**Speech by Zoran Stančič, Deputy Director-General, European Commission, DG CONNECT (20 minutes)**

Word count: 2083

*(introduction)*

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to be here today at an event promoting open access to research results.

This is a topic of huge importance for science and innovation.

Thanks to the internet, scientists around the world are developing new habits of communication and collaboration.

This offers tremendous opportunities that must be harnessed.

We must ensure that scientific information is circulated widely and rapidly, using digital media such as the internet.

This can accelerate scientific discovery and allow research findings to be systematically taken up by businesses.

How can we ensure that scientific information is circulated widely and rapidly? The answer is open access. Open access to scientific publications and to research data.

Open access is no longer an experiment. Open access is backed by a steadily increasing number of universities, research centres and funding agencies in Europe and beyond.

France is one of the many EU Member States that have actively contributed to developing open access policies in Europe.

The work being done via HAL – Hyper Articles en Ligne – is one example of the crucial developments that have been taking place in this country.

The work of French higher education institutions and Couperin in particular, has been instrumental in setting up institutional repositories and spreading information on open access.

And by hosting this conference, France is showing leadership. It is signalling that it is time to move from talking about open access to making open access happen.

So I am very much looking forward to hearing about developments in French open access policy today.

 *(EC vision on open access)*

Like France, the European Commission takes open access very seriously.

As many of you know, open access is a topic which is close to the heart of Neelie Kroes, the Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for the Digital Agenda.

One key principle underlying our open access policy is that scientific information already paid for by the public purse should not be paid for again each time it is accessed or used, and that it should also benefit European companies and citizens to the full.

This is a principle which we have discussed many times at the level of the European Council. We know it is shared among EU Member States.

So access to scientific information is a matter of principle. If you pay for research, you should have access to its results. And better access to its results can drive innovation and our economy.

Our key motivation in Europe in this context is very clear: we must optimise the impact of publicly-funded scientific research. And we see open access as a key tool to achieve this.

To be more specific: from the perspective of the European research policy maker, open access has three many positive effects:

First, it improves science and makes it more efficient by allowing researchers to build on previous research results.

Open access ensures that scientists have access to the best and latest results of research, wherever it has been produced.

Open access makes it possible to share scientific knowledge, especially in the context of complex global challenges like climate change or the search for sustainable energy solutions.

Second, open access can improve transparency by involving citizens and society in science and research policy.

It is increasingly important for citizens to be able to access scientific results, for example in the area of health.

And citizens can also contribute to science through so-called "citizen science" in which citizens themselves contribute data to a larger scientific endeavour.

Third, by improving return on R&D investment, open access can accelerate innovation, and thus economic growth.

For example, the Human Genome Project results were made openly available in 2003. This increased the take up of knowledge and later also commercialisation. The US government's investment of 3,8 billion USD have had an economic impact of 796 billion USD. About 300.000 jobs were created. The genome revolution was launched.

Affordable and easy access to scientific information is beneficial for all companies, but it is particularly important for innovative, small businesses.

A recent study about Danish SMEs highlights that, without speedy access to up-to-date scientific research results, it takes some two years longer to develop or introduce new products.

In summary, the benefits of open access are multiple.

*(EC policy initiatives on open access)*

So I am sure you will agree with me the question is no longer *whether* we need open access, but *how* we can best achieve it.

The European Commission has been working on open access to publications for some years now.

We have met with and listened to all the concerned stakeholders and many research communities. And we have talked to actors in many different Member States.

Last year, this work resulted in the Commission adopting the so-called Scientific Information Package.

This package consists of two policy documents.

The first policy document is a Communication entitled "Towards better access to scientific information".

The second policy document is a Recommendation to the Member States on "access to and preservation of scientific information".

The vision outlined in the Communication is that open access can bring together ideas in a way that catalyses science and innovation.

In the Communication, the Commission outlines its proposed rules for open access in Horizon2020. Open access to scientific publications on the one hand, and open access to scientific data on the other.

*(open access to publications)*

As you know, we already have experience with open access to publications through a pilot action that we are running under the 7th Framework Programme. The feedback that we have from researchers is very positive. In that respect I would like to mention the OpenAIRE project supported the Union. It is a portal linking together open access repositories across Europe. It is *the* tool for researchers to publish and access open access publications.

There is overwhelming support for open access. In a public consultation on open access and related issues done last year, some 85% of respondents agreed that there is a need to improve access to scientific information, and some 90% agreed that open access is the way to do it.

Building on experiences in Europe and worldwide, the Commission proposes to make open access to peer-reviewed publications an obligation in Horizon2020.

In this context let me clarify two things:

First, an open access requirement is not an obligation to publish. Researchers are completely free to decide whether or not to publish their work.

Second, the decision on whether to commercially exploit results, for instance through patents, is typically made before the decision to publish – whether open access or not. Open access therefore does not interfere with the commercial exploitation of research results.

Let me also briefly mention the issue of green or gold open access.

There has been much – maybe too much - discussion on whether we should follow the 'Green' or 'Gold' route to open access. Among national systems, there are many different shades of green and gold in their approaches to open access.

The European Commission has chosen a pragmatic approach: We do not support open access as a goal in itself – it is a way to improve science and research and the economy.

We are agnostic on how open access should be achieved: we support green, gold and any other possible routes towards open access. So, as regards our Horizon 2020 programme, it will be up to researchers to decide whether they want to "go for gold" or "think green".

This approach makes sense at European level since different national systems have different visions, different situations and different needs. And so do academics in all the different fields of research.

Some preliminary findings of a study being undertaken by Science-Metrix to quantify the phenomenon of open access by country and discipline indicate that around 40% of all scientific literature is available in open access. This is an interesting figure since usually, more conservative estimates of around 20% are used.

Looking at the percentage of publications in open access per country, France would score as high as 37% and the Netherlands would even reach 53%.

As for disciplinary differences, lower percentages of open access literature can be found in chemistry, engineering and social sciences with 30 to 40%, whereas biology, biomedicine and mathematics score at around 60%.

*(open access to research data)*

Now let me turn to research data.

Our ambition is to unlock the enormous wealth of knowledge that can come from research data.

With the help of appropriate e-infrastructures, researchers in different domains can collaborate on data sets. They can make new discoveries and can tackle societal challenges in a highly efficient manner.

We want researchers and also businesses to be able to generate wealth on the basis of data.

The Commission has announced that it will promote open access to research data in Horizon2020.

This will be done in a pilot scheme, the modalities of which will be defined later this year.

This is no easy task. And this is why we need your input on this. All ideas and comments are welcome.

In general terms, we wish to focus on “frontier research” and on research addressing broad societal challenges.

We aim to build on the cultures of data sharing that already exist in many research communities.

I would like to emphasise that, regarding open access to data, we are very sensitive to the need to protect commercial interests. Horizon2020 is a programme for research and *innovation*.

We know that the closer we get to market, the more mindful we need to be about protecting intellectual property.

In addition, research data resulting from EU projects, which are related to privacy, national security or trade secrets shall not be requested in open access mode.

*(Member States dimension)*

Now let me turn to our work with the Member States.

Member States are increasingly attentive to the issues of access to and dissemination of digital scientific information. We congratulate them on these very positive developments.

The growing number of national initiatives in this field shows a clear and encouraging move towards the development of policies in these areas.

There are also international activities on open access. The famous Berlin Declaration on open access, for example, is co-signed by institutions in many European countries.

Building on this common will, we now need to develop common guiding principles on open access.

For example, major funding bodies across Europe could determine that all publications resulting from public research funding should be open access.

Another example: main universities or university consortia across Europe could agree that their researchers must publish open access, and that they will be evaluated on the basis of publications that are available in their institutional repositories.

These are only two examples of principles that could further promote open access to research results.

The need to agree on and implement such principles *internationally* is the point of departure of the Recommendation to the Member States on scientific information

It urges Member States to further strengthen their policies on

1) open access to publications,

2) open access to data,

3) preservation, and on

4) e-infrastructures.

The main message is that a lot of valuable work already exists in Europe. Now let us collectively reap the benefits of these efforts.

 *(Conclusion)*

As a conclusion, let me say that I believe that, in a decade or maybe even less, open access will be the norm.

The question we need to ask now is how to get there. We need to create the right incentive structures and support the right infrastructures. And we need to give the right political signals.

I am convinced that, if Member States and the Commission all work together in the areas of access to and preservation of scientific information, we will be able to fulfil the ambitious targets that our 2012 policy package sets for us:

* 100% of scientific publications resulting from Horizon2020 will be open access;
* there will be policies on open access in all the Member States by 2014
* 60% of all publicly-funded scientific articles in Europe will be available under open access by 2016.

We are convinced that open access will have a transformative effect of enormous value in the way we do science.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you for your attention.