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CHARTER OF ETHICS

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Partners

	Partner extended name (country)	Acronym
1	ALMA MATER STUDIORUM - UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA	UNIBO
2	GOETEBORGS UNIVERSITET	UGOT
3	CEU GMBH	CEU PU
4	UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM	UvA
5	INSTITUTO DE CIENCIAS SOCIAIS	ICS-ULISBOA
6	FONDATION NATIONALE DES SCIENCES POLITIQUES	Sciences Po
6.1	CENTRE NATIONAL DE LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE CNRS	CNRS
8	UNIVERSITA CATTOLICA DEL SACRO CUORE	UCSC-Transcrime
9	INSTITUT ZA GLOBALNI ANALIZI	IGA
10	ANTI CORRUPTION RESEARCH AND EDUCATION CENTRE	ACREC
11	LIBERA - ASSOCIAZIONI, NOMI E NUMERI CONTRO LE MAFIE	LIBERA
12	SUSTAINABLE COMMUNICATION AISBL	S-COM
12.1	NET7 SRL	NET7
12.2	TELE RADIO CITY SOCIETA COOPERATIVA SOCIALE	Tele Radio City
13	AKKI ATLATHATO KORMANYZAS KUTATOINTEZET KFT	GTI
14	KING'S COLLEGE LONDON	KCL
15	UNIVERSITAET DUISBURG-ESSEN	UDE

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Charter of Ethics

This Charter of Ethics outlines the ethical principles for conducting an interdisciplinary assessment of political corruption and undue influence within the consortium of 17 academic and non-academic partners involved in the Horizon RESPOND research project.

We, the consortium partners, have developed this document together as a team engaged in a mixed-methods research design across 27 EU countries and 11 neighboring countries. RESPOND aims to identify strategies for better understanding political corruption and undue influence practices, as well as for fighting corruption and improving the ethical performance of governments, public officials, and political parties, fostering engagement in participatory and co-creative anti-corruption efforts, and thereby restoring the popularity of democracy.

This Ethics Charter must be seen as the code of conduct for the individuals working towards RESPOND. Below, we list six general principles in line with the highest ethical standards and the applicable EU, international, and national law on ethical principles, to which RESPOND is committed.

First, we challenge the notion of a "one size fits all" approach to research ethics and safety. Therefore, we commit to adapting various research strategies and addressing ethical concerns following the diverse social, economic, and political contexts of our investigations. We acknowledge that quantitative, computational, qualitative, and co-creation methods are inherently contextual. Considering this understanding, our research project encompasses the following considerations: the researchers' positionality across different field sites, the nature of field relationships that researchers can cultivate and safeguard in diverse settings, and the dynamic changes characterizing each field site, both in the short and medium term.

Second, RESPOND's fundamental principles include respect for the welfare (health and safety) of research participants; protection of personal data, anonymity, and confidentiality; fairness; equity; justice; and social responsibility. We aim to avoid causing harm beyond what participants might experience independently of their role in the research. Our primary guiding principle is, no matter the research method applied, to prioritize the well-being of participants as well as researchers, ensuring the appropriate level of health, security, and safety according to the country's context. Many of our research participants include political elites, citizens, media users, businesspeople, activists, journalists, and other stakeholders involved in anti-corruption efforts, including law enforcers.

As a result, our Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), Policy for Incidental and Unanticipated Findings, and Risk Assessment are documents that have been jointly developed as tools to prevent harm to participants and maintain the confidentiality of their data. Among the measures outlined in our SOP, we emphasize our willingness to obtain oral and informal consent from participants when necessary, while ensuring their anonymity. Additionally, in our dynamic forms for Risk Assessment and Threat and Stakeholder Analysis, regularly updated, we strive to identify potential issues for both researchers and participants and indicate methods to mitigate them. If

necessary due to safety and security reasons, the list of places to collect data and potential participants may be redefined. We recognize that research safety and ethics concerns evolve. They cannot be fixed once and for all before fieldwork begins. For these reasons, all of our ethics-related documents are intended to be dynamic documents that will be updated as needed during the research project.

Third, we take into consideration requirements imposed by both data protection regulations and websites' terms of service to be in line with web scraping rules and respect rights related to personal data, intellectual property, or confidential data. We prioritize data collection using open and public data from 1) government websites, considered essential to this study to identify corruptible forms of influence and susceptible political decisions, mainly on law-making and public spending; 2) open and public social media profiles and legacy media websites, which are also relevant to identify how political corruption is socially constructed and how concerned citizens react to it in the digital age. In order to avoid unintended use or disclosure of data, personal data of participants directly collected through interviews, focus groups, experiments, and surveys should be deleted from the consortium's databases with proper requests and procedures, making unauthorized recovery impossible after the end of the project. Considering that the EU Data Protection Law provides exemptions for processing personal data carried out for journalistic, scientific, artistic, or literary purposes, RESPOND's consortium partners may use certain types of personal data to achieve its research purposes while ensuring compliance with the specific legal basis, requirements and safeguards associated with these exemptions, thereby balancing the objectives of the project with the protection of individual privacy rights. In addition, in the case of partners with parallel legal obligations to further process any other type of data, such as data purchased from private databases, those partners are the ones responsible for collecting, storing and processing the data under the given legal basis.

RESPOND also prioritizes already consolidated AI approaches for big data analytics, which, in this project, is essential for developing risk indicators on political corruption. The consortium members engaged in these activities are expected to follow the EU AI Act guidelines and pay particular attention to procedures to avoid bias, unfairness, and any type of risks specifically created by AI applications deployed to analyze open and public data. Mitigation measures may include the revision of codes and techniques as well as the use of bias and fairness open-source audit toolkits, and the Assessment List for Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence (ALTAI).

Fourth, we view politicians, government officials, party members, law enforcement officials, journalists, educators, civil society actors, businesspeople, and citizens as producers of situated knowledge that they will share with researchers. We believe that research participants can use the results of our research as an important reference to build bridges across different experiences of anti-corruption strategies worldwide. In this way, our research could facilitate communication between different stakeholders in different countries, including academics. In addition, activists, policymakers, and law enforcement agencies interested in transparent governance and anti-corruption initiatives may benefit from the dissemination of research findings in the form of articles and public reports. We follow the FAIR principles (findability,

accessibility, interoperability, and reusability of data), value open science, and prioritize open access to research results while respecting data protection and privacy guidelines.

Fifth, we want to foster respectful relationships that take into account cultural differences among researchers who are part of the consortium and between researchers and research participants. At the same time, we recognize the positionalities of all people involved in the research project. We recognize that there are differences related to gender, age, work position, and other dimensions within and outside the research teams. We aim to create a research environment that is inclusive, collaborative, and capable of balancing such differences when they work against the construction of a shared research space. However, we also recognize that such differences can enrich the research project and the research team with different perspectives on how to conduct the research project. We value the respectful combination of different viewpoints that may emerge from such differences. We believe in academic collaboration and in the value of being consulted by colleagues, both those who are involved in the research consortium and those not involved. In addition, RESPOND follows good research practices based on the fundamental principles of integrity: reliability, honesty, respect, and accountability, as set out in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and documented in the Grant Agreement[1].

Sixth, our commitment includes regular consultation with the Advisory Board that supports the research project throughout its duration. We pledge to seek the advice and assistance of our Advisory Board as well as our consortium members in cases involving research requirements, conflicts with our safety standards and ethical principles, applicable laws and regulations, and the workings of national and local authorities.

The Charter of Ethics serves as the guiding framework for all activities within RESPOND. Any concerns regarding potential breaches of this Charter of Ethics should be promptly communicated to the principal investigator of each interested partner and informed to the Scientific Coordinator. It is the responsibility of each beneficiary partner to take action regarding any suspected misconduct, including those involving affiliated entities, collaborators, subcontractors, as well as associated and third-party partners, related to their organization.