

## Press Release

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05 July 2018

### **Statement from Lisbon Council President Paul Hofheinz: Open Science, the Open Science Monitor and the Open Science Monitoring Trends and Drivers Project**

(BRUSSELS, Belgium) – The Lisbon Council for Economic Competitiveness and Social Renewal asbl released the following letter this morning.

Mr Ian Sample  
Science Editor  
The Guardian  
Kings Place  
90 York Way  
King's Cross  
London N1 9GU

Dear Sir,

Open Science is an increasingly important field, one for which the Lisbon Council for Economic Competitiveness and Social Renewal, a Brussels-based think tank, where I have the honour of serving as president, has been long committed. Our credentials and commitment to this vision are impeccable, and pre-date the time when open science became an important European objective. We are delighted that open access to publications and scientific data sharing are increasingly becoming the rule, rather

than the exception. And we are prepared to continue working to make sure that the results of scientific research are properly and broadly disseminated as widely and quickly as possible – not so that we researchers might have even more to do, but so that we might all live in a society propelled towards and driven by the innovation that open science so clearly engenders.

So it is with much sadness that we read Jon Tennant's aggressive and misinformed article, "Elsevier are Corrupting Open Science in Europe," which appeared in *The Guardian* on Friday, 29 June 2018.

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/political-science/2018/jun/29/elsevier-are-corrupting-open-science-in-europe>

A few facts:

- 1) The "Open Science: Monitoring Trends and Drivers" project, launched on 22 December 2017, is led by a three-partner consortium: the Lisbon Council (lead manager), the Centre for Science and Technology Studies at the University of Leiden and ESADE Business School, in collaboration with the European Commission, which has committed to open science officially as a policy objective. Elsevier, a large, Amsterdam-based scientific publication publisher, is a subcontractor to the project, having agreed to provide data. For the record, Elsevier has no involvement in defining, building or controlling any of the indicators that make up the Open Science Monitor, which the consortium is contracted to produce. Anyone who claims otherwise is mis-informed and has not taken time to get acquainted with the structure of the consortium, which is described in some detail in the official journal of the European Union and in the memorandum setting out the Open Science Monitor methodology on the European Commission website.

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/open\\_science\\_monitor\\_methodological\\_note\\_v2.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/open_science_monitor_methodological_note_v2.pdf)

- 2) The Lisbon Council has a long history of high-profile work on open science. In 2016, the Lisbon Council convened *The 2016 Innovation Summit: Open Innovation, Open Science and the Open to the World Agenda*, where the European Commission's flagship publication (*Science, Research and Innovation Performance of the EU: A Contribution to Open Innovation, Open*

*Science and the Open to the World Agenda*) was launched in the presence of Carlos Moedas, European commissioner for research, science and innovation, and a host of leading European researchers and open-science advocates. For those readers who don't know the publication, it is the bible of open science, serving as a strong endorsement of the European Commission's commitment to the dossier and providing an important, emerging evidence base on the economic impact of this policy approach.

- 3) Few scientific projects succeed without good, up-to-date data. And we all know that Elsevier today not only has a unique position in the scientific-publishing field but also provides advanced data services as part of its business. We reached out to them to help us learn more about the large and quickly growing European market for scientific publications and to form a better, more evidence-based view of the trends in this key area. But, for the record, Elsevier plays no role in the classification of the data they provide to the consortium; that role falls to the Centre for Science and Technology Studies at the University of Leiden, which houses one of the world's leading scientific-output measuring projects, the CWTS Leiden Ranking. The methodology which CWTS uses to classify data for the Open Science Monitor is described fully in the memorandum mentioned above and on the Open Science Monitor website. And Elsevier is not the only source. The consortium – whose research objective is to track and monitor the spread of open science and the impact it has on economic activity and innovation – also consults a wide array of data in an effort to absorb, analyse and stress test the emerging results, including Sherpa Juliet, Sherpa Romeo, re3data, Datacite, Mozilla Codemeta, Programmableweb, Zooniverse, Github and more. It is our view that more data will lead to better, more robust results. And we don't quite understand arguments that not looking at some data sets – or not collaborating on a data-basis with one of the world's largest scientific publishers – would lead to better results.
- 4) And, finally, there is this question of the tone Mr Tennant uses, and whether it is appropriate in a discussion of this type. No genuine scientific debate was ever conducted in the language of hectoring and innuendo. If Mr Tennant feels so strongly about open science, he can and

should participate more directly and constructively in the open, collaborative effort to review and improve the Open Science Monitor methodology ([https://www.makingspeechstalk.com/ch/Open\\_Science\\_Monitor/](https://www.makingspeechstalk.com/ch/Open_Science_Monitor/)), where he (and everyone) can participate directly in creating a powerful, effective open science monitoring tool. There, his comments will be analysed and weighed along with other experts and stakeholders involved in this discussion. Every comment there is logged and processed; and a summary of the comments – and the consortium’s reaction to it – will be published in September, open source, for all to see and read.

- 5) Of course, it would be hard for Mr Tennant to get as much attention as he is getting from attacking the consortium on twitter. But constructive engagement in the project would lead to a better and greater impact on the final outcome. And to more and better open science in Europe. A goal which the consortium is committed to advancing, and which (we believe) we share.

Regarding other charges of bias, we invite readers to visit [https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/goals-research-and-innovation-policy/open-science/open-science-monitor\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/goals-research-and-innovation-policy/open-science/open-science-monitor_en) and decide for themselves.

Science is about criticism. And we welcome it.

Paul Hofheinz  
President and Co-Founder  
The Lisbon Council asbl  
Open Science Monitoring Trends and Drivers Project, Consortium Leader

About the Lisbon Council:

**The Lisbon Council for Economic Competitiveness and Social Renewal asbl** is a Brussels-based think tank and policy network committed to making a positive contribution by engaging political leaders and the public at large in a constructive exchange about the economic and societal challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Its website is [www.lisboncouncil.net](http://www.lisboncouncil.net).