

Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility



MLE Research Integrity

Report 1. Structures and processes

2nd Country Visit:
Athens, 12 March
2019

Report 1

Structures and Processes

Based on

- Discussions at the MLE Kick-off Meeting in Brussels on the 15th November 2018
- Review of existing literature and documentation
- Feedback from 14 countries participating in MLE – RI Country report card
- Discussions at the First MLE Country Visit, Oslo, 30 January 2019



RI country report cards

14 countries in MLE on RI

- 5 countries do not have a national RI policy
- 3 countries do not have a national body or bodies for RI
- 3 countries are not represented in the ENRIO
- 9 countries have defined procedures for handling misconduct
- 8 countries do not have specific RI expertise in the form of RI offices or officers although the level of misconduct investigation was institutional or a mixture of institutional and national
- Diversity of bodies and practices in producing RI guidelines and policies



Recommendations – general

Recommendation 1:

The definition of research integrity should be agreed at the national level in order to harmonize the processes at all levels in a country's RI system and increase the security and trust of researchers and other stakeholders in the fairness and objectivity of RI structures and processes.



Recommendations – general

Recommendation 2:

The criteria for RI and research ethics (RE) experts should be harmonized across Europe.



Recommendations – general

Recommendation 3:

While there is no “right” RI structure that would fit all historical, legal, cultural and socio-economic differences between countries, it would be advisable to create a national RI body that could help coordinate, monitor, educate, communicate and promote research integrity in a country.



Recommendations – general

Recommendation 4:

It would be beneficial for RI in the European context that countries join the European Network of Research Integrity Offices (ENRIO).



Recommendations – specific

1. Overlap of different ethics committees and issues of cooperation

Cooperation of different committees is necessary, but there should be a balance between the independency of work and collaborative efforts in reaching the decisions.



Recommendations – specific

2. Appeals to the results of RI investigations

Appeals should be possible, especially in systems without national RI bodies, where institutional bodies may have strong conflict of interest.



Recommendations – specific

3. Conflict of interest

RI committee members should be carefully selected to avoid conflicts of interest.

International panels would have the least bias in this regard and should be considered at least at the level of the appeals.



Recommendations – specific

4. RI investigations and mobility

a. RI portfolio, similar to teaching portfolio, could be established, consisting of a certificate indicating that this person is a qualified researcher able to address integrity challenges emerging in research (and this can include, for instance, integrity training as part of a mandatory management training program).



Recommendations – specific

4. RI investigations and mobility

b. references to codes and responsibilities should be included into employment contracts at research performing organizations.



Recommendations – specific

5. RI investigations and mobility across sectors

There should be more open dialogue between the sectors on RI and mobility.



Recommendations – specific

6. Whistle-blowers

Policies and procedures for RI investigations should address the important distinction between confidentiality and anonymity and ensure safeguarding of the confidentiality at all times for all involved in the RI investigation.

