



THE CHARTER OF ETHICS OF THE EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR MEDIUM-RANGE WEATHER FORECASTS

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Background

Over the last few years, growing numbers of professional, commercial, governmental and intergovernmental organisations worldwide have produced corporate charters of ethics.

Such charters make public the ethical standards that guide an institution's activities. Publicising the ethical principles on which an institution relies reflects an aspiration to attain greater transparency and accountability and give confidence regarding the organisation's integrity and honesty.

Internally, the aim of these charters is to highlight personal responsibility as the fundamental and most effective element in the functioning of an organisation.

The Charter

The Charter of Ethics establishes a framework which provides guidance on the standards of conduct expected from the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) as an international organisation and from its staff¹ in their internal and external relations.

The Charter puts in writing the standards of conduct already expected of the Centre and its staff, and in so doing seeks to reaffirm the character of ECMWF.

ECMWF is strongly committed to fundamental European principles and values such as Council of Europe Treaties, the European Social Charter, and the European Convention on Human Rights and its Protocols.

The Charter of Ethics does not in any way supersede or amend the contractual obligations of staff under the Staff Regulations, consultancy contracts or Implementing Instructions. They remain the legally binding instruments that determine acceptable or non-acceptable conduct.

¹ Staff members, consultants, graduate trainees

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THE CENTRE'S PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

Competence and professionalism

The primary aim of all activities pursued by the Centre is to serve its Member States through excellence in numerical weather prediction and related tasks as described in the Convention.

The Centre has gained worldwide leadership in its scientific and technical areas of responsibility. It owes its success primarily to the competence and professionalism of its staff, who carry out their functions with objectivity and impartiality and perform their tasks thoroughly and with rigour, in pursuit of excellence.

The high quality of the Centre's output is due to the staff's scientific and technical excellence, together with the good working environment provided by the Centre.

The major competencies of the Centre's staff include communication, cooperation, organisation, creativity, efficiency, a mix of a relaxed ambience and highly professional behaviour, and a focus on results.

The values of the Centre's staff are evidenced by integrity, professionalism, team spirit, openness, honesty, motivation, commitment and dedication, enthusiasm, pride of working at ECMWF, creativity, respect, and ability to think independently. Staff treat each other with honesty and trust, and share their expertise and knowledge.

Competence is vital at all levels to ensure that the Centre's work is carried out to the highest standards, and that all funding received is used responsibly. Staff competence is fostered by the Centre, beginning with recruitment and continuing throughout their employment with the provision of appropriate training.

Honesty and integrity

The Centre aims to be an exemplary institution. Consequently, scientific integrity is an essential value. Integrity entails honesty and adherence to the highest ethical standards in all actions and is a condition for recruitment and continued employment in the Centre.

Staff should seek, accept and offer honest criticism of work, acknowledge and correct errors, and give proper credit and respect to the contributions of others. Professional integrity also entails open discussion and the expression and consideration of divergent views.

Transparency

The Centre ensures that all information provided to Member States and other authorities, organisations and institutions is complete, accurate and timely. The Centre is honest and open in the assessments it gives. All staff should make sure that the documents they produce are rigorous, authentic, sound and accurate.

The Centre's management ensures that staff are kept well informed of all changes or issues that may affect them.

Fair and equal treatment

The Centre has an Equal Opportunity Policy, and sees it as a duty to treat all staff with dignity and fairness in an embodiment of its commitment to refrain from all discrimination on grounds of, for example, race, ethnic origin, nationality, political, philosophical or religious opinions, health, disability, gender or sexual orientation.

Equality of opportunity applies in the recruitment, promotion and professional development of all staff, without favouritism.

Team spirit

One of the Centre's strengths is team spirit and teamwork, which entails active participation, listening and mutual help. It involves sharing experience and knowledge, and assisting colleagues in their work to the benefit of all.

Mutual respect and discretion

The Centre's cultural diversity is a "natural resource", to be fostered by a working climate conducive to fulfilment in which each person receives recognition and encouragement for his or her efforts.

Every individual is entitled to respect and consideration from colleagues. Mutual help and loyalty are values to be aspired to by all. In keeping with the Centre's international character, staff should act with tolerance, sensitivity, respect and impartiality toward persons of other cultures and backgrounds. Staff should take special care to listen well and to express themselves in a manner that is sensitive to potential cultural differences and language barriers, and avoid assumptions based on stereotypes.

Spreading gossip or lending credence to rumours that have the potential to harm a person's reputation and standing is unethical and against the high standards of behaviour expected from staff.

COMMITMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CENTRE

Environment and health

The Centre has environmental and health responsibilities. It takes account of the impact of its activities on the environment, and seeks to reduce negative impacts where feasible.

The Centre is committed to the prompt disclosure of any information concerning a potential danger to the public or the environment.

The Centre is responsible for the health and safety of its staff at work, and aims to provide a comfortable and efficient working environment. Staff are also expected to contribute to the maintenance of safe and healthy working conditions.

Dialogue with staff representatives

The Centre respects and values the work of the Staff Committee and Consultants Representatives in representing the interests and welfare of staff. The Centre involves staff representatives in all major developments affecting the life of the Centre and its working conditions, and seeks to ensure the continued motivation and commitment of staff.

Assistance to staff

The Centre seeks to provide assistance and guidance to staff starting employment, including advice on moving to the local area. Given the Centre's international nature, particular regard is given to relocation and issues related to living in the United Kingdom.

In-service training and personal development

The Centre undertakes to maintain satisfactory conditions of employment for its staff and to develop their capabilities for the benefit of the Centre. To this end, it ensures that an appropriate range of training is available to improve the skills of its staff.

Respect for personal information

Any personal information collected by the Centre on staff, such as medical details, CVs or assessment marks, is confidential and may only be used by the Centre where necessary, appropriate and legal. It may not otherwise be disclosed, within or outside the Centre, without the consent of the person concerned except when legal or regulatory obligations so dictate.

Staff handling personal information on colleagues will take all necessary steps to ensure that it remains strictly confidential.

Protection of staff

The Centre protects staff from all forms of discrimination and harassment (sexual, psychological or otherwise) in the context of their employment. If such problems occur the Centre will lend appropriate support and assistance.

Where staff have acted to promote or maintain ethical behaviour, the Centre will protect them against any form of reprisal attempted against them.

COMMITMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STAFF

Fulfilment of duties

Staff are required to devote a specified amount of time to their duties at the Centre under the terms of the Staff Regulations, Rules and Instructions. Staff shall utilise their time on duty efficiently and effectively for the purposes and in the best interest of the Centre.

Compliance with laws and regulations

Staff should maintain rigorous standards of professional conduct. They must behave responsibly and in accordance with applicable rules when fulfilling their duties.

The status of international civil servant implies certain obligations as regards conduct, both at work and elsewhere. Staff should avoid actions that could be perceived as an abuse of the privileges and immunities accorded for the benefit of the Centre and its staff, and these privileges and immunities should not be used to obtain improper advantage.

The Centre's image

Staff should be mindful of their contribution to, and responsibility for, the image of the Centre, which strives to be an exemplary institution through technical and scientific excellence, and in its internal and external relationships.

Staff should exercise tact and discretion and refrain from any act, whether in carrying out their functions or otherwise, which would harm the reputation of the Centre or its staff.

The Centre's name and logo should not be used inappropriately, or for personal gain.

Scientific publications

Scientific publications are an important product of the research undertaken at the Centre, and staff are encouraged to publish work as appropriate. High scientific standards are expected, and relevant ethical standards should be followed. Scientific integrity is paramount: selective use of unrepresentative data, unwarranted claims or unfair comparisons are not acceptable. There should be proper acknowledgement of the work of others, and careful consideration of authors. Journal guidelines shall be followed where they exist, regarding both general aspects and copyright policy. Manuscripts should be approved by management before submission.

Managerial practices

Managers should ensure harmonious working relations and foster team spirit by guiding, coaching and motivating their team members and proposing appropriate training. Managers have a duty of care for their team members and should listen to them, ensuring that merit is properly acknowledged, and favouritism and prejudice are avoided.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

Conflicts of interest

Conflicts of interest arise when staff have personal interests or contacts that might distort their judgment and hinder the impartial and objective performance of their duties.

Staff should ensure that their personal interests do not conflict with those of the Centre, whether such a conflict is real, potential or susceptible to being viewed as such.

They should, on their own initiative, inform their line manager of any possibility of a conflict of interest in performing their duties.

Right to engage in political activities

The Centre recognises the right of staff to engage in political activities outside the context of their work. However, any public political engagement must avoid conflict with the interests of the Centre.

Invitations and gifts

Honesty and integrity are essential qualities in the eyes of the Centre. Under no circumstances should staff offer or receive payments or gifts, gratifications or advantages that might affect their independence or lead to doubts as to their professional integrity.

Keeping this in proportion, staff may accept gestures such as small gifts or invitations, provided that these are not encouraged, are merely a token of courtesy or hospitality and do not undermine the independence of staff. Procedures for recording corporate hospitality and gifts should be followed.

Staff with responsibility for preparing or taking procurement decisions or investing or managing financial assets must make relevant disclosures as required.

Confidentiality and duty of discretion

Appropriate measures should be taken to keep the Centre's data and information secure where applicable, especially software developed at the Centre. Prudence must be exercised in the use of information technologies such as e-mail, the Internet, teleconferencing etc.

Forecast information and archived data are commercially valuable and shall not be divulged inappropriately.

- Numerical data shall be distributed only in accordance with the appropriate policy agreed by the ECMWF Council.
- Provision of forecasts to the media is not the responsibility of the Centre, and any such requests should be referred to the Press Officer.
- ECMWF forecasts for all time ranges have a specific release time. Under no circumstances should such data be shown or made available prior to the official release date and time.
- Forecast information, even verbal, provided to friends or individuals should be given only with due care, be limited in scope (e.g. providing "holiday" forecasts) and should not allow them any commercial use or financial benefit.

Staff should exercise discretion with the media, and in personal contacts, in conversations among friends or colleagues, in public places etc. as involuntary disclosure of confidential information can be extremely damaging to the Centre.

In relations with the public, including the media, staff should endeavour at all times to promote a positive image of the Centre and its staff. They should represent and seek to advance the Centre's views and policies rather than their own.

Relations with suppliers

The Centre has due respect for its suppliers, with whom it seeks to maintain sound relations based on mutual respect and trust. Staff members involved in the procurement process must always have regard for the interest of the Centre first, to which they owe loyalty in all circumstances. Staff involved in the procurement and contracting processes are expected to:

- issue the same information and instructions to all suppliers competing for a contract and make sure that all suppliers are treated equally throughout the selection procedure;
- protect the confidentiality of all private information imparted by the suppliers, which remains their property;
- receive suppliers' representatives with courtesy, even if the Centre or staff involved in the purchasing process are dissatisfied with their products or services.

Staff should do their best to ensure a good image of the Centre and be fully aware of the impact on suppliers of the image they project.

Relations with commercial customers

ECMWF provides the results from its activities to a number of commercial customers, many of whom operate in a highly competitive environment and some of whom consider their arrangements with ECMWF as confidential. In their dealings with outside parties, ECMWF staff should respect this desire for confidentiality.

Relations with national delegations

The Centre's relationships with national delegations are of prime importance, and the Centre will strive to ensure that they are built on honesty, respect and cooperation.

Given the international nature of their function, the Centre's staff need to remain independent of any authority outside the organisation. They should not seek, accept or allow themselves to be influenced by instructions from any Government or from any person or entity external to the Centre.

Communication between national delegations and the Centre should aim to encourage depth of understanding, and respect the roles of the Centre's management and the Council.

CONCLUSION

The Centre's Charter of Ethics requires that the standards and values described in this document are upheld by all, regardless of their duties, responsibilities or hierarchical position. It is important to help colleagues, where difficulties arise, to maintain ethical behaviour. Staff should contribute to a workplace culture where honesty and integrity prevail.