



Council of the  
European Union

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RECH 250

**NOTE**

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From:	Presidency
To:	Delegations
No. prev. doc.:	12444/15 RECH 233
Subject:	Draft Council conclusions on research integrity - Presidency text

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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 26 October 2015.

Changes to the previous text (doc. 12444/15) are indicated in **bold underlined** for additions and in ~~strikethrough~~ for deletions.

**DRAFT COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON RESEARCH INTEGRITY<sup>1</sup>**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

RECALLING

- The Commission Recommendation on the European Charter for Researchers<sup>2</sup>, 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 Innovation<sup>3</sup>;
- The respect to academic freedom and to free-of-constraint scientific research, as enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;

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<sup>1</sup> 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~~ **objectivity 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 (**main** source: Irish Universities Association -[www.iua.ie](http://www.iua.ie)- and Royal Irish Academy -[www.ria.ie](http://www.ria.ie)-).

<sup>2</sup> 7321/05.

<sup>3</sup> 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~~ socio-economic 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 research and innovation based on academic freedom and integrity as an essential element for a trustworthy knowledge-base leading to socio-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 and dissemination worldwide and, in such context, HIGHLIGHTS the importance of good ~~research~~ practice through all stages of the research and innovation cycle;
3. **RECOGNISES the importance of research integrity as a necessary precondition for open science, while, at the same time, open science contributes to research integrity;**

## Socio-economic impact of research misconduct and its prevention

- 3 4. ACKNOWLEDGES that integrity in both public and private research can be damaged by research misconduct<sup>4</sup> and RECOGNISES that research misconduct and questionable research practices can lead to considerable negative economic impact and costs for both the public and private sector, ~~by damaging the scientific enterprise, misusing public funds, undermining citizens' trust in science, and having~~ consequences on **for**:
  - a) *Individuals and society*: false results or 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, including hampering scientific progress;

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

b) **Public policies: unreliable data or untrustworthy advice may lead to inefficient policy-making;**

b c) *Public institutions:* institutional abilities to foster and promote research in a competent and responsible manner can be undermined;

e d) *Public trust:* research misconduct, **including the misuse of public funds,** can lead to the disruption of public confidence **and support** in science, **and thereby endanger the sustainability of R&I funding;**

4 ~~5~~. CONSIDERS that, while respecting academic freedom, the primary responsibility of research misconduct **integrity** ~~lays on~~ **is with** 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 ~~6~~. EMPHASISES the need for preventive measures to avoid research misconduct **and questionable research practices** 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 7. 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 ~~following minimum common set of principles: (1) honesty, (2) accountability and (3) duty of care;~~ **the principles listed in the "European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity"<sup>5</sup> developed by the European Science Foundation (ESF) and All European Academies (ALLEA), as follows:**

- **Honesty;**
- **Reliability;**
- **Objectivity;**
- **Impartiality and independence;**
- **Open communication;**
- **Duty of care;**
- **Fairness;**
- **Responsibility for future science generations;**

7 8. 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~~ **additional** 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;~~ **in this respect, ACKNOWLEDGES the efforts carried out by Science Europe in supporting the implementation of existing principles and codes;**

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<sup>5</sup> **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](http://www.esf.org/fileadmin/Public_documents/Publications/Code_Conduct_ResearchIntegrity.pdf)**

~~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"<sup>6</sup> 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;~~

**9. CALLS on the Commission to apply the aforementioned "European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity" in EU-funded research, in particular in Horizon 2020;**

~~9~~ **10. INVITES Member States and** the Commission to **promote existing research integrity networks, such as the European Network of Research Integrity Offices (ENRIO)** consider the creation of a European Network of trainers for Research Integrity, **including training activities** based on the "train-the-trainer" principle in order to move towards a higher degree of consistency of research integrity ~~curricula~~ **practices** in Europe;

~~10~~ **11. INVITES Member States, in collaboration with the Commission,** to step up efforts on their mutual learning exercises, including within the framework of **the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (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~~ **12. CALLS on both the Commission and Member States, research funders and the research community together** 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 **and on them to develop minimum guidelines to address** ~~the appropriate responses proportionate to the seriousness of the misconduct.~~

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<sup>6</sup> ~~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](http://www.esf.org/fileadmin/Public_documents/Publications/Code_Conduct_ResearchIntegrity.pdf)~~