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A European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity

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WG 'Code of Conduct' ESF Member Forum

All European Academies (ALLEA)

Earlier efforts in Europe

- ESF (2000): *Good Scientific Practice in Research and Scholarship*

- ALLEA (2003): *Memorandum on Scientific Integrity*

- ESF & ORI (2007): First World Conference on Research Integrity, Lisbon.

- ALLEA/ESF/ENRIO (2007): European Co-ordinated Approach to Research Integrity (ECARI)

- ESF (2008): Survey report *Stewards of Integrity: Institutional approaches to promote and safeguard good research practice in Europe*

- ESF (2008) : Member Forum on Research Integrity

ESF Member Forum on Research Integrity
Four working Groups

1. Raising awareness (Chair: Sonia Ftacnikova (SL))

2. Code of Conduct (Chair: Pieter Drenth (ALLEA, NL)

3. Setting up national structures (Chair: Maura Hiney (TE))

4. Research on research integrity (Chair: Livia Puljak(HR))

Report (2010): *Fostering Research Integrity in Europe*

European Code

- Not a legal document; rather canon for self-regulation

- Applies to natural and life sciences, social and behavioural sciences, and humanities

- Code does not cover the wide scope of science and ethics, but restricts itself to 'internal ethical problems', refering to (in)acceptable behaviour in research

- Objective is to stimulate and develop the emergence of institutional settings that strengthen research integrity, and to set standards across Europe that can, eventually, be held valid and implemented world wide

Principles of research integrity

- Honesty

- Reliability

- Objectivity

- Impartiality and independence

- Open communication

- Duty of care

- Fairness

- Responsibility for future science generations

Misconduct

- Most serious: **Fabrication** (making up results) and **Falsification** (manipulating research, changing or omitting data)

- **Plagiarism** (appropriation of other's results, ideas, words without giving appropriate credit)

- **Minor misdemeanors** (some 'adjustment' of data, cutting a corner, omitting an unwelcome observation); part of QRP

- **Improper dealing** with infringements of principles of integrity (attempts to cover up, reprisals to whistle-blowers, violations of due process)

- These (infringements of) principles and norms are fundamental and universal

Good Research Practices

- **Data management** (storage, access, preservation)

- **Proper** research procedures (proper design, careful, efficient, confidentiality, publication oriented)

- **Responsible** research procedures (respect, safety, cultural sensitivity, care for object of research)

- **Publication-related** conduct (honest, rapid, authorship,recognition, no conflict of interests)

- **Reviewing /editorial** issues (honest, fast, accurate, use of information, no conflict of interests)

Good Research Practices (2)

- Rules are subject to cultural differences. Definitions, traditions, legislative regulations, institutional provisions may vary over nations or regions, sometimes even over disciplines.

- System of regulations of good research practices should therefore not be part of universal Code of Conduct.

- It should rather be developed in the form of national or institutional good practice rules.

- In such Rules issues, as suggested in European Code of Conduct, should be addressed.

Handling cases of misconduct

- Primary responsibility: employers of scientists (university or institute)

- Standing or ad hoc committee

- Need for a due and fair process, that is uniform and sufficiently rapid, and leads to proper outcomes and sanctions

- Responses proportionate to seriousness of misconduct

- Misconduct: intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly; preponderance of evidence; no honest errors or differences of opinion

International research

- Partners should agree to conduct their research according to the same norms and standards for international collaborative research, and

- To bring alleged research misconduct to immediate attention of projectleader(s), and leader(s) of own team

- Investigation according to policies and procedures of partner with primary responsibility for the project

- For large scale, and often externally funded international research projects: agreement cf boilerplate text of Co-ordinating Committee of the OECD Global Science Forum

Final Word

- European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity represents agreement at a given point in time

- European Code could:
    - be a basis for developing national regulations where none exist
    - complement existing codes of ethics
    - in some cases enhance or supersede codes already in operation

- Confinement to European Code of Conduct does not imply that principles and guidelines are to remain restricted to European scientific community