

Statement on open and sustainable knowledge

27th March 2020

The fight against the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the importance of sharing scientific knowledge immediately and openly among the research community.

In the modern world, the circulation of scientific knowledge has been done through journals to which researchers, universities, research centers, hospitals, etc. subscribed to via their libraries.

The migration of print journals to digital format and to the Internet has boosted the ease of accessing their content, although it has maintained the need to have funding sources to subscribe to them. Researchers have been able to access the articles at any time and from anywhere, provided that the institution in which they work is subscribed to the journals in which those articles were published.

Scientific knowledge is thus freed from physical obstacles, but still bound to economic obligations that make its access subscription-dependent. The Open Access and Open Science movement seeks to make the outcomes of scientific research immediately available to the research community. Opening research results improves and accelerates science and contributes to finding solutions to the great social challenges we face such as the current COVID-19 pandemic.

In recent years, publishers have benefited from the pressure to publish in open access by charging fees through the so-called APCs (Article Processing Costs). The payment of these costs falls on researchers, to which the amount already paid by institutions for subscriptions should be added. The result is that, in many occasions, the scientific community pays twice for the same thing.

The diverse consortia, purchasing groups, associations and institutions that sign this declaration and that are hiring journals for academic libraries, we all want to state that worldwide knowledge is understood to be a world heritage, and that today's world needs this knowledge to be openly and immediately available to everyone.

We also state that scientific communication has its costs, and that "open" does not mean *free*. The institutions we represent do not want to stop contributing to their costs. However, they consider that the money that is already being paid in subscriptions to scientific publications should be enough to maintain the current system while it goes Open Access.

In a similar way to what our colleagues do [internationally](#) or in some countries ([France](#), [United Kingdom](#), etc.), with this statement we all want to urge both the institutions that support and carry out research, and the publishers and providers of information services to accelerate the transition towards Open Access within a framework of economic sustainability.