

A snapshot of Open Data and Open Science Policies in Europe

Version 2.0, October 2017

1. Introduction

The [Digital Curation Centre](#) (DCC) maintains a watching brief on funder data policies, and we are currently collaborating with [SPARC Europe](#) to extend our coverage to make it more comprehensive at European level and to cover open research practice more generally. While some studies have been done in this area, all are either out of date or concentrate on open access publications or open government data rather than open research data. The most recent analysis dates from 2013, and while this is a relatively short period the intervening period has been one of considerable change in research data policy.

This document provides a list of national research data policies in Europe. It concentrates on the twenty-eight EU member states, but also covers EEA countries and selected others from the European Research Area. Once the list is fully populated, we will analyse the differences and similarities between individual national approaches, and – where policies have been in place for a reasonable amount of time – seek to assess their effectiveness in preserving and opening research data.

Version note: This is intended to be a live document, with planned biannual revisions via input from national contacts. The version you are currently reading is the first revision (i.e. v2.0) of October 2017.

Changes between v1.0 and v2.0:

- Czech entry updated;
- Estonian entry amended;
- Hungarian entry updated;
- Irish entry updated;
- Polish entry updated;
- Serbian entry added;
- Slovenian entry updated;
- Swiss entry updated;
- Minor formatting corrections.

The original version of March 2017 is archived [here](#).

2. State by state

Our starting point for this analysis was the 2016 [European Research Area \(ERA\) Progress Report 2016 Country Snapshots](#), each of which includes a statement about whether national OA and open data policies are in place, but does not cite the policies in question. The RIO Country Reports were useful in identifying the policies in question, and we also learned a great deal from the NordForsk report [“Open Access to Research Data – Status, Issues and Outlook”](#).

(N.B Some EU member states, such as Belgium, are more federated/devolved than others, and may have sub-national strategies, policies and approaches in place.)

AUSTRIA

There are no known national policies at present, but the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) includes Open Data on its roadmap of Open Science policies (mid-term) and currently has a call out for a [pilot programme on Open Data](#).

BELGIUM

Preserving and providing access to data to allow verification of published research is addressed in the [“Code of Ethics for Scientific Research in Belgium”](#) (p.8). The code states that “the primary data of a research project and the protocols must be kept and made accessible during a determined and sufficient period of time. When publications, especially review and summary articles, do not contain all the necessary data for verification, the data should nevertheless be available” Activities are also in progress as part of the broader Open Access/Open Science conversation. [The Brussels Declaration on Open Access](#) from 2012 (signed by the federal, Flemish and Brussels-Wallonia Science Ministers, commits the signatories to “investigating possibilities and new opportunities in the broad Open Access field, all in frequent collaboration with relevant stakeholders, considering Open Access to scientific publications a forerunner of new initiatives in the ‘Open Data’ and ‘Open Science’ areas”.

BULGARIA

According to the Ministry of Education and Science of Bulgaria, an academic team is currently working on a policy for open science and open research data, but there are at present no active national policies governing research data in Bulgaria, and little information is publicly available regarding the work that is in progress.

CROATIA

No national policy is yet in place, but there is much on-going work in this area. National policies on access and preservation of scientific information (both publications and data) are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports. The Ministry strongly supports open access to scientific information to provide maximum impact from the research they support. [The Croatian Research and Innovation Infrastructures Roadmap 2014-2020](#) addresses the promotion of open access to research data, “especially data funded from public sources”. (See p.8, paras g to j.)

CYPRUS

A national policy for Open Access was approved and announced in February 2016, which also contains encouragement for researchers to make their research data Open Access. The same policy has been adopted by the national funder, the Research Promotion Foundation. Links: [the national policy](#) and the [Research Promotion Foundation’s funding plan](#) (in Greek), and [the national policy translated into English](#).

CZECH REPUBLIC

A National Strategy on Open Access To Scientific Information (2017-2020) was released in 2017, which covers both research publications and research data.

DENMARK

The most relevant document is [“Danish Government. \(2012\). Denmark – a nation of solutions, Enhanced cooperation and improved frameworks for innovation in enterprises. Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education.”](#) (data is covered on pp. 20-24.) Furthermore, a group comprising the Danish Rectors’ College, the Danish e-Infrastructure Cooperation (DeIC) and Denmark’s Electronic Research Library established a Steering Group for National Data Management, which presented a [strategy on data management](#) in 2015 (in Danish.) This advocates a structured, holistic approach to data management, data preservation and data infrastructures, with a bottom-up process based on stakeholder collaboration. (Source: NordForsk (2016), op. cit.) A National Forum for Data Management (https://www.deic.dk/datamanagement/DM_forum, Danish language) was also formed in 2015, with representatives from the Danish universities and national libraries and a secretariat from DeIC. Its vision is “to promote academic and research initiatives in research data management within universities, and link them in a national and international cooperation.”

ESTONIA

Responsibility for research data lies with the Estonian Research Council. They have [a webpage](#) dedicated to it (in the Estonian language) and there is also [a report](#) (“Open Science in Estonia: Principles and Recommendations for Developing National Policy”) which provides an overview of the current state of play. This document is not policy itself, but rather a set of recommendations for developing future national OS policy. The webpage and report are now also [available in English](#).

FINLAND

The most relevant document is the “[Open Science and Research Roadmap 2014–2017](#)” (Ministry of Education and Culture) which sets the policy framework for national efforts in the field. This document is complemented with an Open Science Handbook and a Data Management Guide directed at Finnish researchers. (Source: NordForsk (2016), op. cit.)

FRANCE

In Autumn 2016, the French Senate adopted the “[Law for a Digital Republic](#)” (Loi n°2016-1321 pour une République numérique,) designed by the government as a framework for the development of the digital economy. Article 30 ensures the re-usability of open data deriving from public funding:

When data result from a research activity funded for at least half by the State, local authorities or public institutions, by national agencies or by European Union grant are not protected by a specific right or a particular regulation and have been made public by the researcher, the institution or the research agency, their reuse is free. The publisher of a scientific publication mentioned in the subparagraph I cannot limit the reuse of the research data made public in the publication.

GERMANY

DFG (the main German research funder) has [Guidelines on the Handling of Research Data](#). These guidelines also point towards a set of [Principles for the Handling of Research Data](#), adopted by the Alliance of German Science Organisations on 24 June 2010, and developed in partnership between a number of high profile German research organisations. In 2016 the Helmholtz Association, a union of 18 German scientific-technical and biological-medical research Centres, adopted a [position paper on the management of research data](#). This includes a commitment to “store research data from the Centres within suitable data infrastructures and make them available openly and free of charge for subsequent use by science and society.”

GREECE

There are as yet no known national policies on research data in Greece.

HUNGARY

No policy is yet in place, but first steps are being taken in Autumn 2017, with the formation of a joint committee on open science. The committee’s first meeting was scheduled to be held on 31 October 2017, with a national workshop on open science following soon after on 7 November, including a round-table discussion with different stakeholders.

IRELAND

There is no mandatory policy as yet at government or research council level. The EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) is the sole Irish funder requiring data deposit from projects which they fund. “All significant datasets produced during the research project must be submitted to the EPA at the end of the project for archiving in the EPA Research Data Archive ([SAFER](#)) (p.7)

In a distant but still noteworthy initiative, the Irish government’s Government Reform Unit has recently published its “[Open Data Strategy 2017 – 2022](#)” which notes an intention to “Explore the possibility to broaden the initiative to include Open Research Data, in line with the requirements of the Horizon 2020 research programmes, and with emerging policy in Irish research funding bodies. Where research is publicly-funded, make the research findings available in Open Data formats.” This exploratory work is anticipated to begin in 2021.

ITALY

There is no known national policy as yet, but there have been announcements about a national policy on Open Science and research data from the Ministry of Research and Education. [A recent report](#) from the Ministry (June 2016) makes reference to it:

The current Italian National Research Program aims to encourage the development and dissemination of Open Science and Big Data [.] The plan is to adopt a national policy on the deposit, open access and the reuse of products and research data, in consideration also of big data. In this regard, a working group will be set up to define and propose short strategies, guidelines, implementation plans and shared tools at inter-institutional level, European and international level[.] (Translated from p. 74.)

LATVIA

There are as yet no OA policies in place governing research data in Latvia.

LITHUANIA

[The Law on Higher Education and Research](#) (2009, revised 2015 and 2016) stipulates that “the results of all research works carried out in state higher education and research institutions must be communicated to the public.” This can be interpreted as covering research data as well as publications, but in practice data deposit rates are not high. More recently, the Research Council of Lithuania approved a set of [“Guidelines on Open Access to Scientific Publications and Data”](#) in February 2016.

LUXEMBOURG

There are as yet no policies in place governing research data in Luxembourg.

MALTA

There are as yet no known open research data policies in place governing research data in Malta.

NETHERLANDS

Open data is addressed within the [Nationaal Plan Open Science](#) which deals with data as well as other research outputs, and also has [a supporting website](#) (in English). There is also a [National Coordination Point for Research Data Management](#).

POLAND

The national Open Access policy in Poland, [“Directions of the development of open access to research publications and research results in Poland”](#) (2015), addresses data in a single paragraph which states that, in line with EC recommendations, Open Access should also be provided to research data, and recommends that research institutions and individual researchers should open research data taking into consideration world trends and best practices. A more recent document, [Towards Open Research Data in Poland](#) was released in 2017, and while this is not policy per se, it seeks “to provide a starting point for the debate about opening research data in Poland” and includes an analysis of the legal framework and the presents results of a survey and a qualitative study conducted amongst the Polish academic community, together with a list of recommendations.

PORTUGAL

FCT (the national research funder) has a policy on management and sharing of data and other results arising from FCT-funded research, but in practice this is a general call for researchers to share their data, and not an effective policy. The Portuguese Ministry of Science has established an Expert Group on national Open Science Policy. The group is producing recommendations that will include recommendations on open research data policies. At the same time there are currently some discussions for concrete national initiatives both at the infrastructure level and capacity building and training levels. Furthermore, a consortium of the University of Minho, the Ministry of Science and FCT organise periodic Research Data Management Forum events to improve communication and

understanding between research and government.

ROMANIA

There are as yet no known open research data policies governing research data in Romania.

SLOVAKIA

There are as yet no known open research data policies governing research data in Slovakia.

SLOVENIA

In May 2017 the Government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted the "[Akcijski načrt izvedbe nacionalne strategije odprtega dostopa do znanstvenih objav in raziskovalnih podatkov v Sloveniji 2015-2020](#)" ("Action plan for the implementation of the national strategy of open access to scientific publications and research data in Slovenia 2015-2020, currently only available in Slovenian.) The plan covers activities, indicators, responsible and cooperating institutions for the implementation of actions, timeframe and financial resources, and research data are covered in chapters I., III., IV., V., and VI. The existing [official policy on Open Access](#) also contains a chapter on an open data pilot, more or less in line with the H2020 regulation, and covers data management planning, open access by default, plus recommendations about where to store data for the longer term.

SPAIN

No OA policies are currently in place for Spanish research data, although discussions are being undertaken at Ministry level.

SWEDEN

The [ERA Country Snapshot for Sweden](#) states that no OA policies are currently in place for research data. However, the Swedish Research Council proposed a set of national guidelines for open access to scientific information in January 2015. This proposal includes a section on Guidelines for Open Access to publications, and a description of a process towards providing Open Access also to research data. The intention is that all research data, produced in whole or in part through public funding, should be made openly available as soon as possible. (Source: NordForsk (2016), op. cit.)

UNITED KINGDOM¹

The [RCUK Common Principles on Data Policy](#), published in 2011 and last revised in 2015, underpin the individual policies of the seven public research funding agencies. There is also a [Concordat on Open Research Data](#) (2016) to which RCUK, HEFCE, Universities UK and the Wellcome Trust are all signatories.

3. Selected non-EU countries

ICELAND

Discussions on Open Access to research data have recently been initiated both within the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and at the National and University Library, and awareness of the importance of issues relating to open access to digital research results, especially for smaller countries, is growing. The Ministry is currently drawing up a plan for Icelandic higher education and research for the years 2017–2021, and the importance of structured data management and open access to research data is likely to be included there. Currently, no requirements on e.g. providing a data management plan are imposed when applying for a grant in the public competitive funds. (Source: NordForsk (2016), op. cit.)

¹ The UK is expected to leave the European Union in March 2019.

NORWAY

The Research Council of Norway released a policy on [Open Access to Research Data](#) in 2014.

SERBIA

No policy is yet in place, but work is underway at a national level. An official group was formed by the Ministry of Sciences, which funds the majority of Serbian research, in July 2017. This followed informal discussions dating back to approximately 2013. A draft “Platform for Open Science in Serbia” document has been produced, and although this is not yet publicly available it is hoped that it will receive an official release by the end of 2017.

SWITZERLAND

The programme “[Scientific information: access, processing and safeguarding](#),” initiated by the Rectors’ Conference of Swiss Universities (Program SUC 2013-2016 P-2) addresses research data. (Available in French, German and Italian.)

Additionally, the Swiss National Science Foundation released its [Research Policy on Open Research Data](#) in 2017.

4. Multinational and non-national policies

These policies are included both as influencers on national policies and as exemplars of data management norms / best practice.

- [Amsterdam Call for Action on Open Science](#) (2016)
- [H2020 Programme Guidelines on FAIR Data Management in Horizon 2020](#) (2016)
- [G8 science ministers’ statement](#) (2013)
- [The Panton Principles](#) (2010)
- [OECD principles and guidelines for access to research data from public funding](#) (2007)
- [INSPIRE Directive](#) (2007)

5. Acknowledgements

Many thanks are due to several colleagues from across Europe who have helped to identify relevant policies, or confirmed their absence: the ‘Additional Information’ sections are largely down to information and insight that they provided. Thanks in particular are due to Anthony Ross-Hellauer and Anja Oberlaender (Austria & Germany), Myriam Mertens and Gwen Franck (Belgium), Milena Dobрева (Bulgaria & Malta), Anton Gerunov (Bulgaria), Vasiliki Koukounidou (Cyprus), Lenka Nemeckova (Czech Republic), Jesper Boserup Thestrup (Denmark), Raivo Ruusalepp and Priit Tamm (Estonia), Victoria Tsoukala and Marina Angelaki (Greece), Gyöngyi Karácsony (Hungary), Breeda Herlihy (Ireland), Paola Gargiulo and Liise Lehtsalu (Italy), Daina Ostrovskā (Latvia), Gintare Tautkevičienė (Lithuania), Ryan Scicluna (Malta), Ingrid Dillo, Marjan Grootveld and Just de Leeuwe (Netherlands), Lidia Stępińska-Ustasiak (Poland), Eloy Rodrigues (Portugal), Biljana Kosanovic (Serbia), Reme Melero (Spain), Irena Vipavc Brvar, Janez Štebe and Mojca Kotar (Slovenia), André Hoffmann (Switzerland).

The information held within this report is accurate to the best of the DCC’s knowledge as of October 2017. We will continue to investigate the open data policy landscape across Europe, updating this document periodically. It is a living document. If you are aware of existing policies or relevant national initiatives, or have corrections to share, please get in touch: info@dcc.ac.uk

This work was commissioned by SPARC Europe, co-financed by SPARC Europe and the Digital Curation Centre (DCC), and carried out by DCC.