Recommendations for the European Commission

Occasion: **Workshop Open Access to Research Data**

Date: **21.2.2013**

Participants from the Research Community:

- Fausto Giunchiglia, President Italian Node TrentoRise, EIT KIC ICT-Labs
- Werner Haas, Director Joanneum Research Digital Österreich
- Simon Hodson, JISC Programme Manager, Digital Infrastructure, Managing Research Data
- Teodor Sedlarski, Vice Dean for Academic Affairs and International Relations, Professor of Economics, Sofia University St-Kliment Ohridsko
- York Sure-Vetter, President, GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences
- Klaus Tochtermann, Director German National Library of Economics ZBW
- Stefan Winkler-Nees, Programm Officer Scientific Library Services and Information Systems, DFG
- Kush Wadhwa, Senior Partner, Trilateral Research & Consulting, Coordinator of the RECODE project
- Yannis Ioannidis, President and General Director of the ATHENA Research and Innovation Center

Participants from the European Commission & ERC Executive Agency (ERCEA):

- José Cotta, DG CONNECT, Head of Unit C3 "Digital Science"
- Celina Ramjoué, DG CONNECT, Policy Officer Unit C3 "Digital Science"
- Carlos Morais Pires, DG CONNECT, Head of Sector Unit C1 "e-Infrastructure"
- Jarkko Siren, DG CONNECT, Project Officer Unit C1 "e-Infrastructure"
- Gilles Laroche, DG RTD, Head of Unit B6 "Ethics and Gender"
- Jean-François Dechamp, DG RTD, Policy Officer Unit B6 "Ethics and Gender"
- Daniel Spichtinger, DG RTD, Policy Officer Unit B6 "Ethics and Gender"
- Dagmar Meyer, ERCEA, Unit A.1: Support to the Scientific Council

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The European Commission pronounced that open access to scientific information is a key goal of Horizon 2020. As a first step, open access to scientific publications shall become a general principle of the project. In a next step it is foreseen to promote open access to research data of publicly funded research, too.[1]
Before this principle can be implemented, some questions concerning the specifics of research data need to be answered first. For this reason Prof. York Sure-Vetter and Prof. Klaus Tochtermann have invited leading experts from across Europe as well as representatives of the European Commission to a joint conversation on 21.02.2013 in Brussels.

[1] Press release of the European Commission (17.07.2012): Scientific data: open access to research results will boost Europe's innovation capacity. (Online: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-790_en.htm)

The participants focused on the following six questions during their debate:

1. **What is meant by research data?**
2. **Which areas of Horizon 2020 should be covered?**
3. **How should the issue of data re-use be addressed?**
4. **When and how does openness need to be limited?**
5. **Where should research data go?**
6. **How can we enhance "data awareness" and a culture of sharing?**

After an open and rich debate the European experts concerning research data formulated recommendations for the pilot to each raised question which will be presented in the following.

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Recommendations of the participants of the workshop on Open Access to Research Data to the European Commission

1. What is meant by research data?

The participants agreed that it is not possible to provide a clear definition, what research data exactly is. Nevertheless, it is possible to give a short definition. Therefore we recommend that

- **the European Commission should include a short purpose-driven definition of research data. (E.g.: "Research data is any evidence that is needed to underpin research.")**

The experts came to the conclusion that researchers know within their projects what research data is. Therefore the experts advise to implement an instrument to identify research data at an early stage of a project.

- **We recommend that the European Commission should introduce mandatory data management plans which include a description of the data sets, information on data handling beyond project lifetime and possible repositories for depositing the data sets.**

2. Which areas of Horizon 2020 should be covered?

The experts acknowledged that this policy aims to enforce open access to data. Therefore

- **we recommend that all areas within the pillar "Excellent Science" and the pillar "Joint Research Center (JRC)" should be mandatory covered in the pilot.**

- **The experts strongly recommend that data of all areas within the Social Challenges pillar should be as openly accessible as possible. Specific sensitive data can be excluded if there are strong reasons against the open accessibility. These reasons have to be defined within the data management plan.**

- **No area within the Industrial Leadership pillar must be mandatory. Nevertheless, data management is important and should be pursued. The data of this pillar could be made open within the particular company.**

- **In addition we suggest establishing the pilot on the structure level of Horizon 2020.**

3. How should the issue of data re-use be addressed?

- **We agreed that a framework is needed to define different solutions taking into account different business models.**

- **We strongly recommend that licenses should be as open as possible.**

4. When and how does openness need to be limited?

The experts acknowledged that an embargo can be a useful instrument. For instance embargos work well in the Social Sciences. Therefore we recommend that,

- **according to the discipline, an embargo of up to 12 months should be possible.**

The experts discussed whether there should be an opt-out-clause within the pilot.

- **We recommend to offer the possibility to opt-out in cases when the necessity during the lifetime of the project can be proven.**
- **Besides we suggest to re-appraise the opt-out strategy at the end of Horizon 2020.**

5. Where should research data go?

The experts agreed that research data should be hosted by infrastructures on the basis of an open participatory approach (OpenAire or other). To provide the necessary information of the possible repositories, the experts recommend to

- **include a list of potential repositories within the pilot.**

The experts discussed the sustainability of the existing infrastructures and recommend that

- **infrastructures have to be developed to provide necessary storage capacities as well as appropriate management structures / skills.**

6. How can we enhance "data awareness" and a culture of sharing?

The experts agreed that the process of enhancing data awareness starts by making researchers deal with certain questions (e.g. within the data management plan).

- **We recommend to enhance further data awareness through the implementation of training measures related to data management.**

- **Besides it is necessary to promote the benefits of open access in peer networks.**