

# Research Integrity Incentives. Experiences from Greece

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# RI in the Greek science ecosystem

- ▶ No specific national regulatory framework for research integrity, but incorporated in Act 4521/2018, articles 21–27.
- ▶ No national guidelines or code to address promotion of integrity and management of research misconduct.
- ▶ No national or independent body to provide oversight. Primary responsibility for promoting integrity and handling issues of research misconduct resides with the host institution in which research has been conducted by a researcher against whom an allegation of misconduct has been made. Professional bodies may also have a role in, for example, the case of regulated health professionals (self-regulation & institutional responsibility)

# Integration of RI with RE in Regulatory Bodies

Norms of RI integrated in the mission of national & institutional bodies:

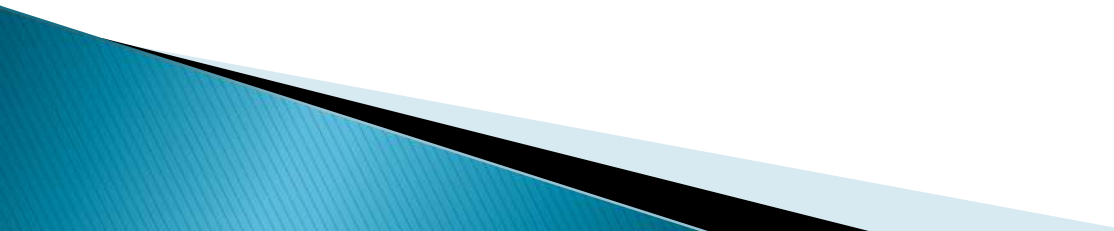
- ▶ **1. National Deontology Committee for Clinical Trials (NDCCT) Ministerial Decree, GG B 1973/2003**

Mission: The ethical screening and approval of all clinical trial protocols to be conducted in Greek institutions/centres; the promotion and regulation of good clinical practices regarding clinical trials. Decisive, authoritative body.

## 2. National Bioethics Commission (NBC-Act 2667/1998)

- ▶ 9-member advisory body on the ethical, social and legal issues (ELSI) arising from scientific advances mostly in biology, genetics, biotechnology, medicine but has recently extended its scope so as to include data ethics, AI and machine ethics, etc.
- ▶ It provides opinions, topic-related guidelines, addresses ministries with policy analyses & recommendations, collaborates with international organizations and represents Greece in international fora.
- ▶ Educational activities. Workshops, training courses, seminars, and since 2011 courses addressing high school pupils.

### 3. Institutional Research Ethics & Deontology Committees (REDCs)

- ▶ Legal Act 4521 /2018, making mandatory the establishment of REDCs in all research institutions (Universities & Research Centres) by the Greek Ministry of Education and Research.
  - ▶ Mission: Ethical reviewing of all funded research projects (mandatory) and PhD research or research leading to publication (optional).
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## 4. Networks regarding the promotion & training in RE & RI

- ▶ **EARTHnet** (Ethical Aspects in Research & Technology for Human), its mission is the promotion of research ethics and research integrity and the raising of awareness on issues regarding RE and RI. It has 15 members (universities and research centres).
- ▶ **RCR-Greece** (Network for Responsible Conduct of Research in Greece) founded by researchers, academics, scientists and professionals to promote RI and with the specific the purpose of education and training of scientists in RI.

- ▶ **HELIX** Hellenic Data Service – sharing data  
Joint activity of Research Centre “Athena” and the Greek Research & Technology Network (GRNET) S.A., (with financial support of EU), with the aim of bringing together the Greek research community, by providing the infrastructure for data-intensive research, data management, analysis, sharing, and reuse by researchers and innovators in a cross-disciplinary, scalable, and low-cost manner.
- ▶ **OpenAIRE National Open Access Desk (NOAD)** project in Greece provides guidance and support to researchers in receipt of Horizon 2020 funding as well as to all other interested parties like policy makers interested in adopting OS/OA policies, repository managers about compatibility with OpenAIRE guidelines and making their content visible, research funders on content aggregation and monitoring of results.
- ▶ **HEAL Link** (Hellenic Academic Libraries Link), “Declaration on Open Access in Greece” regarding on-line access to research articles

# Codes for RE & RI, guidelines

- ▶ –Code of Medical Ethics & Deontology (it includes medical & clinical research) L. Act 3418/2005.
- ▶ – Codes for Research Ethics & Deontology made mandatory for each research institution by L. Act.4521/2018.



# Incentives

- ▶ Peer recognition, reputation & informal acknowledgment 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 (subject to GDPR constraints, data anonymity & protection of data subjects' rights). FAIR principles (« Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable »).
- ▶ Career benefits.
- ▶ 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– initiatives to promote integrity in science. The Greek experience

- ▶ **Institutional REDCs:** Ethical review process
  - Aims: to cultivate an environment in which RE and RI are seen as an integral part of conducting high quality research, and to ensure trust and trustworthiness among researchers and the institution
  - An appeals mechanism has been established for researchers regarding projects which receive negative reviews.
  - The likelihood of personal conflicts of interest is addressed & regulated.
  - ▶ Codes of conduct are been made mandatory for each research institution.

# Financial Benefits– Funding

- ▶ – Transparent & effective ethical screening for research funding, as part of the very assessment process. A case in point:

**Hellenic Foundation for Research & Innovation (HFRI–ELIDEK)** budget 240m euros for strategically–directed funding of research. A transparent funding strategy providing opportunities for all disciplines and for researchers at different career stages ( emphasis on support of early career researchers, PhD candidates, Post–doc, etc...).

- National policy: An open mechanism for publicly funded research, making participation inclusive for all Greek scientists.

**Recommendation:** the adoption of ethical & RI criteria & processes as part of the assessment exercise of high quality research projects.

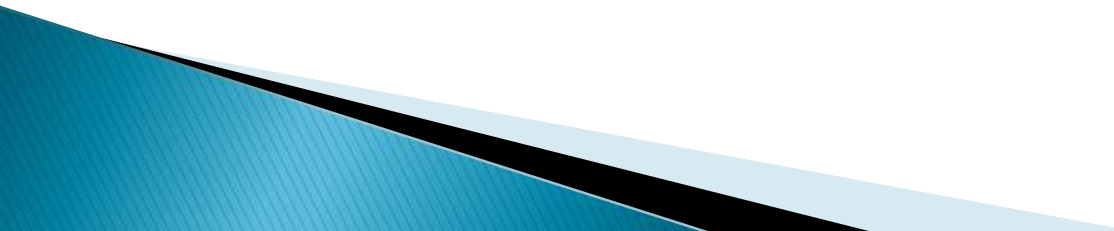
# Formal rewards:

- ▶ Awards, prizes, grants from private sector or non-profit organisations, public bodies.
- Awards for Scientific Excellence, Distinguished Young Scientists Awards (Bodossakis Foundation).
- Science Communication Awards –ETPI 2, The Athens Science Festival.
- The Galien Scientific Research Award .
- ▶ Awards administered by research institutions (e.g. Committees for Research and Special Account for Research funds– ELKE of HEI)


# Risks, threats, challenges

- ▶ RM. The biggest risk to ‘internal’ investigative approaches, currently in force, is lack of transparency, because of fear of reputational damage to the institution. Lack of stable and transparent procedures for dealing with RI breaches (mostly plagiarism).
- ▶ REDCs: Shortage of peer reviewers–experts for ethical assessment (small scientific communities, not paid work, extremely short period for reviewing, according to L.4521 /2018 only 15 days for the whole review process to be completed!)
- ▶ Lack of training (of committee members and reviewers, who do not always have the appropriate training and knowledge).

# Disincentives

- ▶ Lack of a National Body for Research Integrity
  - ▶ Lack of a National Code for Research Integrity binding for researchers and research institutions.
  - ▶ Lack of co-ordination between different institutional ethics committees dealing with specific fields of research.
  - ▶ Lack of systematic policies for open science, open access data (as yet).
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# Implementing incentives

- Robust consultation with all parties involved.
  - Continuous monitoring in governing research.
  - Transparent, flexible, interactive review processes.
  - Open science policies & practices.
  - Need for harmonization between RE & RI bodies at national level.
  - Collaborative efforts of research institutions, funding agencies, professional associations, national policy-making bodies, advocacy groups.
  - European bodies for RI, crucial role in facilitating dialogue and communication.
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*Thank you for your attention*

