidelines to ensure the development of more comprehensive policies<sup>10</sup> - policies which categorically stipulate positions on key areas such as mandating deposit and not allowing waivers on open access or indeed on deposit itself. Alignment of key elements will bring practical benefits such as higher rates of deposit, better visibility of research, more funding opportunities and higher citation rates, along with the ability to accomplish straightforward interdisciplinary, cross-national and international collaboration.

10 OA Policy Alignment Checklist (2015)

[http://www.pasteur4oa.eu/sites/pasteur4oa/files/resource/Policy%20alignment%20check%20list\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.pasteur4oa.eu/sites/pasteur4oa/files/resource/Policy%20alignment%20check%20list_FINAL.pdf)

Appendix 1. Alignment of European policies based on response to ROARMAP fields

Field	Response	Funders		Institutions	
		% of Funder policies	No of Funder Policies	% of Institution policies	No of Institution Policies
Deposit Of Item	Not Specified	11%	7	9%	31
	Requested	14%	9	28%	100
	Required	75%	49	63%	225
Locus Of Deposit	Any suitable repository	32%	21	5%	19
	Institutional Repository	25%	16	90%	321
	Not Specified	14%	9	4%	15
	Subject repository	29%	19	0%	1
Date Of Deposit	No later than the time of acceptance	12%	8	15%	53
	By end of policy-specified embargo	37%	24	4%	13
	Not Specified	34%	22	49%	174
	Other	8%	5	10%	34
	When publisher permits	2%	1	12%	41
	No later than the publication date	8%	5	12%	41
Journal Article Version	Published edition (version of record)	6%	4	8%	29
	Other	5%	3	8%	28
	Not Specified	40%	26	45%	159
	Author's final peer-reviewed version	49%	32	39%	140
Can Deposit Be Waived?	Yes	8%	5	18%	64
	Not Specified	31%	20	39%	140
	Not Applicable	15%	10	22%	78
	No	46%	30	21%	74
Making deposited item Open Access	Not Mentioned	20%	13	21%	75
	Other	0%	0	2%	8
	Recommended	15%	10	39%	138
	Required	65%	42	38%	135
Date to be made Open	Acceptance date	5%	3	3%	11
	By end of policy-permitted embargo	49%	32	18%	63
	Not Mentioned	26%	17	43%	154
	As soon as the deposit is completed	3%	2	1%	4
	Other	5%	3	5%	17
	When publisher permits	8%	5	27%	97
	Publication date	5%	3	3%	10
Can making the deposited item Open Access be waived?	No	22%	14	18%	65
	Not Applicable	55%	36	35%	126
	Not Specified	17%	11	26%	94
	Yes	6%	4	20%	71

<b>Open Licensing Conditions</b>	Requires an open licence without specifying which one	22%	14	16%	56
	Requires a different open licence	0%	0	2%	7
	Requires CC-BY-NC or equivalent	2%	1	4%	16
	Requires CC-BY or equivalent	28%	18	8%	29
	Other	17%	11	13%	47
	Not Specified	11%	7	27%	97
	Does not require any re-use licence	22%	14	29%	104
<b>Policy's permitted embargo length for humanities and social sciences</b>	0 months	6%	4	1%	2
	6 months	9%	6	4%	14
	12 months	34%	22	10%	37
	24 months	2%	1	3%	9
	Longer	3%	2	1%	5
	Not Specified	46%	30	81%	289
	<b>Policy's permitted embargo length for science, technology and medicine</b>	0 months	6%	4	1%
6 months		62%	40	8%	28
12 months		5%	3	8%	29
24 months		0%	0	1%	4
Longer		3%	2	2%	6
Not Specified		25%	17	81%	287
<b>Can maximal allowable embargo length be waived?</b>		Yes	3%	2	5%
	Not Specified	28%	18	24%	86
	Not Applicable	46%	30	68%	242
	No	23%	15	3%	11
<b>Gold OA publishing option:</b>	Recommended as an alternative to Green self-archiving	31%	20	17%	62
	Required	0%	0	0%	0
	Permitted alternative to Green self-archiving	25%	16	24%	87
	Other	6%	4	5%	17
	Not Specified	38%	25	53%	190
<b>Link to Research Evaluation?</b>	Yes	8%	5	13%	47
	Not Specified	58%	38	62%	221
	No	34%	22	25%	88