The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity

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Misconduct in science and scholarship

- Effects of research misconduct are harmful for:
  - science
  - individuals and society
  - trust in science as a useful source of information and dependable base for decision making

- Increasing number of cases (in press)?

- We need: proper and accepted definition of (forms of) misconduct, reliable means of identification, effective corrective/preventive actions

- International harmonisation
A European Code

- Europe: Lack of uniformity, consistency, harmonisation
- Joint effort of European Science Foundation (ESF) and All European Academies (ALLEA)
- European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity
  - Principles of integrity in scientific and scholarly research
  - Possible violations thereof
  - Guidelines for good practice
- Accepted by ALLEA and ESF
Nature of ECoC

- Nature and functions of Codes:
  - **Aspirational** - ideal to pursue
  - **Normative** - reference base, collective understanding
  - **Educational** - training, supervision, guidance
  - **Regulatory** - controlling, monitoring, sanctions

- ECoC is stronger than a recommendation or an appeal, but weaker than than a Charter or a body of law.

- ECoC is a canon for self regulation: more aspirational than regulatory
Why not legal base?

- Research Integrity is responsibility of ‘custodians’ (universities, research institutes, academies, funding agencies) rather than of judiciary

- Internalization of norms, conscience building more important than fear of being caught and punished

- Code deals also with good practices, agreements, conventions; more than legal prescriptions/restrictions

- Border between unacceptable and (still) acceptable not always clear
International collaboration

- Foreign colleague, post doc or PhD student to be invited: code and rules of host institute

- Two or more (groups of) researchers decide to work together on a research project: agreement on beforehand (code and rules of ‘leading’ research team)

- Large scale collaboration of national research teams, often sponsored by international funds: agreement on beforehand on definition and rules (suggestion European Code of Conduct: OECD Global Science Forum boiler plate text)
Objectives ECoC

- Stimulation and furthering of the emergence of institutional settings that enforce research integrity

- Basis for the development/improvement of national or institutional codes

- Benchmark for proper behaviour in international collaborative research
Further developments

- Stimulated discussion at national level
- Stimulated developing/adapting (existing) codes
- Stimulated discussion in wider context (Europe, global)
  - Singapore statement (2010)
  - Conference East Asian Academies of Sciences (2010)
  - ALLEA/KNAW conference on plagiarism (2011)