



Press release

All European scientific articles to be freely accessible by 2020

Europe makes a definitive choice for open access by 2020

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All scientific articles in Europe must be freely accessible as of 2020. EU member states want to achieve optimal reuse of research data. They are also looking into a European visa for foreign start-up founders. And, according to the new Innovation Principle, new European legislation must take account of its impact on innovation. These are the main outcomes of the meeting of the Competitiveness Council in Brussels on 27 May.

Sharing knowledge freely

Under the presidency of Netherlands State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science Sander Dekker, the EU ministers responsible for research and innovation decided unanimously to take these significant steps. Mr Dekker is pleased that these ambitions have been translated into clear agreements to maximise the impact of research. 'Research and innovation generate economic growth and more jobs and provide solutions to societal challenges,' the state secretary said. 'And that means a stronger Europe. To achieve that, Europe must be as attractive as possible for researchers and start-ups to locate here and for companies to invest. That calls for knowledge to be freely shared. The time for talking about open access is now past. With these agreements, we are going to achieve it in practice.'

Open access

Open access means that scientific publications on the results of research supported by public and public-private funds must be freely accessible to everyone. That is not yet the case. The results of publicly funded research are currently not



accessible to people outside universities and knowledge institutions. As a result, teachers, doctors and entrepreneurs do not have access to the latest scientific insights that are so relevant to their work, and universities have to take out expensive subscriptions with publishers to gain access to publications.

Reusing research data


From 2020, all scientific publications on the results of publicly funded research must be freely available. It also must be able to optimally reuse research data. To achieve that, the data must be made accessible, unless there are well-founded reasons for not doing so, for example intellectual property rights or security or privacy issues.

Greater societal impact

The member states are also calling on the wider research world, including research funders, to introduce changes, for example by modifying the way scientists are assessed. They should be no longer be judged only on the number of publications or citations they produce, but more attention should be paid to the societal impact of their work. 'Research and innovation provide the solutions to the social and economic challenges of the future,' said Mr Dekker. 'Open access breaks down the walls surrounding science and makes sure that society benefits as much as possible from all scientific insights. In that way, we maximise the impact of universities and knowledge institutions.'

A better climate in which to locate and invest

Better and smarter European legislation should provide a favourable climate for businesses to locate and invest. Rules must never stand in the way of innovation. The newly adopted Innovation Principle aims to ensure that all new European policy initiatives and legislation take account of their impact on innovation. To examine existing European rules, the research ministers announced 'innovation deals', a European variant of the 'green deals' in the Netherlands. Governments, businesses and research institutions will be



looking at how they can remove barriers to innovation from existing European legislation.

Start-up visas

To boost the European economy, Europe must be made more attractive for foreign start-ups, which are an important source of innovation and jobs. The member states are looking into on introducing a European start-up visa for foreign start-up founders so that they will not have to apply for a separate visa in each member state.

Horizon 2020 programme

The European framework programme for research and innovation Horizon 2020, with a budget of €70 billion, is the world's largest cross-border programme. An evaluation of the previous EU research programme shows that every euro invested in research and innovation generated an estimated eleven euros, for example through innovations, new technologies and products. This is why the European research and innovation ministers want to encourage large-scale investment in knowledge. In Horizon 2020, besides impact and cross-border cooperation, excellence is the most important condition for acquiring European funding. 'With these agreements, my colleagues are showing that we all agree that sharing knowledge and data, making legislation future-proof and investing in excellent research are indispensable to ensuring a strong Europe in the future,' said Mr Dekker.

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