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ALLEA'S RESPONSE TO COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON RESEARCH ASSESSMENT AND OPEN SCIENCE

ALLEA, the European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities, warmly welcomes the adoption of the *Conclusions on Research Assessment and Implementation of Open Science* by the Council of the European Union on 10 June.¹ The Conclusions are in agreement with points that ALLEA itself has made over the years, in particular on the necessity of appropriately implementing and rewarding open science practices and the development of research assessment criteria that follow principles of excellence, research integrity and trustworthy science.

The importance of promoting and rewarding ethical Open Science practices, where research outcomes (including data, software, protocols, etc.) are shared early in the research cycle and according to FAIR principles, has been repeatedly advocated by ALLEA.² We are therefore delighted to see such strong support for Open Science in the recent Conclusions.

At the same time, ALLEA continues to stress that it matters *how* we open knowledge – The push for Open Access publishing is driven by good intentions but has also paved the way for unethical publishing practices. Examples of these are the introduction of exorbitant “article processing charges” for gold Open Access publication in some of the “prestige journals”, the blossoming of predatory journals and publishers engaging in predatory behaviours,³ and the increased market dominance of the big commercial publishing houses, among others.⁴ As such, ALLEA echoes the Council’s position that inclusivity, equity, and diversity should guide the transition to open science, which must be a science open to participation by all as well as access by all.

The above developments have been fuelled by the inappropriate use of journal- and publication-based metrics in funding, hiring and promotion decisions, thereby creating perverse incentives for researchers to continue publishing using expensive “pay-to-publish” and untransparent hybrid models. In addition, the overreliance on bibliometric indicators and the emphasis on quantity over quality have been clearly linked to misconduct. The current assessment systems fail to recognize and reward the diverse set of competencies, activities, and outputs and have been universally identified as a major obstacle in the transition to a more open science culture.⁵


1 <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10126-2022-INIT/en/pdf>

2 See, for example, https://www.allea.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/ALLEA_Response_PlanS.pdf, <https://www.allea.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Ethical-Aspects-of-Open-Access-Report.pdf>, and <https://allea.org/portfolio-item/sustainable-and-fair-data-sharing-in-the-humanities/>

3 <https://www.interacademies.org/publication/predatory-practices-report-English>

4 <https://allea.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/ALLEA-Statement-Equity-in-Open-Access-2021.pdf>

5 https://allea.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Research_Assessments_Event_Report.pdf



ALLEA is pleased to read that the Council also warns that “the current research assessment systems are nowadays to a great extent too focused on the use of some quantitative journal- and publication-based indicators and the evaluation of a narrow range of research outputs” and that existing conditions “may lead to negative biases in terms of research quality, reproducibility and integrity”.

We welcome the principles set out in the Conclusion for designing novel approaches to research assessment, with particular weight on recognizing (1) the critical role for peer review in research assessment and (2) the importance of integrity and ethics in developing criteria focused on quality and impact. There is no “one-size-fits-all” format, and the emphasis on researchers taking responsibility for improving research assessment in their communities aligns well with the core concept of self-regulation set out in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity.⁶

Fundamentally the more open the science, the greater its potential societal impact, and in consequence the greater the responsibility to conduct and communicate it in an ethical manner and in line with principles of research integrity.

ALLEA underscores that the described reforms are urgently needed and require concerted efforts from the international academic community, supported by infrastructures for exchanging best practices as well as the necessary financial resources to implement these. ALLEA is committed to promoting change and values the opportunity to work with the European Commission on these issues in the context of the ERA Forum and as part of the coalition on reforming research assessment.⁷

⁶ <https://allea.org/code-of-conduct/>

⁷ <https://allea.org/allea-joins-the-european-commission-coalition-on-research-assessment-reform/> and <https://allea.org/towards-a-new-european-research-area/>

About ALLEA

ALLEA is the European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities, representing more than 50 academies from about 40 countries in Europe. ALLEA speaks out on behalf of its members on the European and international stages, promotes science as a global public good, and facilitates scientific collaboration across borders and disciplines. Learn more: <https://www.allea.org>
