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INTRODUCTION

The principles of open access are now widely known by all the actors involved in the scientific communication process (researchers, publishers, managers, academics, etc.). However, there is a clear need for practical studies of the situation of open access in certain areas that will allow us to take action to improve the results.

One of the references has undoubtedly been the report *Open access in the Nordic countries*,¹ which shows the state of affairs in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden and was drawn up within the Nordbib project to serve as a basis for discussion and work at a workshop held in the spring of 2007.

The countries of Southern Europe have unique characteristics as regards participation in the scientific communication process: they use languages that have a long tradition but are not the usual channel for scientific communication, they do not have a powerful publishing industry, they spend a smaller percentage of GDP on research and scientific data acquisition, etc.

The present report arose from the activities of the Southern European Libraries Link (SELL),² which represents library consortia of six countries (France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and Turkey). Although this organization was created to exchange experiences and to act as a pressure group in relation to scientific and technical publishers, its founding charter also states clearly that one of its main goals is “to draw common policies towards information acquirement and provision”.

In order to move towards common policies for open access to science, experts in each country were asked to provide reports on the situation of open access. We used a common template including three main sections: scientific journals (number, format, quality, subject specialization, type of publishers, type of

¹ Hedlund, Turid; Rabow, Ingegerd (2007). *Open access in the Nordic Countries: a state of the art report*. Nordbib. (<http://www.nordbib.net/Initiatives---Reports/Reports/OA-in-the-Nordic-countries.aspx>). [Accessed: 1/07/2010].

² <http://www.heal-link.gr/SELL/index.html>

access, etc.); institutional repositories and harvesters; and policies supporting open access. Common data sources were used as far as possible (Ulrich's directory, OpenDOAR, DOAJ, ROAR, etc.), and were complemented in most cases by directories and other national sources.

Preliminary versions of the national reports were submitted and discussed at a conference held in Granada in May 2010, and served as a starting point for drafting a declaration of principles (the Alhambra Declaration) that aims to foster open access and the involvement of the various actors of the scientific communication process.

The published document contains updated and revised versions of the national reports, along with general conclusions, the Alhambra Declaration, and several appendices which offer more detailed information on journals and repositories in each of the countries. Statistical data included in the reports and in the appendices were updated as of May 2010. As such, this is the temporal reference for tables and figures if no other date is indicated.

This report is addressed especially to authorities and academic managers, to make them aware of the importance of encouraging actions to promote open access to science; to publishers, especially those of the public sector, to make them aware of the benefits of the open access model and to encourage them to adopt it; to academics; and to library professionals, who have played a significant role in the movement for the free dissemination of knowledge and must continue to do so.