



## Biomedical Alliance in Europe

### Statement on Plan S

The 8th of February 2019, Brussels

The Biomedical Alliance in Europe (BioMed Alliance) welcomes the initiative proposed by Coalition S and supports the promotion of open access publishing. Nonetheless, we have certain concerns about the scope and implementation of Plan S. In particular, some of our members see the plan as underdeveloped, the timeline as too ambitious and the content as too restrictive and inflexible.

The BioMed Alliance is a non-profit organisation representing 29 leading European research and medical societies uniting more than 400,000 researchers and healthcare professionals. Our members play an important role in facilitating European health research and providing continuing education and information to healthcare professionals.

We believe that, if implemented efficiently, open access can facilitate access to publicly funded scientific publications and benefit the European Research sector.

Nonetheless, BioMed Alliance members have certain concerns about the implementation, particularly regarding the timeline and the inflexibility of the plan. Following the input received from our members, we would like to stress the following opinions regarding Plan S and its implementation:

- ✓ We recognise that a move towards open access is beneficial to researchers and to the research sector because it can facilitate access to information and promote information sharing.
- ✓ We believe that it is in the common interest to move towards open access publication and to reduce the increasing costs that academic institutions face when purchasing journal subscriptions.
- ✓ We would like to emphasise that not-for-profit health organisations often depend on the publication of their societies journals as a source of income. These organisations are largely dependent on volunteers and they do not make a profit by publishing journals. Instead, the income is invested in the journal, their organisation and quality education for medical professionals. We believe that these organisations may need more time to adapt to the new situation.
- ✓ We assert that the quality of scientific journals must be maintained by specifying quality and peer review standards.
- ✓ We express concern that authors may be limited in their academic freedom and publication options by obliging them to only publish in open access journals. In addition, we emphasise that authors may find it difficult to bear the costs of publishing in open access journals. This is particularly the case for authors in lower income countries as they may not be able to afford publication, thus deepening disparities.



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- ✓ We believe that the open access policy in the way that it is currently designed is too restrictive regarding the type of open access publishing that is allowed.
- ✓ We echo the comments of other stakeholders that the majority of journals are hybrid publications. We believe that these publications should continue to be allowed to exist during a transition period.
- ✓ We believe that open access publishing is the future, but we are concerned that underlying mechanisms and facilities are not yet sufficiently in place to allow for a complete and swift move to open access in the timeline, as proposed by Plan S.

### **About BioMed Alliance:**

The BioMed Alliance is committed to promoting excellence and innovation in the European healthcare field with the goal of improving the health and well-being of all European citizens. More info here: <https://www.biomedeuropa.org/>