

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ETHICS AND INTEGRITY IN SCIENCE
**RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR ISSUING OPINIONS ON COMPLIANCE
WITH ETHICAL CONDUCT RULES AND ON VIOLATIONS OF RESEARCH
INTEGRITY PRINCIPLES**

Article 1

(1) The National Council for Ethics and Integrity in Science (hereinafter: the Council) shall initiate a procedure to issue an opinion on compliance with ethical conduct rules, or on violations of research integrity principles as set out in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, at the initiative of an individual or of a research or higher education organisation, or on its own initiative.

(2) The ethics committee of a research or higher education organisation may also submit an initiative for the issuance of an opinion concerning violations of ethical conduct rules or the principles of integrity in individual cases.

(3) The Council may also initiate a procedure on its own initiative based on information obtained from natural or legal persons.

Article 2

(1) The Council shall not initiate the procedure if the matter falls within the competence of the ethics and integrity committee of a research or higher education organisation, unless the committee before which the procedure is pending requests the Council to issue an opinion.

(2) Notwithstanding the preceding paragraph, the Council shall also initiate a procedure at the request of the initiator if it deems there to be justified reasons to do so based on the allegations in the initiative.

(3) The procedure before the Council shall remain confidential until the opinion is issued.

Article 3

(1) The initiative must be signed. The initiator must clearly define the questions on which the Council is requested to issue an opinion, stating the reasons and circumstances relevant to the decision.

(2) The initiator must also define any alleged non-compliance with ethical conduct rules or violations of the principles of research integrity, providing evidence to substantiate their claim.

Article 4

(1) A member of the Council shall not participate in the issuance of an opinion if they are related to the initiator or the individual to whom the allegation of non-compliance with ethical

conduct rules or violation of integrity principles relates, or if they are employed by the organisation to which the allegation pertains, or if they have a conflict of interest with any of the aforementioned persons due to other circumstances.

(2) The member shall inform the Council of the aforementioned circumstances, and the Council shall then decide whether to exclude the member from the decision-making process.

Article 5

(1) Upon receiving an initiative, the Council shall designate a member to act as rapporteur for the case. The rapporteur shall examine the initiative and report to the Council during its session on whether it is suitable for consideration.

(2) If the initiative is incomplete, the Council shall call on the initiator to supplement it in accordance with Article 3 of these Rules within a specified time limit, which shall not be shorter than seven days. If the initiator fails to supplement the initiative within the time limit, or if the initiative falls under Article 2 of these Rules, the Council shall notify the initiator that the case will not be considered.

Article 6

(1) If the Council finds that the case is suitable for consideration, it shall adopt a decision to initiate the procedure, summarising the initiative's content and stating the reasons for initiating the procedure. At the initiator's request, and if the Council deems there are justified reasons for doing so, it may withhold the initiator's identity.

(2) The decision shall be sent to the person or organisation alleged to have acted in violation of ethical conduct rules or principles of integrity, setting a time limit for them to state their position. This response period shall not be shorter than 30 days. In urgent cases, the Council may set a shorter time limit, but it shall not be shorter than seven days.

(3) The Council may call on individuals and organisations with information relevant to the decision to submit it within the time limits specified in the preceding paragraph.

Article 7

(1) After receiving a response or upon the expiry of the time limits referred to in the preceding Article, the rapporteur shall produce a report for the Council session, in cooperation with the Ministry's professional service.

(2) The Council shall consider the rapporteur's report at a closed session. If deemed necessary, the Council may call on the initiator, the person or representative of the organisation concerned, as well as other individuals who can provide relevant information or whose interests may be affected by the opinion, to attend the session.

Article 8

(1) If, after the session, the Council finds that it requires additional information to make a decision, it may postpone the session by a maximum of 30 days. Otherwise, it shall issue an opinion deciding on the initiative.

(2) In its opinion, the Council shall take a position on whether the case under review involves non-compliance with the ethical conduct rules of science, or whether the allegation of a violation of research integrity principles is substantiated. Furthermore, the opinion must contain information on the grounds on which the procedure was initiated. The members who participated in adopting the opinion must be listed in it. If any member did not participate in the decision, it must be stated whether they were excluded from the procedure.

Article 9

(1) The Council shall send its opinion to the initiator and any other person or organisation involved in the procedure. If an ethics committee exists within the research organisation or higher education organisation in the area from which the matter originates, the Council shall send the opinion to that committee, even if it did not request its issuance.

(2) If the opinion relates to a research project financed by public funds, the Council shall also send it to the organisation or agency responsible for funding the project. If a procedure related to the matter under review is pending before any other authority or organisation, the opinion shall also be sent to them.

(3) The Council shall publish the opinion in an anonymised form on its website. If the Council considers the case to be of particular significance, it may inform the media of its content, unless this would conflict with rules on the protection of official secrecy.

Article 10

These Rules shall enter into force eight days after their publication on the website.

Ljubljana, 3 July 2025