

4. Create transparency on the costs and conditions of academic communication

The problem

There are concerns that the current academic publication system is unsustainable for research performing organisations. In order to achieve a cost-effective, efficient and dynamic system of academic communication stakeholders need to gain appropriate insight into its costs and conditions. This is particularly relevant in the transition phase to open access when both Big Deals and article processing charges (APCs) are being used.

The solution

Introduce greater transparency in costs and conditions connected with academic communication as soon as possible so as to enable a better transition to open access.

Concrete actions

- **National authorities and European Commission:** give strong political backing to Research Performing Organisations in their negotiations with publishers.
- **Research Performing Organisations:** collaborate closely, e.g. form consortia, to negotiate with publishers, in order to reach agreements in which fair open access is the default standard.
- **National authorities:** work with all other stakeholders to create a comprehensive and transparent system for gathering and sharing information on the costs and conditions of academic communication.
- **National authorities, Research Performing Organisations and publishers:** require details of public spending to be fully transparent and abolish non-disclosure clauses in contracts.
- **European Commission:** provide guidance to clarify the relevance of EU competition law to the exchange of information on the costs and conditions of academic communication.

Expected positive effects

- Greater transparency will contribute to a level playing field in academic communication, which will benefit small and intermediate as well as new innovative publishers and entrepreneurs;
- Lower overall costs for academic communication;
- Fair pricing.