



Council of the
European Union

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RECH 233

NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Delegations
Subject: Draft Council conclusions on research integrity
- Presidency text

Delegations will find attached a Presidency text on the Draft Council conclusions on research integrity with a view to the Research Working Party meeting on 5 October 2015.

DRAFT COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON RESEARCH INTEGRITY¹

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

RECALLING

- The Commission Recommendation on the European Charter for Researchers², setting out the basis for ethical practices and fundamental ethical principles for researchers and related organisations to act responsibly within their working environment;
- The respect to fundamental ethical principles and integrity in EU research and innovation activities, as complied with by the activities covered by Horizon 2020 - The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation³;
- The respect to academic freedom and to free-of-constraint scientific research, as enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;

¹ For the purposes of these conclusions, research integrity relates to the performance of research to the highest standards of professionalism and rigour, and to the accuracy and truth of the research record in publications and elsewhere. Good research practice includes research ethics in the proposal and experimentation phase, as well as publication ethics in its analysis and dissemination (source: Irish Universities Association -www.iua.ie- and Royal Irish Academy -www.ria.ie-).

² 7321/05.

³ Regulation (EU) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing Horizon 2020 - The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020).

Research integrity as key to research excellence and societal relevance

1. CONSIDERS research integrity as the foundation of high quality research and as a prerequisite for achieving excellence in research and innovation in Europe and beyond. STRESSES the importance of excellence based on academic freedom and integrity as an essential element for a trustworthy knowledge-base leading to economic development and societal advancement as well as to the improvement of living standards, health and wellbeing of citizens in Europe;
2. ACKNOWLEDGES the increase in scientific output worldwide and, in such context, HIGHLIGHTS the importance of good research practice through all stages of the innovation cycle;

Socio-economic impact of research misconduct and its prevention

3. ACKNOWLEDGES that integrity in research can be damaged by research misconduct⁴ and RECOGNISES that research misconduct can lead to considerable cost by damaging the scientific enterprise, misusing public funds, undermining citizens' trust in science, and has consequences on:
 - a) *Individuals and society*: unsafe R&I products or processes may be released or false results may become public and widely accepted by the community or by other scientists with serious consequences;
 - b) *Public institutions*: institutional abilities to foster and promote research in a competent and responsible manner can be undermined;
 - c) *Public trust*: research misconduct can lead to the disruption of public confidence in science;

⁴ Research misconduct is understood as breaches of research integrity. Research misconduct includes fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism (FFP) in proposing, performing, or reporting of results, because these violations damage the research record (source: OECD (2007): "Best practices for ensuring scientific integrity and preventing misconduct").

4. CONSIDERS that, while respecting academic freedom, the primary responsibility of research misconduct lays on researchers themselves, with an overarching responsibility also being existent at institutional level; Consequently, CALLS for the fostering of an institutional culture of research integrity in order to create, mainly through training and mentoring practices, a climate in which responsible behaviour is expected at individual and institutional level;
5. EMPHASISES the need for preventive measures to avoid research misconduct and HIGHLIGHTS the role that education, training and life-long learning at different stages of the researchers' careers can play in this respect;

Promotion of research integrity at EU and Member State level

6. AGREES on the value and benefit of the promotion of research integrity at individual and institutional level and CONSIDERS that excellent research at EU and Member State level should be founded on the following minimum common set of principles: (1) honesty, (2) accountability and (3) duty of care;
7. STRESSES the need for EU action to call for the implementation of research integrity principles as a guarantee for high quality research in Europe while avoiding unnecessary administrative burden and ASKS the Commission to further develop the definition and criteria for the applicability of the aforesaid three minimum common principles in EU R&I projects;
8. NOTES that such principles could conform the basis of a Common European Framework for Research Integrity and for the Prevention of Misconduct, as a common denominator of the already existing relevant EU and national codes of conduct in research, in particular the "European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity"⁵ developed by the European Science Foundation (ESF) and All European Academies (ALLEA); and LOOKS FORWARD to the forthcoming Horizon 2020 Code of Conduct by the Commission, as an essential tool for the promotion of research integrity at EU level;

⁵ The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (ESF and ALLEA, 2011), available at http://www.esf.org/fileadmin/Public_documents/Publications/Code_Conduct_ResearchIntegrity.pdf

9. INVITES the Commission to consider the creation of a European Network of trainers for Research Integrity, based on the "train-the-trainer" principle in order to move towards a higher degree of consistency of research integrity curricula in Europe;
 10. INVITES Member States to step up efforts on their mutual learning exercises, including within the framework of ERAC, and on the exchange of best practices in the field of research integrity and in education-related activities for the prevention of research misconduct;
 11. CALLS on both the Commission and Member States to explore ways for the removal of incentives for research misconduct, focusing on positive incentives for the promotion of the quality of research as well as on the appropriate responses proportionate to the seriousness of the misconduct.
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