In 2016, SPARC Europe has been paving the way for the type of work it intends to focus on between now and 2020. After structured consultation with Open Science and Scholarship (OS) European leaders, and by conducting research into Open Science activity in Europe in 2016, SPARC Europe (SE) now has a strategic plan and a work plan that will strive to make ‘Open’ the default. It has started to do this in 2016 by showcasing Open Science / Scholarship progress in Europe and promoting discourse, by making steps towards sustaining OS services, contributing to cultural change in the research community, and by gaining more of an understanding as to what needs to be done for more Open Science in Europe. 1

1. Establishing the strategy for SPARC Europe in 2016-2020

SPARC Europe published a new strategic plan in early 2016 using input from its members, interview data from 25 key Open Science stakeholders, a SWOT analysis, an Open Agenda organisation mapping, and recommendations from an independent consultant.

Our new vision is:

“Driving to make more research accessible to all, and striving to make ‘Open’ the default in Europe – for the academic community, education, industry, and society.”

Our mission is:

“To provide leadership to Europe’s research community to enable the conditions, opportunities and rights for more access to Europe’s research for all.”

Since there is much to be done to make ‘Open’ the default in the areas of science and scholarship, SPARC Europe will focus on Open Access to Publications, Open Peer Review, Open Data, and Open Educational Resources, as well as Research Evaluation, and Research Integrity in the coming years. It will continue to team up with consultants to accomplish more in these areas, and will work together with other organisations that prioritise Open Science.

For more on our work plan, see below.

2. Helping create Open cultural change

SPARC Europe launched Europe’s Open Access Champions in 2016 and won the LIBER Innovation Award for it in the same year. Fourteen SPARC Europe members contributed to this showcase of stories and visions from Open Access (OA) leaders from the research communities of various EU countries and disciplines. SPARC Europe was consequently invited to write an article and a chapter, and present at several more events in Europe to emphasise the importance of changing culture through more direct engagement with researchers and research administrators. In 2016, SPARC Europe also began work on Europe’s Open Data Champions, where it is focussing on those who are taking significant action to open up their and their colleagues’ data in Europe. This is in line with the SPARC Europe belief that stimulating the good practice of sharing open data, open access or open educational resources amongst peers in the research community will help inspire others to adopt more Open research practice.

1 Please note that a number of strategic activities had been deferred until a suitable Director was in place.
This was achieved in November 2016.
3. Showcasing the strong Open Science work of others

As part of its pluralistic approach to Open research practice and to making ‘Open’ the default, SPARC Europe continued to do more work to accentuate the results of some of Europe’s Open Science key influencers. For example, it summarised and publicised progress made by the European Union on the Amsterdam Call for Action on Open Science, and results of the Competitive Council. It furthermore supported the European Commission’s Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on Copyright in a Single Market by writing a formal response. SPARC Europe was in unison with the views expressed by LIBER, LERU and EBLIDA.

SPARC Europe also started with a new set of activities to promote discourse on some of the significant work being done to implement Open Science in Europe. In late 2016, SPARC Europe highlighted some of the work of Max Planck by inviting Dr Ralf Schimmer to write a paper on “Making moves to the large-scale transition to Open Access”. To stimulate discourse on his approach, SPARC Europe invited a range of experts to provide a variety of opinions on his vision. In the coming years, SPARC Europe intends to promote a range of approaches to Open Science led by some of Europe’s OS leaders. In so doing, it will help reach, inform and engage more of Europe and bring the Open Science support community up to speed with progress in Open Science and Scholarship.

4. Supporting the sustainability of Open Science services

2016 also saw SPARC Europe carry forward the work done by Knowledge Exchange and its Putting down roots, Securing the future of Open Access policies. SPARC Europe is facilitating work to explore how to implement this work. As a result, a group of Research Performing Organisations (universities and research institutions) and Research Funder Organisations have met twice to explore the establishment of a Committee that could help fund essential Open Science services in future, ie. ‘A Global Sustainability Committee for Open Science Services.’ This group currently includes AOASG and CAUL from Australasia, COAR, EIFL, EUA, the European Research Council, DG Research and Innovation at the European Commission, Science Europe, IFLA, LIBER, SPARC and SPARC Europe.

The vision is to have an Open Science infrastructure of freely available Open Science services funded by policymakers and stakeholders, committing to provide sustainable funding for the operation and development of key services. The mission is to provide a new co-ordinated cost-sharing framework to ensure that non-commercial OS services that underpin the development of wider global Open Science are sustained in the future.

Together with the group, SPARC Europe has worked on the terms of reference, the case, elements of governance, and what information needs to be provided by those service providers requesting funding. 2017 will see whether international organisations will now join such a committee to carry out pilots.

5. Mapping Open Science in Europe

In recent years, Europe has seen an acceleration in Open Science / Scholarship policy (OS), service offers, infrastructure development, and a continuing need for supporting cultural change. These areas are increasingly being addressed by many organisations across Europe that serve Research Funder Organisations (RFOs), Research Performing Organisations (RPOs), their libraries and diverse research communities. Before SPARC Europe started work to see how to strengthen OS support in Europe, it wanted to look at who was currently providing what types of services in Europe. Findings in this preliminary report show that organisations seem to be largely offering OS information and knowledge aggregation services; recommendations and guidelines, briefing or position papers; training and educational activities such as webinars, workshops and conferences.
SPARC Europe will further investigate how far stakeholder groups, goals and actual activities overlap in particular areas, to be able to determine where more synergies can help make further progress, and where one can perhaps speak more in unison. The small study also highlighted potential gaps when supporting young researchers and Open Science / Scholarship; in the areas of policy enforcement and monitoring; in Open Science leadership capacity-building; and in Open Educational Resource (OER) work. SPARC Europe will therefore target some of these areas in future years, including policy and young researcher support and OER.

For more information on all results, see the report here.

6. Informing and liaising with the Open Science community

As part of SPARC Europe’s advocacy work, it commissioned a Business Plan Toolkit for Publishing an Open Access Journal. This helps others develop a business plan to make the case for an OA journal. It includes guidance – for research institutions intending on publishing an OA journal – on describing the business venture, the market, governance and ownership, operations, marketing, financial planning and risk assessment, for example.

SPARC Europe hosted a workshop in Helsinki in 2016 as a satellite to its members’ meeting and to LIBER’s Annual Conference on Making ‘Open’ the Default. It primarily brought together Open Access Champions from Croatia, France, Norway, and the UK to share their views on what libraries and, above all, researchers can do to make ‘Open’ the default. Participants discussed their approaches, experiences and visions, sharing them in a different context amongst peers from different domains, bringing them and the audience new insights into the path ahead.

SPARC Europe also presented at several international events in 2016, including:

- **Liber Annual Conference 2016**, 29 June - 1 July 2016, Helsinki
- **Munin Conference on Scholarly Publishing**, 21-22 November 2016, Tromso

Whilst planning its work plan for the coming four years, SPARC Europe attended and actively contributed to some of the following:

- **Open Science Conference**, The Netherlands EU Presidency, 4-5 April 2016, Amsterdam
- **FOSTER Final Meeting**, 28 June 2016, Helsinki
- **Open Knowledge Leaders Programme**, 16-17 July 2016, Berlin, and online programme
- **Open Access Tage**, 10-11 October 2016, Berlin
- **National Points of Reference Meeting, European Commission**, 10 November 2016, Brussels
- **OpenCON Berlin**, 25-26 November 2016, Berlin
- **London Info International**, 6-7 December 2016, London

SPARC Europe was furthermore invited to write a chapter for a Croatian book on Open Access in Science and Higher Education by Skolska Knjiga, 2017 (forthcoming).

With the view to work more closely with organisations where Open Science is a priority, SPARC Europe has also had initial exploratory talks with SPARC (US), LIBER, OpenAIRE, COAR, EIFL and OASPA, as well as with funders such as the Wellcome Trust and the European Commission’s DG
Research & Innovation, as well as with some of its members. SPARC Europe’s vision and implementation plans seem to be in line with and complementary to current work being carried out in Europe in the area of Open Science. SPARC Europe very much looks forward to working together with these drivers and others in the coming years to help make ‘Open’ the default.

7. Planning the work to be done to help make ‘Open’ the default

As an international organisation with a European focus, SPARC Europe will continue to influence Open Scholarship leadership in Europe to develop Open policy, and it will facilitate the implementation of that policy to help ensure ‘Open’ indeed becomes ‘Open’. SPARC Europe will provide advocacy, guidance, tools and services to facilitate this, and will focus on aggregating Europe’s knowledge on Open Science to speed up progress internationally.

What will be essential is to support and strengthen the sometimes rich but fragmented and disparate Open Scholarship (OS) support in Europe since the OS landscape has become so fertile in recent years. Furthermore, a wide range of decision-makers all play an integral part in making ‘Open’ the default, i.e. RPO research managers, funders, research societies and academies, and research assessment bodies. In this context, SPARC Europe will strive to help more communities in their goals to achieve more Openness from the funding, research evaluation, scientific and library communities, to create more fruitful and sustainable Open Scholarship results.

Four programmes will frame SPARC Europe’s work of the coming years:

I. **Influence Europe’s Open Science and Scholarship decision-makers and scholars**
   Targeting additional stakeholders such as funders, research assessment bodies as well as deans and research management; building on the work of champions; bringing European good practice on open science policy to policy makers; and supporting young researchers

II. **Support and strengthen the Open Scholarship (OS) support community in Europe**
   Highlighting and addressing gaps and overlaps in the European OS offering; and facilitating how to better sustain OS services in the future

III. **Provide advocacy, guidance, tools and services in support of the implementation and monitoring of open policies**
   Building the SPARC Europe champions programme (Open Data and OER) and providing tools and outputs to support research leaders / managers and funders towards more openness.

IV. **Carry out European information-gathering and dissemination, including the sharing of good practice and European experience**
   Conducting short landscapes studies or case studies; showcasing strong OS work and facilitating the dissemination of more European news on OS.
8. Strengthening the SPARC Europe brand

SPARC Europe has revised its logo, and has a new corporate design that is reflected in new presentation and document templates conveying more openness and clarity. A completely new website is also currently under way to be published in very early spring. A snapshot of the new design is presented below.

Thank you for supporting us in making further change by being a SPARC Europe member.