

Wednesday June 20th, 2012

The first National Task Force Meeting on Open Access in Greece was successfully organized by the National Documentation Centre (EKT/NHRF) On June 20th, 2012. The Task Force was constituted within the frame of the project Mediterranean Open Access Network (MedOANet), bringing together important stakeholders in the realm of research in Greece. One of the aims of this FP7-funded project is to support coordinated strategies and policies in Open Access to scientific information at the national level in Greece, Italy, Spain, France, Portugal and Turkey, as well as to help coordinate developments in those countries.

The National Task Force in Greece comprises representatives of research funders, research performers, publishers, and businesses. More specifically it comprises representatives of the council of University and Higher Education Rectors, representatives of the council of the Presidents of the Greek Research Centres, representatives of public Research Funders, such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture, of private research Funders, such as the Onassis Foundation, the Hellenic Academic Libraries Link and the South Europe Libraries Link-Greece, representative of the European project OpenAIRE, representatives of Academic publishers and the business sector.

This first meeting was organized around two sessions: the first, an introduction to Open Access and Open Access developments internationally, in Europe and in Greece; the second involved the presentation of and discussion on strategies and processes on implementing Open Access policies for funders, research performers and publishers and enforcing Open Access, as well as a discussion on particular challenges facing each of the stakeholders categories that relate to providing access to research.

In presenting the current situation in Greece as mapped by the project through extensive surveys, it became apparent that a lot more needs to be done in the country with respect to implementing policies (no research institution or funder currently has an open access mandate), as well as with respect to developing the necessary technological infrastructures that will empower institutions in providing access to the research they produce and in preserving it (less than half of the higher education institutions and only one research centre currently possess an institutional repository).

At the same time, this is a turning point for the educational and research system in Greece, which is under reform, and therefore it is a good opportunity to promote positive changes in the system with reference to access to, dissemination of and

preservation of research. Stakeholders from the research and education sector were very positive about the concept of Open Access, and in fact, the Green route to open access, as a way of providing access to their research outputs, safekeeping and promoting their research activities. To this end, specific policies and texts thereof, were discussed to be forwarded for debate and, potentially, endorsement to the Council of the University Rectors and that of the Presidents of the public Research Centres, as well as the Higher Education Technological Institutions. Additionally, the possibility was discussed of including a clause on Open Access in a sample regulation for Universities that is being prepared by the Ministry of Education, to assist the Universities in preparing internal regulations, which are called for by the new law on Higher Education.

Further important points that were raised concerned the significant role of the research and academic libraries in awareness-raising regarding Open Access and in educating researchers about its benefits, as well as the concerns, on the part of the researchers regarding intellectual property rights in the internet, and especially with regard to research data in the realm of culture, whose openness is largely prevented in Greece by a strict antiquities law.

Overall, the representatives of the stakeholders expressed their commitment to promoting the concept of open access to research, especially that funded with public resources, and to further widening the group of stakeholders that will participate in a systematic national process towards Open Access in the fall in view of increasing its impact.