Developing National Open Access Policies: An Ukrainian Case Study

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Abstract

Since January 2007 Ukraine has a law mandating open access to publicly funded researches. It was widely supported by most of the Parliament members. And it is already the second parliamentary inquiry mandating the Cabinet of Ministers to take actions on creating favourable conditions for developing open access repositories in archives, libraries, museums, scientific and research institutions with open access condition to state funded researches. And for the second time the implementation of this law was interrupted by the political crises. Grass root initiatives of Ukrainian Universities and libraries as well as the political support from the principle legislative body in the country have still not resulted into a single well-functioning institutional/national repository. The poster highlights the developments that have taken place, actions for the years to come and recommendations for the countries that are in circumstances that can be compared to Ukraine.

Keywords: open access; mandating policy; publicly funded researches; institutional repository

1 Introduction and Developments

Mandating open access to publicly funded research in Ukraine was a movement launched by the scholars publishing their articles in open access journals, innovative librarians and University administrations. This movement was co-ordinated by International Renaissance Foundation (IRF, Soros Foundation in Ukraine), which since 2004 organised a number of awareness raising campaigns in mass media and regional seminars for the academic community. National Academy of Sciences (NAS) and International Researches and Exchanges Board (IREX) supported open access ideas and joined the movement.

The first public statement on open access policies in Ukraine was drafted during the international Open Access Scholarly Communication Workshop hosted by the National University Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (NAUKMA) and organised by IRF, Open Society Institute, NAS and International Association of Academies of Sciences on February 17-19, 2005. 140 researchers, administrators, librarians, information managers from higher educational institutions and scientific research laboratories involved in e-journal publishing and institutional repository development from 17 countries signed the Recommendations for Ukrainian authorities to ensure: the right of individuals and the public to access information and knowledge and to guarantee that intellectual property regimes are not the obstacles to the public access to knowledge, to encourage research and higher educational institutions to practice open access and to put an open access condition to state funded researches (except reasonable exceptions) and to provide state financing and technical assistance to research and higher educational institutions to set up and maintain open access repositories.

These Recommendations were endorsed by Ukrainian Vice Prime Minister. And on September 21, 2005, the Recommendations were presented at the first Parliamentary hearings on Developing information society in Ukraine. In December 2005 these hearings resulted into the Parliamentary Inquiry on Harmonisation of Governmental Educational Policies re open access movement [1]. Open access was one of the priorities in developing information society in Ukraine. The Cabinet of Ministers was responsible for creating favourable conditions for developing open access repositories in archives, libraries, museums and other cultural institutions and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine – for encouraging development of open access resources in science, technology and education with open access condition to state funded research. Beginning of 2006 was also the time of parliamentary elections campaign, when the "old" Cabinet of Ministers didn’t feel any responsibility to start new activities like open access projects. And later on two "new" Cabinet of Ministers were busy trying to cope with political crises in summer and autumn 2006.

In September 2006 representatives of Parliamentary Committee on Science and Education, State Fund for Fundamental Researches, Scientific and Publishing Council of NAS, Ministry of Science and Education of
Ukraine, National Library of Ukraine after V.Vernadsky, State Department of Intellectual Property, Kyiv public administration, Association "Informatio-Consortium", Institute of Social Development and IRF created a working group on developing open access policies in Ukraine and pushing the Cabinet of Ministers to implement the resolution of Ukrainian Parliament on Open Access.

In November 2006 State Fund for Fundamental Researches commissioned IRF to develop an Open Access Policy for their grantees reporting publicly funded research. The goal was to require electronic copies of any research papers supported in whole or in part by Government funding to be deposited into an institutional digital repository immediately upon acceptance for publication.

Both initiatives turned previous parliamentary resolution into the law mandating open access to publicly funded research [2]. According to the law there should be six months of transition period (completed by July 2007). But the following political crises withdrew the attention of the Cabinet of Ministers from immediate implementation of this law.

Since October 2005 a grassroots initiative of the academic community undertook a project to create a network of open access repositories in Ukraine. Nine Ukrainian Universities reported this decision at the national conference for university and regional universal scientific libraries INFORMATIO 2005. The project has been implemented by Association "Informatio-Consortium", Scientific Library of National University Kyiv Mohyla Academy, Lviv Catholic University and Centre for the Humanities of Lviv National University after I.Franko. All these projects still lack financing and skilled staff. So far only pilot institutional repositories have been created.

Governmental institutions are still the unique donors of research and development in Ukraine. This is why a law mandating open access to publicly funded research plays a crucial role in open access initiatives. Delays with implementation of this law cause delays in the development of open access institutional repositories.

Nevertheless we will continue financial and expert support to Ukrainian network of open access institutional repositories encouraging Universities and research institutions to sign the Berlin Declaration and introduce self-archiving policies, develop model open access institutional repositories and providing training for the interested organisations. At the policy level we will keep pushing the implementing of the law of Ukraine mandating open access to publicly funded research. IRF implements open access projects in cooperation with the Information Program of the Open Society Institute and the Electronic Information for Libraries Consortia (eIFL).

2 Recommendations

Recommendations for countries that are in circumstances that can be compared to Ukraine: 1) alliances are crucial and local partners needed; 2) targeted web-sites and workshops proved to be useful tools for awareness raising and lobbying; 3) support from mass media is important to create public awareness.

Notes and References
