



Mutual Learning Exercise (MLE) on Research Integrity

Greece – Good practices

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Results of the MLE on RI
29/10/2019

MCE Conference & Business Centre
Brussels – Belgium

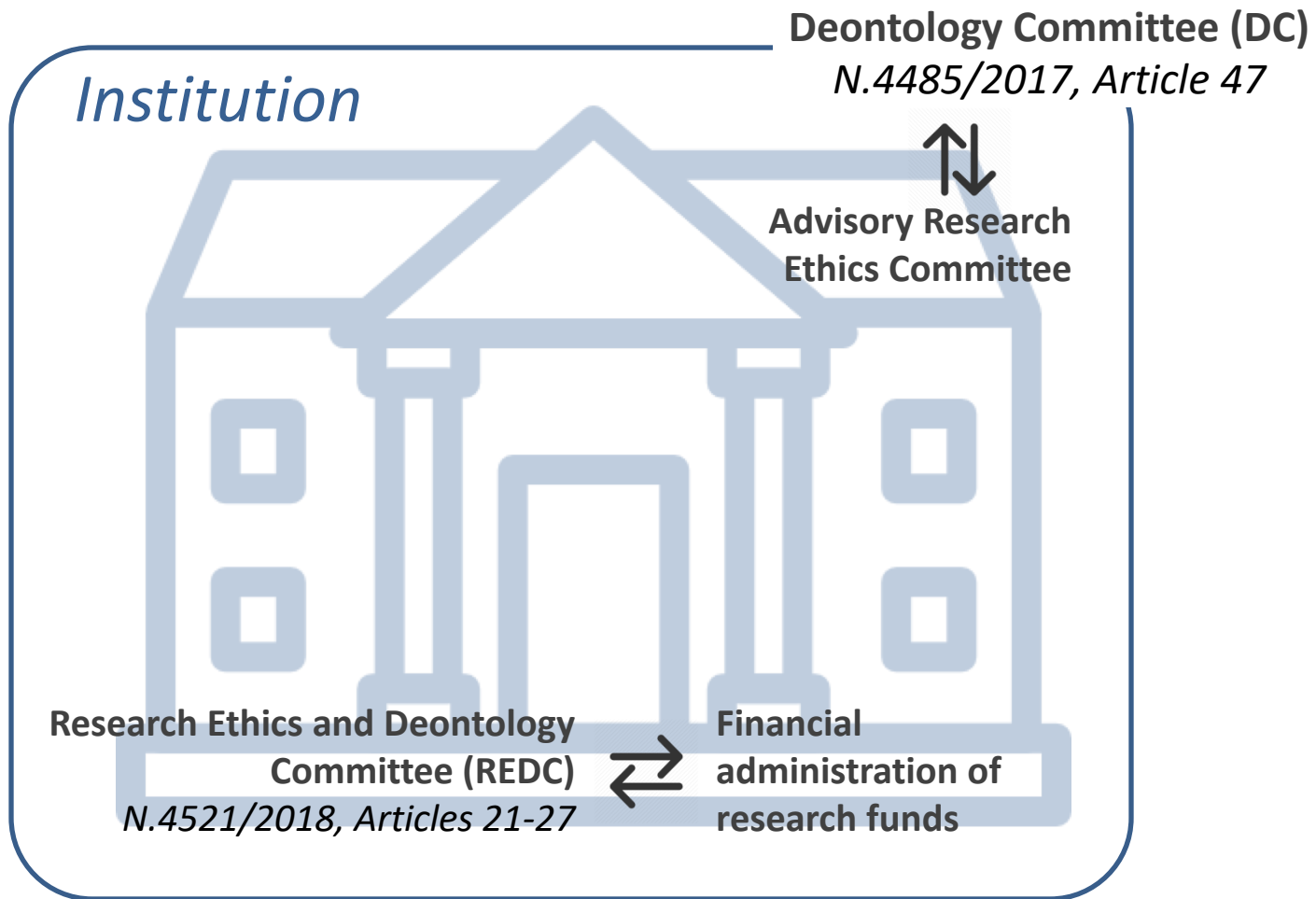


Structure of RI overlooking entities in RPOs

- **Deontology Committee (DC)** staffed by the Deans and the vice-Rector responsible for Academic Affairs, Student Care and Lifelong Education (*N.4485/2017, Article 47*). Their responsibilities are the following:
 - Draft a Code of Conduct (CoC) for academic, administrative and research issues
 - Safeguard the application of the CoC and pinpoint research misconduct
 - Prepare an annual report concerning the application of the CoC and suggest any needed additions
 - Examine allegations of research misconduct coming from the institute's community. If such an allegation has a basis a report is sent to the Rector to proceed with a formal investigation
- In some Universities (as in NTUA) an **Advisory Research Ethics Committee** aids the work of the institutional REC
- From March 2018, a **Research Ethics and Deontology Committee (REDC)** is active in each RPO. (*N.4521/2018, Articles 21-27*)
 - Their main task is to apply ethical assessment in research proposals



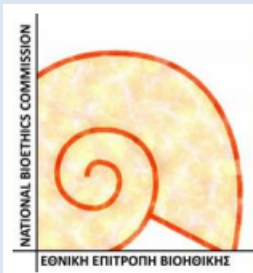
Structure of RI overlooking entities in RPOs



Resolution of unintended consequences of new ethical regulations

National Committee
for the Protection of
Animals

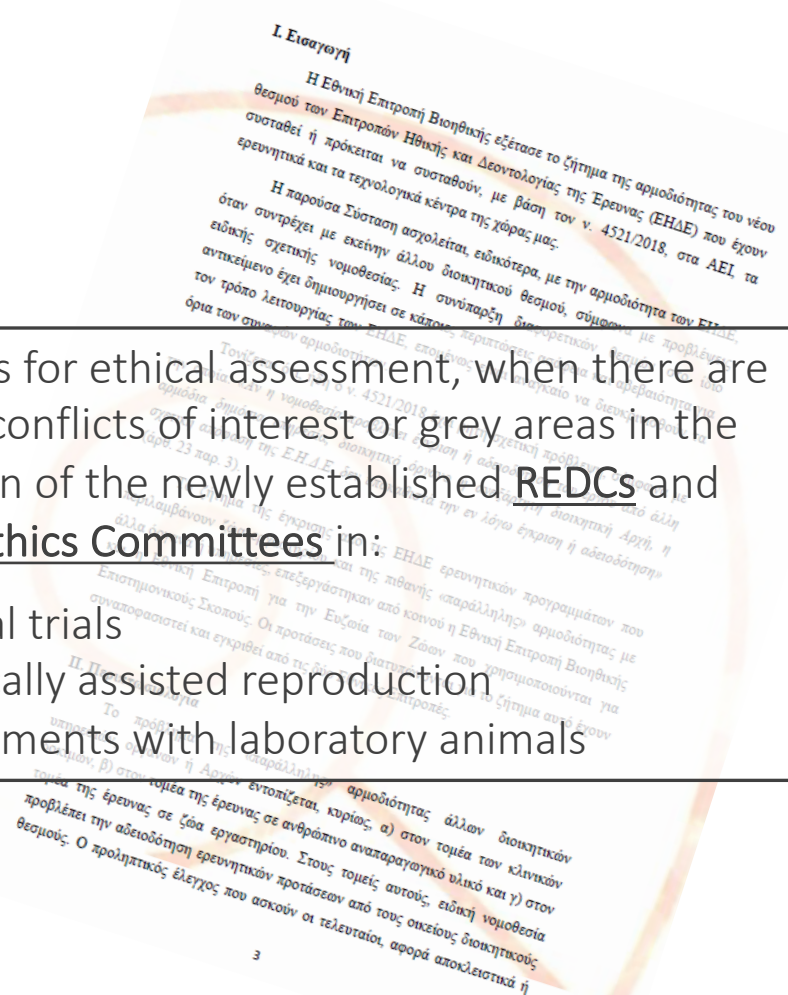
used for Scientific Purposes



National Bioethics
Commission

Guidelines for ethical assessment, when there are incipient conflicts of interest or grey areas in the jurisdiction of the newly established REDCs and existing Ethics Committees in:

1. Clinical trials
2. Medically assisted reproduction
3. Experiments with laboratory animals



EARTHnet – Studying the challenges of REDCs

Contributed presentation:

The new Greek law for the operation of Research Ethics and Deontology Committees: Context and challenges

A questionnaire was circulated among REDCs of EARTHnet's members RPOs, to map the challenges faced during the creation of the REDCs and during the first 6 months of the implementation of the new law, i.e. from October 2018 until March 2019. It aims to map the challenges concerning:

- selection of the REDC members
- interaction with the institutional agencies and academia
- implementing ethical assessment in publicly funded research.



The new Greek law for the operation of Research Ethics and Deontology Committees: context and challenges

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Assessment of measures aiming to improve transparency in research

BACKGROUND

In September 2017, the Greek Ministry of Education set up a panel of seven experts, in order to draft a law for the operation of ethical screening at the institutional level, through the creation of **Research Ethics and Deontology Committees (REDCs)**. The driving force for this initiative was that part of the official assessment of upcoming EC funded projects should be implemented within the funding institute. The suggested draft law was voted by the Greek parliament and, since March 2018, it has been put into force, having a legal mandate upon publicly funded Greek Universities and Research Centres. These institutes had the obligation to create their REDC and to align their Codes of Conduct with the content of the new law, by September 2018.

- An Institutional Deontology Committee (DC), chaired by the Dean, and a vice-Rector will be appointed. Law No.4521/2018, Article 47. Their responsibilities are the following:
 - Drafts Code of Conduct (CoC) for the administrative and research staff.
 - Subsequent application of the CoC and prepare research misconduct.
 - Prepare an annual report, concerning the application of the CoC and suggest any needed actions.
 - Examine Allegation of research misconduct. If such an allegation has a basis, a report is sent to the Rector to proceed with a formal investigation.
- In some cases (e.g. in NTUA) an Advisory Research Ethics Committee acts the work of the DC.

Law No.4521/2018

SURVEY

A mapping initiative through the EARTHnet network, aiming at clarifying important stakeholders regarding the implementation of the new law.

METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire was circulated among EARTHnet members, in order to map the challenges faced for the creation of the REDCs, and during the first 6 months of the implementation of the new law, i.e. from October 2018 until March 2019. It aimed to map the challenges concerning: (a) selection of the REDC members, (b) interaction with the institutional agencies and academia, and (c) implementing ethical assessment in publicly funded research.

SURVEY RESULTS

- ✓ All participants responding to the survey agree that the new law is a positive development towards the establishment of procedures ensuring transparency in research.
- ✓ Acknowledgement of the need to protect the rights of human participants, animals and the environment.
- ✓ Mixed responses regarding the perspective of future establishment of a National REDC.
- ✓ Strict time constraints (15 days) for the committees to respond to applications.
- ✓ Need for clearer instructions in applications and clearer distinctions of responsibilities among the various committees of the institutions (e.g. REDC and Research Committee).
- ✓ Difficulties in finding experts with specialization in RE & E.

CONCLUSIONS

EARTHnet has made a survey in order to gain feedback from the Greek scientific community on the initial challenges faced during the implementation of the new law for the creation and function of institutional committees for ethical assessment of research proposals (REDCs). The far-reaching aim of this goal-oriented initiative is to foster interaction among Greek Research Performing Organizations, so as to promote the creation of a National Code of Conduct and a Nation-wide Commission of Research Integrity and Ethics.

The project leading to this application (ENERI) has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 7210184.



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Incentives

BODOSSAKI FOUNDATION



- Outstanding achievements of the candidates in their given field and completion of their research
- Their contribution to the cultural, scientific and economic development of Greece
- Their contribution to the international promotion of Greece through their work and ethics

Awarded to Greek **scientists** who have contributed significantly to innovation through the development of innovative ideas, products or methods for the diagnosis or treatment of diseases



 PRIX GALIEN GREECE 



ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ ΝΙΑΡΧΟΣ
STAVROS NIARCHOS
FOUNDATION

Awards educational institutes (in all levels) in Greece



Incentives

- Peer recognition, reputation & informal acknowledgement of RI practices for researchers & host institutions.
- Adoption of appropriate & transparent review and evaluation processes for funding and publishing. Setting clear standards and criteria.
- Sharing data sets, open science practices & policies . FAIR principles (« Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable »).
- Initiatives for open discussions and sharing of good practices through collaboration between institutions, funders, journal editors, so as to address misconduct & ensure accuracy of research records.
- Transcending the “obey the regulations or suffer the consequences” model of incentive.**

Incentives policies

- Institutional REDCs: Ethical review process transparent procedures to ensure trust and trustworthiness among researchers and the institution
 - An **appeals mechanism** has been established for researchers regarding projects which receive negative reviews.
 - Likelihood of **personal conflicts of interest** addressed & regulated.
 - **Codes of conduct** mandatory for each research institution.
- Financial Benefits- Funding
- Formal rewards , including awards administered by research institutions (e.g. Committees for Research and Special Account for Research funds- ELKE of HEI)

Unintended consequences & challenges

- Diverse bodies of RE & RI assessment- overlap or conflict between tasks of IREDCs and Institutional Committees for the Evaluation of Protocols using animals in research- CEPs-EAPs (Presidential Decree 56/2013, derivative from Directive 2010/63/EU)?
- Different evaluation bodies performing similar or overlapping tasks?
- Handling researchers' complaints. Challenges of overregulation?
- Issues of co-ordination



Learning for experience. Pathways for conflict resolutions

- Co-operation between different evaluation/review bodies through constant channels of communication.
- Interactive evaluation processes (but without compromising each body's autonomy)
- Desirable to have common members in common (e.g. between IREDC & CEP-EAP).
- **A pro-active approach of assessing consequences before introducing new regulations, with the aim of strengthening and NOT marginalising ethics screening and the RE & RI review process.**
- Possibly some policy reform in terms of updating regulations and harmonizing the functions of diverse evaluation committees.



Overall, implementing incentives

- Robust consultation with all stakeholders .
- Joint collaborative efforts between research institutions, funding agencies, professional associations, national policy-making bodies, advocacy groups.
- Continuous monitoring in governing research.
- Transparent, flexible, interactive review processes.
- Open science policies & practices.
- Need for harmonization between RE & RI bodies at national level (including clinical trials, bodies assessing protocols using animals, etc).
- European bodies , networks, initiatives for RI & RE, crucial role in facilitating dialogue , communication, sharing good practices. MLE a case in point!

Thank you for your attention



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