



*Press release*

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## **Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities: CERN and University of Pavia sign Berlin Declaration**

Press conference and Signing Ceremony:

12.05.2004, 05:00 p.m. at CERN Council Chamber, Geneva

First practical actions toward the realization of open access to knowledge in the sciences and in the humanities have been formulated at a meeting on the implementation of the recommendations in the Berlin Declaration at CERN/Geneva May 12–13, 2004. The meeting was coordinated by a group of Max Planck institutions (the Max Planck Institute for Gravitational Physics (Albert Einstein Institute), the Fritz Haber Institute, the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, and the Heinz Nixdorf Center for Information Management). The Berlin declaration (<http://www.zim.mpg.de/openaccess-berlin/berlindeclaration.html>) has been launched in October 2003 at a meeting organized by the Max Planck Society to ensure the free and unrestricted access of everybody to the results of scientific research and the sources documenting the cultural heritage of mankind. It has until now been signed by 38 organizations throughout the world which are now taking concrete measures of implementation.

For the first time ever, the Internet offers the possibility of making knowledge universally accessible. As a result, publishing practices and the system of quality assurance used so far in the sciences and the humanities are expected to undergo considerable changes. In signing the "Berlin Declaration", the research organizations advocate consistently using the Internet for scientific communication and publishing.

It was this spirit of openness and sharing in a vast community that induced Tim Berners Lee and Robert Cailliau of CERN to invent the World Wide Web 15 years ago. Now CERN and its collaborating institutes are one of the leading forces developing Grid Computing, which will allow physicists around the world to analyse the data from CERN's new machine, the Large Hadron Collider (LHC), from their home institutes.

The process of transforming scholarly communication towards the open access model pioneered by the high-energy physicists of CERN has now taken up additional momentum. With CERN one of the most distinguished European research institutions has become a Signatory of the Berlin

Declaration. Representing a larger group of research organizations about to join the process started in Berlin, the University of Pavia has signed the declaration as the first Italian university.

In opening the meeting, Robert Aymar, Director General of CERN said: “50 years ago 12 European Countries adopted the Convention of CERN which was the result of the vision of Scientists and Politicians from Europe, and around the world, and which has been proven to be the basis for the success of this Organization. The Convention requires openness, stipulating that “the results of its (CERN’s) experimental and theoretical work shall be published or otherwise made generally available”.

For the first time the Geneva meeting has recognized not only the benefit of open access for science but also its crucial role in turning the Internet into a key element of an open and peaceful world. As the President of the Academy of African Languages, Adama Samassekou, representing the World Summit on Information Society at the meeting pointed out: „ In a world of open access knowledge is a connecting rather than a dividing factor between different cultures. We have to counteract the danger of a knowledge divide blooming from the present practice of commercial scholarly communication. What we need instead is open access as a model for a new, open-minded way of thinking, the only way to address the global challenges emerging from the divide between rich and less rich societies.“

Among several nations already on their way towards an open access society, also the Federal Republic of Germany plays a leading role, with its partnership between the Max Planck Society, the Fachinformationszentrum Karlsruhe, and the Federal Ministry of Research and Education. With the project of creating a nucleus for a national infrastructure for open access to scientific information and cultural heritage just granted, this partnership has taken on a concrete form. The project is being co-funded by the partners at a level of 25 million Euros for a period of five years.

**Further information:**

<http://www.zim.mpg.de/openaccess-cern>

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