



OPEN POLICY NETWORK



www.openpolicynetwork.org | opn@creativecommons.org
444 Castro Street, Suite 916, Mountain View, CA 94041

23 September 2014

Ing. Peter Pellegrini
Ministerstvo školstva, vedy, výskumu a športu SR
Stromova 1
Bratislava
813 30
Slovak Republic

Re: Open Government Partnership Action Plan Chapter 2: Open Education (Support)

Dear Minister Pellegrini,

We the undersigned member organizations of the Open Policy Network — an international coalition working to advance open licensing policies for publicly-funded resources — are writing to express our support for the Open Education chapter of the proposed Slovak Open Government Partnership Action Plan. An English translation of this plan came to our attention through one of our members, and we were thrilled to see such strong commitments to both Open Educational Resources (Tasks 9-18) and Open Access to scientific research (Tasks 19-22). As the Minister responsible for implementing the majority of the proposed tasks, we respectfully urge you to support this section as the Action Plan is finalized.

The Open Policy Network believes that the adoption of policies that ensure that publicly funded resources are openly licensed to the public can maximize the return on government investments and promote a global commons of resources for innovative reuse. Such policies can advance the use, creation and sharing of open educational resources (OER), which reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and repurposing by others. Such policies can also advance Open Access to scholarly research, which means the free, immediate online availability of research outputs with the right to fully use them in the digital environment.

We the undersigned organizations applaud Tasks 9-18 of the Action Plan, which would expand the creation, use and sharing of OER. OER harness the full power of ICTs to improve the efficiency of education, expand access to knowledge, and create new opportunities for innovative teaching and learning practices. Most importantly, Tasks 11 and 12 would ensure that educational resources financed or co-financed through public funding would be licensed and shared as OERs in a public online repository. This

would ensure that government-funded products are most efficiently used, since OER can be used by multiple schools, departments and projects at the same time with no additional cost. These tasks are in line with recommendations issued by the European Commission to member states as part of the Opening Up Education Initiative[1]. Slovakia would join other countries who have successfully implemented the benefits of OER. For example, in Poland the “Digital School” program is developing free, openly licensed school textbooks to significantly reduce the burden on parents and pupils [2]. In the United States, a US\$2 billion government grant program to improve workforce training requires open licensing so that the entire country, and world, can benefit from the educational materials developed[3].

We also applaud the Tasks 19-22 of the Action Plan, which would expand Open Access to the results of scientific research. Open Access accelerates the pace of scientific discovery and innovation, enriches education, and stimulates the economy. Most importantly, Tasks 19 and 20 would create national policies that ensure the results of government funded research are available Open Access. This would ensure the Slovak public has free and transparent access to the research it funds, and also maximize the public’s investment by ensuring Slovakia’s scientists, scholars, students, and entrepreneurs can innovate and build upon the results. The European Commission recognized the importance of Open Access in its Horizon 2020 program, and tasks are aligned with the open access requirement included in the European Commission’s Horizon 2020 program[4], and also with similar policies proposed in other European nations as core pieces of their innovation and competitiveness agendas. Open Access policies are already operative in countries such as the United States, where the National Institute of Health makes more than 2.5 million articles arising from publicly funded research available in its PubMed Central repository, which are accessed by more than half a million unique users per day[5]. One of those users, a now-famous teenager named Jack Andraka, developed a revolutionary cancer test primarily using research articles he could access for free [6].

In closing, we applaud the inclusion of both OER and Open Access to scientific research in the Open Government Partnership Action Plan, and believe that it is an important first step toward Slovakia becoming a leader in open education. We strongly encourage you to support the inclusion of this section in the final version of the Action Plan, and if there is any way the Open Policy Network can be helpful in the implementation of this section please do not hesitate to let us know.

Sincerely,

Australian Governments Open Access Licensing Framework (AusGOAL)

<http://www.ausgoal.gov.au/>

Contact: Baden Appleyard (b.appleyard@ausgoal.gov.au)

Australia

Centrum Cyfrowe

<http://centrumcyfrowe.pl>

Contact: Alek Tarkowski (atarkowski@centrumcyfrowe.pl)

Poland

Cetis

<http://www.cetis.ac.uk>

Contact: Lorna M. Campbell (lorna.m.campbell@icloud.com)

United Kingdom

Creative Commons

<https://creativecommons.org>

Contact: Timothy Vollmer (tvoll@creativecommons.org)

United States

Kennisland

<http://www.kennisland.nl>

Contact: Maarten Zeinstra (mz@kl.nl)

Netherlands

Open Coalition

https://wikimedia.org.uk/wiki/Open_Coalition

Contact: Rebecca Khan (bekka.kahn@gmail.com)

United Kingdom

Open Education Consortium

<http://www.oecconsortium.org>

Contact: Mary Lou Forward (mlforward@openedconsortium.org)

United States

World Wide Ed

<http://wideworlded.org>

Contact: Jenni Hayman (director@wideworlded.org)

Canada

References:

[1] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52013DC0654>

[2] <http://creativecommons.pl/open-educational-resources-in-the-digital-school-program/>

[3] <http://www.dol.gov/opa/media/press/eta/ETA20140644.htm><http://www.dol.gov/opa/media/press/eta/ETA20140644.htm>

[4] <http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/index.cfm?fuseaction=public.topic&id=1294&lang=1>

[5] <http://www.sparc.arl.org/advocacy/national/nih>

[6] <http://www.righttoresearch.org/blog/open-access-empowers-16-year-old-to-create-breakth.shtml>