Recommendations from the EUA Working Group on Open Access adopted by the EUA Council on 26th of March 2008 (University of Barcelona, Spain)

I. Working Group: Aims and Scope

In January 2007 EUA established a "Working Group on Open Access" for a one year period as a platform of expert opinion to provide both a voice for, and visibility to European universities as stakeholders in the policy debate. Its mission was dualfold: to raise awareness of the importance of "open access" issues to the wider university community, both in terms of its impact upon the research process and its financial implications for university libraries, and to develop recommendations for a common strategy for the university sector as key stakeholders in policy development in the field. The decision to set up the Working Group had reflected the general view that the interests of universities were not being heard in the growing policy debate on the issue of the wide implications of rapid development of digital ICT for publishing which tended to be dominated by the commercial interests of the major scientific publishing companies.

The Working Group membership drew upon the range of different university perspectives on the concept of "Open Access" from those of academic researchers, librarians and university management. In the course of its three meetings in 2007 the Working Group gathered expert opinion on open access publishing business models, legal and copyright issues, technical development of national digital repositories and their European networking, and the policies being developed towards open access publishing by funding agencies at the national level and the European Commission. Professor Sijbolt Noorda (Chair of the Working Group) and members contributed also to several European Conferences held in 2007 including the major conference on "Scientific Publishing in the Digital Age" held jointly by the European Commission DG Research and DG Information and Media in Brussels in February 2007 in which the university sector were recognised formally as a major "stakeholder" in the open access policy debate.

In reaching its recommendations that are addressed to three audiences university leaders at the institutional level, National Rectors Conferences and the EUA the Working Group has borne in mind the full spectrum of issues involved; these range from the clear opportunity offered to widen access to the results of research, to the implications of open access publishing for peer review and quality assurance in academic research and the rapidly rising costs of scientific publications for university libraries (through high subscription prices for both electronic and printed journals, including "bundling" marketing strategies by publishers).

II. European and Global Context of the Recommendations

The Working Group recommendations seek to build upon the findings of the "Study on the Economic and Technical Evolution of Scientific Publications Markets in Europe" (European Commission, DG Research, project report, January 2006), and public statements issued by the European Research Council (ERC) and the European Research Advisory Board (EURAB) on Open Access as well as the current practices of some funding agencies such as UK Research Councils and the newly adopted policy of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the United States concerning open access mandates for peer reviewed publications arising from grants.

In the European context the most recent significant development has been the ERC announcement on 17th December 2007 of its position on open access, as follows: The ERC requires that all peer reviewed publications from ERC funded research projects be deposited on publication into an appropriate research repository where available, such as PubMedCentral, ArXiv or an institutional repository, and subsequently made Open Access within 6 months of publication.

The Working Group recommendations seek also to provide support to European level initiatives promoting institutional repositories, their networking and wider accessibility through the future Confederation of European Repositories being developed by the DRIVER project consortium (funded under the European Commission 7th Research Framework Programme) and other university led initiatives such as EurOpenScholar and the UNICA network.

III. Recommendations

The Working Group recommendations (below) are based upon the following core premises: the university's role and responsibility as guardian of research knowledge as a "public good"; the results of publicly funded research should be publicly available as soon as possible; and quality assurance peer review processes are preconditions for scholarly publishing and therefore are essential to be maintained in the digital publishing mode.
It is important to emphasise that the scope of the Working Group recommendations cover as a priority the need for the enhancement of open access to peerreviewed published research literature only, and not scientific research data, teaching materials etc. Issues of access to research data, its archiving and preservation need further attention from universities, funding agencies and scientific professional bodies, and are subject to several initiatives at the national and European level which are not addressed here (e.g. the Alliance for Permanent Access and European Digital Information Infrastructure).

A. Recommendations for University Leadership

1. Universities should develop institutional policies and strategies that foster the availability of their quality controlled research results (in the form of research papers and other outputs) for the broadest possible range of users, maximising their visibility, accessibility and scientific impact.

2. The basic approach for achieving this should be the creation of an institutional repository or participation in a shared repository. These repositories should be established and managed according to current best practices (following recommendations and guidelines from DRIVER and similar projects) complying with the OAIPMH protocol and allowing interoperability and future networking for wider usage.

3. University institutional policies should require that their researchers deposit (selfarchive) their scientific publications in their institutional repository upon acceptance for publication. Permissible embargoes should apply only to the date of open access provision and not the date of deposit. Such policies would be in compliance with evolving policies of research funding agencies at the national and European level such as the ERC.

4. University policies should include copyright in the institutional intellectual property rights (IPR) management. It should be the responsibility of the university to inform their faculty researchers about IPR and copyright management in order to ensure the wider sharing and reuse of the digital research content they have produced. This should include a clear policy on ownership and management of copyright covering scholarly publications and define procedures for ensuring that the institution has the right to use the material produced by its staff for further research, educational and instructional purposes.

5. University institutional policies should explore also how resources could be found and made available to researchers for author fees to support the emerging "author pays model" of open access.

B. Recommendations for National Rectors' Conferences

1. All National Rectors' Conferences should work with national research funding agencies and governments in their countries to implement the requirement for selfarchiving of research publications in institutional repositories and other appropriate open access repositories according to best practice models of the ERC and existing national research funding agencies operating open access mandates. National Rectors' Conferences should encourage governments to work within the framework of the "Council of the European Union Conclusions on Scientific Information in the Digital Age: Access, Dissemination and Preservation" adopted at the EU Competitiveness Council meeting on 22nd23rd November 2007.

2. National Rectors' Conferences should attach high priority to raising the awareness of university leadership to the importance of open access policies in terms of enhanced visibility, access and impact of their research results.

C. Recommendations for the European University Association

1. EUA should continue to contribute actively to the policy dialogue on Open Access at the European level with a view to a selfarchiving mandate for all research results arising from EU research programme/project funding, hence in support of and building upon the ERC position and other international initiatives such as that of the US National Institutes of Health (NIH).

2. EUA should continue to be visible and to rally expertise from Europe's universities on Open Access issues to provide input to European and International events advancing open access to scientific publications, research data and their preservation.

EUA Working Group Membership - OPEN ACCESS

Chair
Sijbolt Noorda, (EUA Council member, NL)

Belgium (Fl): Inge Van Nieuwerburgh, Ghent University

Czech Republic: Jan Stanek, Vice-Rector -Inst. of Chem. Technology Prague

Denmark: Wilbert van der Meer, Special Adviser, Danish Rectors' Conference

Finland: Kalle Korhonen, Member of Finnish Open Access WG

France: Geneviève Gourdet, COUPERIN

Germany: Gerhard Schneider, Vice-Rector -University Freiburg

Greece: Claudine Xenidou-Dervou, Coordinator, HEAL-Link / Site Librarian, Physics & Informatics Depts. Aristotle University

Italy: Paola Gargiulo, Consorzio per le Applicazioni di Supercalcolo per Università e Ricerca (CASPUR)

Netherlands: Nol Verhagen, University of Amsterdam,

Norway: Rune Nilsen, Professor, University of Bergen

Portugal: Eloy Rodrigues, Head of Documentation Services, Minho University Institutional Repository.

Spain: Lluis Anglada I Ferrer, Director of Consorci de Biblioteques Universitaries de Catalunya

Sweden: Lars Björnshauge, Director of Libraries / Chief Librarian, University of Lund,

UK: Stephen Pinfield, Director of SHERPA, Deputy Chief Information Officer & Director of Research and Learning Resources, University of Nottingham,

Observer :

Françoise Vandooren, Université Library, Université Libre de Bruxelles

EUA :

John Smith, Deputy Secretary General

Thomas Estermann, Senior Programme Manager

Gemma Jackson, Administrative Assistant, Research and Innovation Unit