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Multilingualism as a European challenge
Research must be communicated in multiple languages

Access to research and greater interaction between science and society can only be possible if research is communicated in multiple languages, including those actually used in speech and writing locally.

In the ongoing reform of the research assessment system, the call for multilingualism is the most notable omission.
Why do we need multilingual scholarly communication?

Not all local publications need to be translated into English and not all publications in English need to be translated into local languages.

As the evidence-based picture of European publishing practices shows, researchers in humanities and social sciences are multilingual.
The starting point of my presentation

Publication-oriented academia, publication-oriented open science and research assessment make researchers invisible.
Researchers from social sciences and humanities face different challenges of Open Science and research assessment than researchers from STEM fields.

Let’s talk about researchers publishing papers and not papers themselves.
Multilingualism and language bias are crucial challenges for Open Science and Research Assessment from the social sciences and humanities perspective.
Helsinki Initiative on Multilingualism in Scholarly Communication

Helsinki Initiative is published in 38 different languages, including Chinese.

Over 900 individuals and organizations (among others, EUA, DOAJ, OPERAS, Universities Norway) from 70 countries.

www.helsinki-initiative.org
Recent ENRESSH studies based on national current research information systems show an evidence-based picture of publication patterns of social sciences and humanities in Europe.
Total number of publications in eight European countries in the social sciences and the humanities

Percentage of peer reviewed publications in English, local language(s) and other languages in the social sciences and humanities in 2014

All publication types (books, chapters, journal articles, edited volumes)
Language patterns of article publishing on the researcher level across countries

Researchers who published at least three articles between 2013 and 2015

English-biased citation indexes

The majority of these peer-reviewed journal articles in Czech, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, Norwegian, Polish, Slovene and Swedish are invisible in international databases:

97% of articles are not indexed in WoS and 92% of articles are not in Scopus.
Language biases in traditional research assessment

The excellence of research is too often equated with English-language publications
What can we do to improve this situation?
Ideally, language is a non-issue in assessment.

Researchers should be recognized and rewarded according to the results and the impact of their research.
All actors involved in research assessment should make sure that in the process of expert-based evaluation, high quality research is valued regardless of the publishing language or publication channel.

Moreover, when metrics-based systems are utilized, journal and book publications in all languages should be adequately taken into account.

The selection of evaluators and their language skill should be a relevant concern in assessments.
Socialization of publication channels and supporting open citations initiatives

Reclaiming key communication channels and owning them by the academic community and learned societies is a crucial step in maintaining and achieving the goals of open science.

75 % of European spending on scientific journals goes to the ”big five” publishers
Protecting national infrastructure for publishing

National journals and book publishers must be safeguarded in their transition to open access.

We must make sure that not-for-profit journals and book publishers have both sufficient resources and the support needed to maintain high standards of quality control and research integrity.
Multilingualism is integral to accessibility and should be part of the European research assessment reform
Thank you

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