



KEMÖ PRINCIPLES FOR OPEN ACCESS AGREEMENTS

(22.07.2026)

As one of the first movers globally, the Austrian Academic Library Consortium (Kooperation E-Medien Österreich, KEMÖ) has played a pivotal role since 2013 in transforming Austria's research output from closed to Open Access (OA). Through agreements with more than 20 publishers—both large and small—KEMÖ has enabled researchers across its member institutions to publish their work OA.

In light of the rapidly evolving scholarly publishing landscape - marked by structural and systemic inefficiencies and dependencies, rising costs for authors and unsustainable financial pressure on KEMÖ institutions – KEMÖ has developed a new set of guiding principles for future OA agreements. These principles will form the basis for negotiations with publishers to ensure sustainable, transparent, and equitable agreements for the Austrian research community, while supporting the global transition to OA without incentivising volume over quality.

Publishers and their proposals are required to demonstrate alignment with the following principles:

1) Cost reduction and cost control

To ensure the responsible and efficient use of the finite and increasingly constrained public funds in Austria and to enable long-term cost control, the agreements must be affordable and sustainable, maximising value for money for the Austrian research and higher education community.

KEMÖ contracts, in particular those that are still tied to high costs and / or legacy spend are required to be fundamentally realigned to ensure that public funds are used as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Agreements are expected to enable both a reduction in overall costs and comprehensive OA coverage of the consortium's research output. They must ensure predictable and controlled cost development (e.g. through a centrally agreed flat fee).

Price structures linked to historic spend will be subject to review and correction where necessary to ensure alignment with these principles.

2) Comprehensive OA publishing

The OA agreements must cover comprehensive (e.g. uncapped), immediate OA publishing for authors affiliated with KEMÖ institutions across the publisher's entire portfolio, without author-facing charges, including all hybrid and fully OA journals, covering 100% of KEMÖ output. Institutions and authors will not be required to pay any other charges.

The comprehensive OA publishing is expected to be fully accommodated within the agreed pricing (e.g. through a centrally agreed flat fee). Models that introduce additional per-article charges or expose institutions to unpredictable publication-driven cost increases are not considered aligned with these principles.

Publishers should demonstrate their clear commitment to the global transition to OA and provide data and evidence of progress.

3) Access to content and perpetual access rights

During the transition, the agreements are required to continue to ensure comprehensive access to the publisher's entire portfolio, within the agreed pricing, including perpetual access rights for the period. The publisher must guarantee the long-term availability of the published content through established archiving solutions such as Portico and CLOCKSS.

4) Transparency

Agreements must comply with the Austrian Freedom of Information Act, effective 1 September 2025. As a result, confidentiality clauses in licence agreements will no longer be accepted.

5) Authors' rights and permitted uses consistent with scholarly practice

Under the terms of the agreements, authors will be able to publish their work under a liberal Creative Commons licence as defined by the consortium and retain unrestricted copyright to their work, including to their Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM). No language should be used in the communication with authors that steers them towards more restrictive licences or that restricts their rights in any other way.

The AAM and any supplementary materials may be deposited in an institutional or subject repository without any additional charge upon first online publication of the Version of Record of the article under a CC BY licence, even if the article was not published OA.

Permitted uses need to reflect current and evolving scholarly practices and include mechanisms that support scholarly sharing, as well as the right to use the content in combination with artificial intelligence tools for teaching, learning, and research.

6) Publishing services and infrastructure

Publishers must work closely with the consortium to ensure smooth, reliable OA workflows for authors and their institutions, and to provide clear, consistent reporting. Providers are also required to make publication metadata available to open infrastructures, including Crossref.

7) EU contract law

All contracts must comply with the European Union's legal framework.

8) Coordinated negotiations

Negotiations for KEMÖ agreements are conducted centrally through the KEMÖ Head Office and appointed negotiation teams. Publishers must continue to engage through KEMÖ's designated negotiation structures and respect the consortium's coordinated process.