Dear members of the executive council of the ASE,

With this letter, we, the co-editors of RoSE, announce our decision to step down from this role and explain why. After having worked hard on the journal, in some cases for many years, this was not a step that came lightly, but we see it as inevitable.

RoSE is currently published by Taylor & Francis (T&F), a commercial publisher, in a subscription model. The big disadvantage of this model is that most articles are hidden behind a paywall, inaccessible for many scholars worldwide. For years, we have been in discussions about the possibility of moving to an open-access model, and we have used a considerable part of the editorial budget for "buying out" articles from behind the pay wall, especially those of young scholars or scholars from non-OECD countries.

The ASE has now decided to stay with T&F, and against the move towards a subscribe-to-open model with Stanford University Press. This decision, however, means that the future path of the journal is towards a model with author publishing fees (APFs), not subscriptions. T&F have been very clear about their estimation that the subscription model will continue to decline and will soon no longer be feasible. Having the journal run on an APF model means that the income depends on authors having funds available (which is only the case for authors in privileged countries and institutions). Editors are incentivized to publish as many articles as possible, to maximize revenue. This is not a path that we, as an editorial team, want to follow. We think it conflicts with the values of open knowledge and equity in science, especially for scholars from non-Western countries that cannot afford to pay AFPs.

The structure of ASE, with its financial dependence on the journal income, has created an unhealthy financial dependence on royalties from the journals. We have therefore never pushed for moving to models that would not generate *any* income. The Stanford UP model would, with high likelihood, have allowed generating a stable income, while preserving the quality and integrity of the journal. But ASE's leadership - with its short-term cycles, which make longer-term planning maybe more difficult than it would otherwise be - has decided that it does not want to take this step.

We have therefore decided to end our collaboration with the ASE and to step down as co-editors of RoSE.

As a matter of responsibility towards authors, we will continue - with ASE's consent - to handle the papers that are currently in the review process, but will not accept new submissions. We hope that ASE can soon form a new editorial board and take over the journal.

Best wishes

The RoSE co-editors
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Lisa Herzog

Natascha van der Zwan
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