



# Helsinki Initiative of Multilingual Scholarly Communication

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ABSTRACT

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The Helsinki Initiative on Multilingualism in Scholarly Communication was an environment that values multilingual scholarly communication, science communication, and publications in all languages. The long-term goal of the Helsinki Initiative is to ensure high quality research published in all languages needed across the world for effective communication within and beyond academia.

The Helsinki Initiative arose from the joint effort of the COST-Action ENR (Evaluation in the Social Science and the Humanities), Universities Norway, a Federation of Finnish Learned Societies, the Committee for Public Information in Scholarly Publishing. Signatories from over 70 countries agree that multilingualism is an international, not just national or local concern.

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Helsinki Initiative has three main goals:

1. to promote multilingual dissemination of research knowledge within and beyond Europe
2. to ensure sustainable open access transition of non-profit scholarly publishers where possible
3. to promote language diversity and multilingualism in research assessment and funding

It is important to communicate research results to international expert audiences and to respect the traditions of each discipline. However, if research is communicated exclusively in one language, it is difficult to fulfil all its missions and responsibilities toward society. In addition to international communication, Responsible Research and Innovation and Open Science. Broad access to scientific research and society is possible only if research is communicated and used in multiple languages.

## Why we need multilingual scientific knowledge

According to statement by the European University Association supporting the need for multilingual communication, particularly relevant for Europe, as its research is characterized by geographical diversity. The application of globally and locally produced knowledge requires critical discussion and interpretation by a community familiar with the local conditions and different actors within society. There is a widespread need for multilingual communication, not only between research professionals and citizens.

To cope with grand challenges and to meet sustainable development goals, we need research that is communicated in languages and formats suited for the diverse audiences. Especially in the field of climate change, an important part of research is contextualised, creating a need for original research that is accessible to citizens who are affected by this research. It is impossible to imagine that all new research can be communicated in one language.

Finnish or French society, history and culture would be published only in foreign publishers.

A study of users of open access journals on the Finnish Journal.fi platform shows that Finnish and Swedish) are vital for reaching important users of research both users participated in the survey, and the two largest groups were students (40%) and citizens, other experts, teachers, journalists, civil servants, entrepreneurs and people outside academia were focused on articles available in Finland's national language.

## Why we need the infrastructure of journals published in different languages?

The national journals and book publishers across Europe play a vital role in the research communities outlets for publishing and critically discussing research in different languages. Peer-reviewed journals and books are published in the local languages by publishers such as learned societies or research institutions, relying on voluntary continuing publishing operations without subscription fees is a real sustainability challenge in the European languages.

It is of utmost importance that multilingualism for European scholarly publishing implementation and the impact of Open Science policies and practices across Europe. Artificial intelligence technologies are part of the solution for facilitating multilingual access. An action plan to promote and implement multilingualism needs also to address the transition of journals publishing locally relevant research and developing scientific journals in different languages.

# Why it is important to address language bias in assessment and funding?

Ideally, language is a non-issue in assessment. Researchers should be recognised for the impact of their research, despite the language of application or publication. They are often far from language-neutral, and this is an issue with metrics as well as with the ability to trust that high-quality research is valued regardless of publishing language. Researchers should have funding even if they spend time on writing to policy-makers, professional reviewers for local language journals.

Because assessments steer research through distribution of resources, rewards, and opportunities, they compromise equal opportunities for individual researchers and institutions. International assessment may lead to systemic undervaluation of SSH research compared to STEM, to the production of locally relevant research and knowledge transfer beyond academia, and to the loss of multilingual scientific knowledge in all researchers' and citizens' main languages. Assessment reform needs to address well-known language biases in metrics and evaluation.

## Recommendation of the Helsinki-Initiative

1. Support dissemination of research results for the full benefit of the society.
  - Make sure researchers are rewarded for disseminating research results beyond academia, culture, and society.
  - Make sure equal access to researched knowledge is provided in a variety of languages.
2. Protect national infrastructures for publishing locally relevant research.

- Make sure not-for-profit journals and book publishers have both sufficient resources and high standards of quality control and research integrity.
- Make sure national journals and book publishers are safeguarded in their transition to open access.
- 3. Promote language diversity in research assessment, evaluation, and funding systems.
- Make sure that in the process of expert-based evaluation, high quality research is published in the language or publication channel.
- Make sure that when metrics-based systems are utilized, journal and book publications are taken into account.

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