



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Community research

Role of Funders in Publication Ethics

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Parallel session:

Publication-The role of Publishers, Funders and Research Institutions

**ESF-ORI First World Conference on Research Integrity:
Fostering Responsible Research**

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Outline

- 1. Scientific Misconduct**
- 2. European Commission (EC) as a funding body**
- 3. Scientific publishing: Access & Peer review**
- 4. EC activities: Research Integrity & Scientific Publishing**
- 5. Conclusions**



Scientific misconduct

- **Encompasses a wide range of governance and ethics aspects:**
 - ‘Governance’: peer review, authorship, whistle blowing, code of conduct (*publication issues*)
 - ‘Ethics’: honesty, fraud, conflict of interest, professional responsibility
- **Addressed on the level of institutions and of scientific societies (self regulation) rather than at funding body level**



Scientific misconduct

- **Scientific misconduct undermines public confidence in research results and discourages citizens from taking part in research**
- **Science and politics are heavily interlinked and scientific misconduct can undermine effective policy creation and implementation in areas of public interest**
- **In a democratic society, a knock-on effect leading to unwillingness of funding bodies to financially support research**



EC as a funding body

- **From 2007 to 2013 will invest a total of 53 billion euros of public money in European research**
- **European citizens have the right to expect that scientific results are based on sound and legitimate research practises**
- **Scientific misconduct has been brought to greater public attention in recent years following a series of high profile incidents reported in the media**
- **While legal instruments do exist at EC level to combat financial fraud in general there is, as of yet, no formal policy or legal instruments to deal with scientific misconduct**



Scientific Publishing

- **Access to/dissemination of research results is limited due to high journal prices and copyright provisions**
 - Digital revolution: explosion of access and dissemination possibilities through the internet
 - Need for public debate on current publishing system with the goal of developing ways to improve access and dissemination conditions
- **Increased access to scientific information (especially raw data) could lead to a more rigorous monitoring and testing of research results and therefore provide early detection of incidents of scientific misconduct**
- **Several funding bodies are implementing policies to ensure that publicly funded research should be accessible to society at large**



Scientific Publishing

- **Peer review in scientific publishing can be one of the first instruments to detect instances of scientific misconduct, however it is important to note that this is not the fundamental role of the peer review process**
- **The process is designed to evaluate the quality of the work rather than to detect fraud. Generally reviewers do not have full access to the raw data in order to reproduce or replicate the findings and this is not their task**
- **Funding bodies also use peer review process to select projects for funding**
- **Should scientific publications and funding bodies reassess their peer review processes and extend it to also include fraud detection in order to limit potential funding or validation of fraudulent research? Is this possible or desirable?**



EC activities: Research Integrity

- **As well as being a funding body the EC is in the unique position of also being a policy making body**
- **Activities:**
 - **Joint session of the Forum of National Ethics Councils and the European Group on Ethics on scientific integrity, Berlin, May 2007**
 - **Supporting this World Conference on Scientific Integrity**
 - **Expert group on scientific integrity which drafted recommendations for EC actions and which are publicised today**
 - **The requirements and « Acquis » of ethical review**
 - **Request for input from colleagues at other DGs: how/where can the Commission bring added value?**



EC activities: Scientific Publishing

- **2006 Study on the economic and technical evolution of the scientific publication markets in Europe: publication and public consultation**
http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/pdf/scientific-publication-study_en.pdf
http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/page_en.cfm?id=3185
- **15-16 February 2007, Brussels: stakeholder conference "Scientific Publishing in the European Research Area"**
http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/page_en.cfm?id=3459
- **February 2007: Communication on "Scientific information in the digital age: access, dissemination and preservation"**
- **April 2007: Launch of the Green Paper on the future of the European Research Area (ERA). Knowledge sharing (including open access) is listed as one of the 6 axes**
- **As of 2007: debate at European Parliament and Member State level**



Conclusions

- **Actions to ensure that research activities funded by EC should strengthen and ensure a high level of research integrity**
- **Striving for balance between fostering cutting-edge research and ensuring ethical conduct in research**
- **Must be compatible with rules of subsidiarity**
- **Support transparency and access to scientific information and research methodologies (2008 Call)**
- **Several possibilities on which to reflect**



Conclusions

Possible activities:

- **Code of Practise for Research which all those availing of EC funding for research activities should sign up to?**
- **Sanctions? how to impose in an international research team; the same practice may be treated differently in different countries**
- **Reflection on guidelines for research integrity in the Framework Programme**
- **Any procedures must be robust, objective and fair enough to ensure protection against false accusations**



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Conclusions

This conference marks the beginning of a policy process which requires debate, discussion collaboration and interaction with all stakeholders

The European Commission looks forward to the conclusions and outcomes of these discussions

Thank you for your attention

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