



European Research Council

Established by the European Commission

Highlight:

ERC Scientific Council adopts a Scientific Misconduct Strategy to uphold research integrity in ERC research projects

9 October 2012

During its plenary session in Limassol (Cyprus) last week, the governing body of the European Research Council (ERC) - the Scientific Council - adopted a Scientific Misconduct Strategy. This document, which is considered the first ever at a European level, aims to detect and vigorously treat any allegations of scientific misconduct or any suspected breach of research integrity concerning an ERC applicant or project. Cases of scientific misconduct may include for instance the use and the publicity of falsified data, incorrect attribution of work or plagiarism of other applicants' proposals. The strategy will allow the ERC to take the appropriate follow-up actions and maintain the highest scientific and ethical standards at all stages of ERC competitions.

ERC Vice-President [Prof. Pavel Exner](#), who chairs the ERC Standing Committee on Conflict of Interests, said: "*The adoption of this strategy is an important step toward promoting a culture of research integrity across Europe. I believe this is essential if we want to preserve the very high performance of ERC grantees and panel members. This strategy paper gives a strong signal to the scientists who can pursue their dream ideas only if their research is 100% honest*".

According to the recently adopted document, host institutions are the first responsible bodies for detecting, investigating and adjudicating any allegations of scientific misconduct. This means that they should have the appropriate structures in place and bring any information to the attention of the ERC Executive Agency - the executive arm of the ERC.

The Strategy foresees that the ERCEA will set up a procedure to ensure timely follow-up actions, when cases of scientific misconduct or questionable research practices are reported. This procedure should include for instance, the notification to the European Commission and to OLAF, its anti-fraud body, the hearing of the parties involved, and follow-up actions such as exclusion of proposals from the evaluation, suspension or termination of granting.

During its plenary session, the ERC's Scientific Council reiterated its determination to uphold high ethical standards in all its activities. To this end, it will take part in the discussions on research integrity organised by the European Regional Working Group of the [Global Research Council](#) (GRC) on 22 October 2012 in Brussels, ahead of adopting a Statement of Principles on research integrity at the GRC meeting in May 2013 in Berlin.



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Background:

The strategy just adopted by the ERC is the final result of a process started in 2009, when the Scientific Council committed to formulating guidelines on conflict of interest, fraud and ethical matters related to any facet of the ERC's competences (see [Minutes](#) of the Scientific Council's meeting held on 13-14 October 2009 in Brussels).

It requested one of its committees, the Standing Committee on Conflict of Interests, Scientific Misconduct and Ethical Issues (CoIME), to draw up guidelines in that respect. CoIME is composed of a chairman (Prof. Pavel Exner), [Prof. Helga Nowotny](#) (ERC President), [Prof. Carl-Henrik Heldin](#), [Prof. Nicholas Canny](#), [Prof. Henrietta L. Moore](#), [Dr Daniel Estève](#) and [Prof. Isabelle Vernos](#).

European Research Council ([ERC](#))

Set up in 2007 by the European Union, the ERC aims to stimulate scientific excellence in Europe by encouraging competition for funding between the very best, creative researchers of any nationality and age based in the EU.

Since its launch, the ERC has funded over 3,000 researchers and their frontier research projects and has become a "benchmark" for the competitiveness of national research systems complementing existing funding schemes at national and European levels. The ERC operates according to an "investigator-driven", or "bottom-up", approach, allowing researchers to identify new opportunities in all fields of research (Physical Sciences and Engineering, Life Sciences and Social Sciences and Humanities).

The ERC, which is the newest component of the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme, has a total budget of €7.5 billion from 2007 to 2013. Last year, the European Commission proposed a substantial increase in the ERC's budget for 2014 to 2020 under the new framework programme ('Horizon 2020').

Links

ERC's Scientific Misconduct Strategy:

http://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/file/ERC_Scientific_misconduct_strategy.pdf

[List of the 22 members of the ERC's Scientific Council](#) and [their role](#)

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