

# Comments to Jean-Claude Burgelman's article *Politics and Open Science: How the European Open Science Cloud Became Reality (the Untold Story)*

—The twin challenge of the hard-core change and the cultural shift. The role of the Chorus in the Greek drama

Edit Herczog<sup>†</sup>

Rue Posschier 16 1040 Brussels, Belgium

Citation: Herczog, E.: Comments to Jean-Claude Burgelman's article *Politics and Open Science: How the European Open Science Cloud became reality (the untold story)*—The twin challenge of the hard-core change and the cultural shift. The role of the Chorus in the Greek drama. *Data Intelligence*. 3(1), 20-23 (2021). doi: 10.1162/dint\_a\_00070

---

In 2014 I have ended my “decade mirabilis” in the European Parliament, after the European Enlargement in 2004, when ten countries entered to the European Parliament. I had a pleasure to work on several industrial and technological and research related legislations. The transitions due to the changed legislation show that the most difficult element of the transition is always twofold: To be aware of the changed legislation is difficult, but the cultural shift is a real challenge.

I remember the sunny day in Washington in July 2014, when John Wood, then Council member of the Research Data Alliance (RDA) explained to the transatlantic legislators (Congressmen and Members of the EP) the future of science and research, due to Open Data (OD). Besides John's enthusiasm it was a communication failure as it was too technical for most of the audience. The event had two consequences: (i) RDA issued a paper “Harvest the Data” with the support of Science Business, to explain the value of data to the policymakers (civil servants and politicians), (ii) I became a profound believer of OD and Open Science (OS) as it combined the two challenges of my experience as Member of the European Parliament: Technical and Cultural twinning of the fundamental challenges ahead, occurring all over the world. For most of the professionals, data and data management was the burden, and data sharing was not even part of their tasks. However, like always there was a small group of visionary people driving the change. In the duration of the six years covered in the article of JC Burgelman, I found a new mission and put lots of

---

<sup>†</sup> Corresponding author: Edit Herczog (E-mail: edit.herczog@geant.org; ORCID: 0000-0002-2930-5401).

voluntary efforts to support those pioneers. My vision was not simply to achieve the gradual change: my vision was and is to achieve the “data scope” which is like the microscope or the telescope in the past, opens new research fields which were not possible before. (The professionals call it interdisciplinary research). I am very honoured to serve the RDA community as a Council member since 2016 and being the European Co-chair for the FAIR DMM WG<sup>①</sup> to build global compromise around the FAIR maturity criteria as a critical step to the future.

Jean Claude Burgelman's article is an important chapter of the OS history as not simply an insider but the main actor of the Greek Drama. Following his narrative, I will write my observations about the real main actor of any Greek drama: the Chorus. The Greek Drama is driven by the Chorus, representing the community, led by the coryphaeus, often more than just one. The face of the chorus members is covered by a mask to impersonalize the faces and allow for different roles. The chorus divides the different scenes and moves the story forward. In the EOSC drama the different camps and leading personalities were the chorus and coryphaeus.

**Chorus 2016.** Parallel to the Amsterdam declaration RDA organised the conference in Amsterdam, where Barend Mons, Eva Mendez, Sandra Collins and myself were in the panel moderated by John Wood. The chorus was divided into two parts: Some argued for fast revolutionary change turning to “machine actionable” data, while others argued for an evolution, moving slowly by sorting out the most important data challenges ahead. This dichotomy is a main characteristic of the OD movement. There are progressive value-based groups and personalities in both camps. (I must admit I could also observe some transactional thinkers, saving or creating status quo for their benefits too).

**Chorus 2017.** The first EOSC Summit was the first time the researchers exchanged views with the European Commission, including Commissioner Moedas, Director General of DG RTD, Robert Jan Smits and the respective Directors from DG RTD and CNECT. The dichotomy between the chorus: doers arguing for “moving and doing” versus the perfectionists “do not move before we know all details” was crystal clear. In my contribution I used the analogy of Christopher Columbus: if he would know all the details of his trip, he would not discover America. (Today the Minimum Viable Product is largely used and known<sup>②</sup> but was less known in 2017).

Following the EOSC Summit, the 140 organizations signing to the Declaration, along with the Amsterdam declaration of the political leaders, was sufficient to prepare the next scene of the drama.

**Chorus 2018:** The community started driving EOSC through several H2020 projects, both horizontal and domain specific. It is the moment when the first High Level Group report, also known as the FAIR principles started to enter to the daily narrative of the researchers. The EOSC events were populated. The vivid discussions had two main directions:

---

<sup>①</sup> <https://www.rd-alliance.org/groups/fair-data-maturity-model-wg>

<sup>②</sup> <http://www.syncdev.com/minimum-viable-product/>

1. EOSC organization: When it should start, what is the best institutional form, who should be included and who should be in the lead. At the end of 2018, the Selection board (Eva Mendez, Bob Jones and I ) agreed the individuals and the institutions (representing the funders, the domains and the data cycle) of the Expert Group, known as the Executive board of EOSC.
2. FAIR was discussed in each corner of Europe. RDA Europe 3 project led by Peter Wittenburg (who is also a chair of the informal group of doers (GEDE), GO FAIR, led by Barend Mons and the RDA Technically Advisory Board (TAB) co-chair Françoise Genova were the three names you had to remember when promoting FAIR and arguing for the next step to make the FAIR principle actionable before the creolization overwrites the unity around them.

**Chorus 2019:** The two processes followed their own paths. The EOSC Executive Board has got a strategic ally when the Governing Board has been created representing the policymakers from each EU country. In addition, the Working Groups were populated by large number of professionals engineering the different elements of EOSC. At the same time, the RDA FAIR data maturity model Working Group started with full speed to elaborate FAIR maturity criteria. To do it in the bottom up driven global method with the editorial support from the EU we could analyze the fifteen existing FAIR assessment methods (developed in regions and domains). The third element of the chorus was the OS movement, converged in the OS Policy platform, several national initiatives, and European projects. It quickly become clear that the change in culture, will be one where the dividing interests were difficult to be aligned, and where not only the resistance but the risk of opt-out will be present. Here the transition takes longer time and facilitation of the transition remains a future task at all levels.

**Chorus 2020:** The EOSC EB and GB with the support of the community in the projects and working groups achieved its milestones to agree the organizational model and to establish the legal entity. The Strategic Research and Innovation agenda approved by the legislators is foreseen. The RDA FAIR DMM WG achieved its milestone to publish the recommendation. We could agree on the FAIR Maturity criteria (several criteria for each letter of FAIR). The two processes met again in the EOSC FAIR WG metrics report led by Françoise Genova, where the first set of the FAIR DMM Maturity criteria became the EOSC metrics criteria. The WG moves to the next stage as a Maintenance Group to further work on the criteria, and probably revisit the principles. It should be done bottom up and only periodically changed, every two or three years only (depending on the need).

The year 2020 is a “*annus miserabilis*” due to COVID 19. The FAIR DMM criteria recommendation was ready just in time to be used when defining rules how data can be collected to fight the pandemic.

We are not in the beginning of the end, but at the end of the beginning. To reach out the 1.7 million researchers, to include social sciences, to make the change at global stage are the next priorities.

Six years are long when you are following it day to day. Comparing to any other huge transitions, it is the shortest transition I witnessed. Once again it has been proved that parallel twin transition of professional expertise and societal acceptance is difficult but possible. As the structure of the Greek drama obliges: The main acts and actors interrupted and advanced by the Chorus.

As a tribute to JC Burgelman, I quote GB Shaw in his play *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (1893): **“People are always blaming circumstances for what they are. I don't believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can't find them, make them.”**

This article is a tribute to the chorus. All members of the chorus. Those who were the frontrunners, agreeing or disputing time to time but common in their constructive approach. Those who are in the EU and those who are around the world to push for change. Those who made a mass work in all formations formally and informally, some of them paid, but most of them volunteers. Those who originally resisted, but turned out to be supporters or at least became less vocal. Those who are in the beginning of their OS journey. Those who will define the future to come. And those who will benefit from the change. The society, the *raison d'être* of everything we do.

## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



**Edit Herczog** is Director General of her company Vision & Values, a Brussel based company focused on company coaching. She is Senior EU Liaison Adviser for GÉANT. She is member of the: Administrative Board of the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER); the Research Data Alliance Global Council; and the Board of Directors at the Transatlantic Policy Network. She is member of the European Commission Expert Group on the implementation of the Regulation on the Community legal framework for a European Research Infrastructure Consortium and Co-Chair of the RDA FAIR DMM Maintenance Group. She is visiting lecturer of International Management at HEC Liege and the OB MBA program. She served two consecutive terms in the European Parliament as MEP (2004–2014), was member of the ITRE, IMCO, BUDG, and CONT committees, and held roles in a number of parliamentary forums such as the European Energy Forum, the European Internet Foundation, the Kangaroo Group, Knowledge 4 Innovation and the Forum for the Future of Nuclear Energy. Prior to her election to the EP she was member of the Hungarian Parliament in which role she was delegate to the Council of Europe. Before her political engagement, she worked for the private sector as regional sales and technical manager for the specialty chemicals company, National Starch & Chemical. She has an MSc in food conservation engineering. She was research fellow at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and professor's assistant at the University of Horticulture. Edit holds a Certificate of Company Direction for strategic marketing, financial management and company law from the Institute of Directors.