



EuroHPC JOINT UNDERTAKING
DECISION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE EuroHPC JOINT
UNDERTAKING No 16/2022

Adopting rules on the prevention and management of conflicts of interest of the staff members of the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking

THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE EUROHPC JOINT UNDERTAKING,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to the Staff Regulations of Officials ('Staff Regulations') and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union ('CEOS'), laid down by Council Regulation (EEC, Euratom, ECSC) No 259/68¹, and in particular Title II of the Staff Regulations and Articles 11 and 81 of the CEOS²,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EU) No 2021/1173 of 13 July 2021 on establishing the European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking ('EuroHPC') and repealing Regulation (EU) No 2018/1488 and in particular Article 20 thereof,

Having regard to Article 22 of the Statutes annexed to Council Regulation (EU) No. 2021/1173 of 13 July 2021 establishing the EuroHPC JU ('Statutes'),

Having regard to the Guidelines on the prevention and management of conflicts of interest in EU decentralised agencies dated 10 December 2013³,

Having regard to Commission Decision C(2018) 4048 of 29.6.2018 on outside activities and assignments and on occupational activities after leaving the Service which applies to the EuroHPC JU by analogy,

Having regard to the agreement of the European Commission pursuant to Article 110 (2) of the Staff Regulations⁴,

After informing the staff,

Whereas:

¹ OJ L 56, 4.3.1968, p. 1.

² Articles 11 to 26a of the Staff Regulations are applicable by analogy to temporary agents and contract agents, pursuant to Articles 11 and 81 of the CEOS, respectively.

³ Annexed to the Common Approach endorsed by the Inter-institutional Working Group on EU decentralized agencies in July 2012.

⁴ Commission Decision C(2022) 3594 of 25.5.2022.

- (1) EuroHPC JU is a public-private partnership and as a consequence public and private interests are intertwined;
- (2) It is understood that all staff members shall carry out their duties and conduct themselves solely with the interest of the EuroHPC JU in mind, notably they shall carry out the assigned duties objectively, impartially and in keeping with their duty of loyalty to the EuroHPC JU;
- (3) Provisions on conflict of interest are already included in various documents, such as the Staff Regulations, the CEOS, Financial Rules and the Rules of Procedure of the Governing Board, the Research and Innovation Advisory Group, the Infrastructure Advisory Group;
- (4) Provisions on outside activities and assignments and on occupational activities after leaving the Service are already laid down in Commission Decision C(2018) 4048 of 29.6.2018 which applies to the EuroHPC JU by analogy.
- (5) The present decision shall be without prejudice to the existing rights and obligations related to conflicts of interest provided in other applicable documents mentioned in recital 3. By implementing the Staff Regulations and the CEOS, this decision aims to complement the existing rules and to serve as a reference for the staff members of the EuroHPC JU and ensures a comprehensive and coherent approach on conflicts of interest and the highest standards of administration, professional ethics, integrity and independence.

HAS ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING DECISION:

CHAPTER I- SCOPE, GENERAL OBLIGATIONS AND DEFINITION

Article 1 - Subject

The present Decision lays down rules for the prevention and management of conflicts of interest of the EuroHPC JU staff members in order to ensure the handling in a transparent and consistent manner of situations where conflicts of interest may arise.

Article 2 - Scope and persons concerned

- 2.1 This Decision shall apply to the following categories of actors involved in the work and activities of the EuroHPC JU:
- contract staff,
 - temporary staff⁵
 - seconded national experts

⁵ According to Article 8(2) of the Statutes in the Annex to Council Regulation (EC) No 2021/1173, this category shall include also the Executive Director of the EuroHPC JU.

collectively referred hereinafter as ‘staff members’, unless otherwise specified.

- 2.2 All staff members of the EuroHPC JU shall carry out their duties and conduct themselves solely with the interest of the EuroHPC JU in mind. All staff members shall carry out the duties objectively and impartially and in keeping their duty of loyalty to the EuroHPC JU. All staff members shall abstain from any action adversely affecting the reputation of the EuroHPC JU.

Article 3 – General principles on conflict of interest and personal interest

- 3.1 A conflict of interest refers to a situation where the impartiality and objectivity of a decision, opinion or recommendation of the EuroHPC JU is or might be perceived as being compromised by a personal interest held by or entrusted to a staff member.
- 3.2 No staff members should, in the performance of their duties, deal with a matter in which, directly or indirectly, they may have any personal interests such as to impair their independence.
- 3.3 Relevant personal interests may notably be of a financial or non-financial nature and may also concern a personal or family relationship, any representation of any other interests of third parties or a community of interests with any third parties, any professional or economic affiliation, as well as any other outside activities leading to the situation described under point 3.1.
- 3.4 The appearance of a conflict of interest can constitute a reputational risk to the EuroHPC JU, even if turns out to be unsubstantiated. Therefore, taking due consideration of proportionality, specific backgrounds, all relevant facts and mitigating circumstances, a risk of perceived conflict of interest should be treated as if it were an actual conflict of interest.
- 3.5 It is the responsibility of all staff members to ensure that their conduct is in line with the rules regarding the conflict of interest in both letter and spirit. Each staff member of the EuroHPC JU shall assume an individual responsibility by declaring in good faith his/her interests and information to the EuroHPC JU in compliance with the provisions of this decision and of the Staff Regulations.
- 3.6 Article 11a of the Staff Regulations applies to any staff member. Any staff member, who becomes aware of a potential conflict of interest, must immediately inform in writing the relevant competent authority.

Article 4 – Specific provisions regarding the Executive Director

The Executive Director shall act impartially, avoiding any situation liable to give rise to potential conflicts of interest. Taking into account the public character of his/her function when acting under the tasks and roles laid down in the Statutes in the Annex to Council Regulation (EC) No 2021/1173, the Executive Director shall perform his/her tasks objectively, impartially and with independence keeping with his/her duty of loyalty to the EuroHPC JU.

When questions which are not explicitly covered by these rules arise, adherence to the generally accepted principles of probity shall determine the behaviour of the Executive Director.

The Executive Director shall:

- (1) Act independently in the general interest of the EuroHPC JU and in the common interest of the sound management of the Programme(s) and its objectives without allowing himself/herself to be influenced by personal interests or relationships;
- (2) Guarantee that under his/her role of authorising officer, the EuroHPC JU operates within the limits of its statutory remit and rules;
- (3) When communicating on a matter on which the EuroHPC JU has taken a view, the Executive Director shall represent the views of the EuroHPC JU; when communicating on a matter that falls within the remit of the EuroHPC JU but on which the EuroHPC JU has not taken a view so far, the Executive Director may give his/her own personal view, but should make clear that this does not necessarily represent the official opinion of the EuroHPC JU. The Executive Director should always refrain from any unauthorised disclosure of information or documents received in the line of duty that have not already been made public or are accessible to the public;
- (4) Not exploit his/her position in order to affect the expected impartiality of the EuroHPC JU staff members, external experts, reviewers, consultants and any third parties participating at any title in the bodies or activities of the EuroHPC JU.

CHAPTER II – PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO STAFF MEMBERS⁶

Article 5 - Obligation to make declarations on conflicts of interest

- 5.1 Before recruitment or taking up duties in the EuroHPC JU or returning from unpaid leave, the Appointing Authority shall examine whether the candidate/staff member has any personal interest such as to impair his/her independence.

To that end, staff members, shall submit a declaration on conflict of interest using the relevant form.

The members of a Selection Board shall submit before taking up their duties a declaration on conflict of interest and confidentiality using a relevant form.

In cases where the declaration shows a potential or apparent conflict of interest, it must be managed and solved before the staff member takes up/resumes his/her duties.

- 5.2 Staff members must promptly disclose all relevant information about a personal interest when circumstances change following their initial disclosure or when new situations arise. If at any time in the course of his/her duties a staff member

⁶ Without prejudice to the Article 3a of this Decision, these provisions are also applicable to the Executive Director.

becomes aware of any potential conflict of interest or any appearance of a conflict of interest, the staff member is obliged to inform the relevant competent authority in the EuroHPC JU by spontaneously submitting an ad-hoc declaration on conflict of interest, using the relevant form.

Article 6 - Obligation of confidentiality

- 6.1 Staff members shall refrain from any unauthorised disclosure of information received in the line of duty, unless that information has already been made public or is accessible to the public.
- 6.2 All staff members shall continue to be bound by this obligation after leaving the EuroHPC JU.

Article 7 - Obligations related to honours, decorations, favours and gifts

- 7.1 Staff members shall not accept, directly or indirectly, without a prior permission of the Appointing Authority, any honour, decoration, favour, gift or payment of any kind whatsoever from any source outside the EuroHPC JU.

Criteria to be considered in this context are, in particular, if the acceptance of the gift or hospitality is contrary to the interest of the service or presents a real or perceived conflict of interest for the staff member concerned, or if such acceptance would be in accordance with diplomatic and courtesy usage.

Gifts and hospitality motivated solely by a family relationship or personal friendship, or in a context not related in any way to the staff member's duties do not, in principle, fall under these provisions. However, even here situations may arise when acceptance can be perceived as compromising the staff member's independence.

- 7.2 A gift is understood to mean:
 - a sum of money or any physical object, or
 - the possibility to participate for free in events which are either open to the public or private in nature, only accessible in return for payment and represent a certain value (such as complimentary tickets for sports events, concerts, theatre, conferences, etc.), or
 - any other advantage with a pecuniary value, such as transport costs.
- 7.3 Hospitality offers are considered to be one particular type of favour. Hospitality is defined as an offer of food, drink, accommodation and/or entertainment from any source outside the EuroHPC JU.
- 7.4 Acceptance of gifts or hospitality may exceptionally be authorised (within the limits indicated in Article 7.5 and 7.7 below) when it is clear that this will not compromise or reasonably be perceived to compromise the staff member's objectivity and independence and will not damage the EuroHPC JU 's public image.
- 7.5 Subject to the general principles set out herein, the following apply:
 - (1) Prior permission by the Appointing Authority is presumed to be granted

- for accepting a gift worth up to €50;
- (2) Explicit prior permission by the Appointing Authority is required for accepting a gift worth between 50 and 150 €, by submitting a declaration, using the relevant form.
- (3) Authorisation to accept gifts with a value higher than €150 or any sum of money will be refused by the Appointing Authority.

7.6 If the Appointing Authority refuses to authorise the acceptance or if a gift is unwanted, it can be returned to the source, if this is feasible. Alternatively, the gift can be donated by the EuroHPC JU to an appropriate charitable organisation.

As a courtesy, the staff member should inform the sender of the gift that the gift cannot be accepted and will be transmitted to charity, unless this would be diplomatically inappropriate.

7.7 As a general rule the staff member should not accept any hospitality and should make use of sound judgement in order to assess, in the given circumstances, if acceptance could be envisaged.

Subject to the general principles set out herein, the following apply:

- (1) Prior permission by the Appointing Authority is presumed to be granted for:
 - hospitality in the form of lunches or dinners strictly linked to the function of the staff member and as such not prejudicial to the interests and public image of the EuroHPC JU, and in which the staff member participates in agreement with his/her hierarchy and in the interest of the service;
 - occasional offers of simple meals, refreshments, snacks.
- (2) Explicit prior permission by the Appointing Authority is required in cases not covered by the previous heading, by submitting a declaration, using the relevant form.

7.8 The mission order shall as a rule cover all predictable offers of hospitality, based on the mission programme – notably meals, accommodation and transport. These will not be considered as hospitality offers if the programme of the mission and the participation of the staff member has been authorised – as they form part of the performance of his/her duties in the interest of the EuroHPC JU. The acceptance of these offers will then be declared in the mission expense statement.

Particular prudence is necessary in sensitive situations. For instance staff members participating in inspections and similar missions should whenever possible inform their immediate superior or team leader on an ad hoc basis, and in accordance with any other specific provisions, when hospitality is offered in the course of such missions. If this is impossible, they should exercise their individual judgement and act according to the principles set out in these guidelines. Any hospitality thus accepted should be declared in the mission expense statement.

7.9 Accumulation of gifts and hospitality for which prior permission of the Appointing Authority is presumed may be seen to compromise the staff's objectivity and independence, or may damage the EuroHPC JU's public image.

Therefore, it requires the prior permission by the Appointing Authority.

Article 8 - Obligations related to publications and speeches

- 8.1 Staff members, wishing to publish or to have published, either on their own or with other parties, a document, such as an article or a book, on anything dealing with their work or EU matters generally, shall inform the Appointing Authority in advance.

The staff member concerned shall submit a declaration, using the relevant form, as the case may be, and provide the Appointing Authority with any information, in particular a copy, in electronic form, of the document he/she intends to publish. This must be accompanied by a summary of the document to be published, in electronic form, in one of the EuroHPC JU's working languages.

- 8.2 Without prejudice to Article 17a of the Staff Regulations, when publishing on an EU matter, the staff member concerned shall indicate in the document he/she wants to publish that he/she is writing under his/her own name, engaging himself/herself and not the responsibility of the any EU institution or body. The staff member is obliged to observe the rules concerning non-disclosure of information and the confidentiality requirement on EU matters and those related to his/her work in the EuroHPC JU.

Article 9 - Obligations related to election or appointment for public office

- 9.1 Pursuant to Article 15(1) of Staff Regulations, contract staff and temporary staff who intend to stand for public office shall notify the Appointing Authority by submitting a declaration, using the relevant form.
- 9.2 Pursuant to Article 15(2) of Staff Regulations, contract staff and temporary staff who are elected or appointed to public office must immediately inform the Appointing Authority by submitting a declaration, using the relevant form.

Article 10 - Obligation to declare the professional activities of the spouse or partner

- 10.1 Pursuant to Article 13 of Staff Regulations, staff members have the obligation to inform the Appointing Authority if their spouse/partner is in gainful employment, i.e. doing paid work. In this respect, unmarried, legally recognised partners are regarded in the same way as spouses pursuant to Article 1(2) (c) of Annex VII to Staff Regulations.
- 10.2 The staff members shall submit a declaration, using the relevant form. If there is any change in the spouse's situation, the staff member is obliged to submit a new Declaration.

Article 11 - Procedures to manage a conflict of interest

- 11.1 With regard to the staff members, the Appointing Authority is responsible for adopting formal decisions to prevent and manage conflicts of interest, when

informed of a situation which may be detrimental to the EuroHPC JU.

The Appointing Authority shall carry out an internal assessment involving the legal department, the human resources department, the line manager of the staff member concerned or any other persons, including the staff member concerned, as it deems necessary. Based on the findings of the assessment, the Appointing Authority shall decide in writing the necessary measures in accordance with the applicable rules.

- 11.2. Without prejudice to the EuroHPC JU decision delegating the powers conferred by the Staff Regulations on the Appointing Authority and by the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union on the authority authorised to conclude contracts of employment to the Executive Director of the EuroHPC JU, the Appointing Authority powers shall be exercised by:
- the Governing Board of the EuroHPC JU in matters concerning the Executive Director, or
 - the Executive Director for staff members working for the EuroHPC JU.

***Article 12 - Ex-post treatment of situations of non-compliance
with the obligations under the present rules***

- 12.1 In accordance with Article 86(1) of the Staff Regulations⁷, any failure by staff members of the EuroHPC JU to comply with his/her obligations under the rules of conflict of interest, whether intentionally or through negligence on his/her part, shall make him/her liable to disciplinary measures, in accordance with the provisions of the Staff Regulations and the CEOS.
- 12.2 Seconded national experts shall comply with the relevant obligations imposed by the present Decision on conflict of interest. Failure to observe the obligations provided herein entitles the EuroHPC JU to terminate the collaboration, subject to respecting the procedural safeguards of the seconded national expert concerned, notably, including the right to be informed in advance of the reasons underlying the Appointing Authority's intention to terminate the collaboration and giving him/her an opportunity to be heard.
- 12.3 If the person concerned was involved in a decision-making procedure without having declared an interest, the Appointing Authority or the respective body or group may undertake remedial actions, in particular to review or cancel the decision, if it was seriously affected by the conflict of interest. This implies carrying out an ex-post review of the person's activities and contributions to the EuroHPC JU's output.

CHAPTER III – GENERAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS

⁷ Applicable by analogy to temporary and contract agents pursuant to Articles 50a and 119 of the CEOS, respectively.

Article 13 - Register

- 13.1 All the declarations made by staff members shall be clearly recorded in a Register by the EuroHPC JU. This will enable the EuroHPC JU to demonstrate, if necessary, that a specific conflict of interest has been appropriately identified and managed.⁸
- 13.2 The register referred to in paragraph 13.1 shall be maintained in compliance with the applicable provisions of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies offices and agencies on the free movement of such data.

Article 14 - Transparency

- 14.1 The EuroHPC JU shall publish on its website the policies and rules for the prevention of conflict of interest in a clear and easily identifiable manner.
- 14.2 The declarations of conflict of interest submitted by the Executive Director shall be available for public scrutiny, subject to the applicable EU rules on protection of personal data and access to documents. Where deemed relevant, the CV of the person concerned (or a summary of his/her professional experience) could also be made available. In case of a declaration of absence of conflicts of interest, this information shall be made available along with the CV of the person concerned.

Article 15 - Final provisions

- 15.1 The Executive Director of the EuroHPC JU may adopt subsequent explanatory guidelines to facilitate the implementation of the present Decision.
- 15.2 Any permission granted by the Appointing Authority or by the related body/group of the EuroHPC JU pursuant to a declaration submitted by staff members shall be limited to the specific situation described in the declaration and cannot be extended to any other similar situations.
- Any change of the initial situation described in the declaration and approved by the Appointing Authority or the respective body or group shall be considered as a new situation and must be brought to the attention of the Appointing Authority.
- 15.3 These rules shall come into force on the date of their adoption by the Governing Board and shall be published on the website of the EuroHPC JU.

⁸ Measures adopted to manage the conflicts of interest are filed in the personal file of each staff member.

Done at Luxembourg, on 8 August 2022

For the Governing Board

[signed]

Herbert Zeisel

The Chair