The European Research Council
Activities in research integrity and gender

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European Research Council
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ERC Scientific Council
Working groups & Standing committees

Gender balance
Innovation and relations with industry
Open Access
Committee on Panels
CoIME (Research integrity)

Widening Participation
Internationalisation
Key Performance Indicators

Established by the European Commission
ERC Scientific Council
Working groups & Standing committees
ERC standing Committee on Conflict of Interests, Scientific Misconduct, Ethical Issues (CoIME)

Mission:

"...formulating guidelines on conflict of interest, fraud and ethical matters related to any facet of the ERC's competences, clarifying criteria and considering any particular instance or situation where ethical concerns may arise"

(Minutes of the Scientific Council Plenary meeting October 2009)
CoLME - Composition

- ScC Chair Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon and six further members:
  - Prof. Pavel Exner (Chair - delegated)
  - Prof. Carl-Henrik Heldin
  - Prof. Nicholas Canny
  - Prof. Isabelle Vernos
  - Prof. Nuria Sebastiàn Gallés
  - Prof. Sierd Cloetingh

ERCEA secretariat: Laura Pontiggia, Unit Support to the Scientific Council
Misconduct policy: The European Research Council (ERC) has issued a strategy for identifying and addressing scientific misconduct — the first such policy on the European level.
The ERC Scientific Misconduct Strategy: the starting point

**Host Institutions** have primary responsibility for detection of scientific misconduct, investigation and adjudication.

**ERC Recommendation:** all ERC HIs will have structures in place to uphold scientific integrity, deal with all cases coming to ERC attention, report to the ERC on actions taken.
Notwithstanding the above.....

ERC will address all issues of alleged scientific misconduct concerning an ERC applicant or project

Through its Executive Agency (ERCEA), the ERC will take appropriate follow–up actions, whenever there is sufficient evidence that scientific misconduct has taken place
Role of the CoIME

CoIME has an important advisory/consultative role; works in close collaboration with ERCEA Director; can consult external experts.

ERCEA Director takes decisions after having received CoIME’s opinion, using his own discretion or judgment.
Established by the European Commission

Procedure to deal with incoming information on scientific misconduct

Based on the Strategy, an administrative procedure is established to deal with scientific misconduct

Ensuring timely follow-up actions

Strengthening the capability of the ERC to deal with incoming information on scientific misconduct

Respecting the legal framework applicable to an Agency established within the European Commission's frame
Examples of follow-up actions by ERCEA Director

- Proposals may be excluded during submission, evaluation or award
- Peer reviewers may be excluded from review evaluation or their appointment may be terminated
- Request for measures to be taken by the Host Institution
- Suspension or termination of granting
13 Cases analysed in 2012

- 7 cases of CoI involving peer reviewers
- 2 cases of alleged plagiarism
- 2 cases of copy/past of other ERC applications
- 2 cases of misconduct allegedly committed by an ERC applicant in the past
10 Cases analysed in 2013

- 4 cases of CoI involving peer reviewers
- 1 cases of alleged plagiarism
- 2 cases of copy/past of other ERC applications
- 1 case of cheating and double funding
- 1 case of misconduct allegedly committed by an ERC applicant in the past
- 1 case of forgery
A strict policy on Conflict of Interest
Code of Conduct of ERC peer reviewers

• **Strict obligations of impartiality**

• A conflict of interest (Col) can result in:
  - the exclusion from the evaluation of the entire call (“out of the call” rule);
  - or in the exclusion from the panel discussion on the proposal in question ( “out of the room” rule)

• **Strict obligations of confidentiality**
"Out of the call rule"

It applies when a reviewer:

- Has submitted a proposal as a principal investigator or team member in the same call

- Has close family ties (spouse, domestic or non-domestic partner, child, sibling, parent etc.) or other close personal relationship with the principal investigator of any proposal submitted to his/her evaluation panel
"Out of the room rule"

It applies when a reviewer (examples):

- Was involved in the preparation of the proposal;
- Stands to benefit directly should the proposal be accepted or rejected;
- Is a director, trustee or partner of one of the applicant legal entities or is in any way involved in the management of the proposal;
- Is employed or contracted by one of the applicant legal entities
"Out of the room rule"

It applies when a reviewer (more examples):

- Has, or has had during the last five years, a scientific collaboration with the principal investigator of the proposal;
- Has or has had a relationship of scientific rivalry or professional hostility with the principal investigator of the proposal;
- Has, or has had in the past, a mentor/mentee relationship with the principal investigator of the proposal;
Disseminating, raising awareness, hopefully deterring

- Cases of misconduct are reported (anonymously) in the ERC Annual Report

- On 6 September 2013 H. Nowotny and P. Exner sign an Editorial on Science on "Improving ERC Ethical Standards"

- Cases of misconduct to be described (anonymously) in ERC communication material and presentations
More information on
erc.europa.eu

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