



Code of Conduct for Scientific Cooperation of ETH Zurich (CoC)

Workshop Ethische und rechtliche Verantwortung in internationaler Forschung

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Outline

1. ETH values and its international relations
2. Triggers for the creation of a Code of Conduct
3. Ethical challenges
4. Elements of the code
5. First experience and review

1. ETH Zurich's Core Values

Autonomy, culture of empowerment

- Scope for creativity and innovative ideas

Diversity of disciplines

- Broad spectrum allows knowledge to be combined in original and forward-looking ways
- Humanities, social and management sciences as integral part of the education

Linking research and teaching

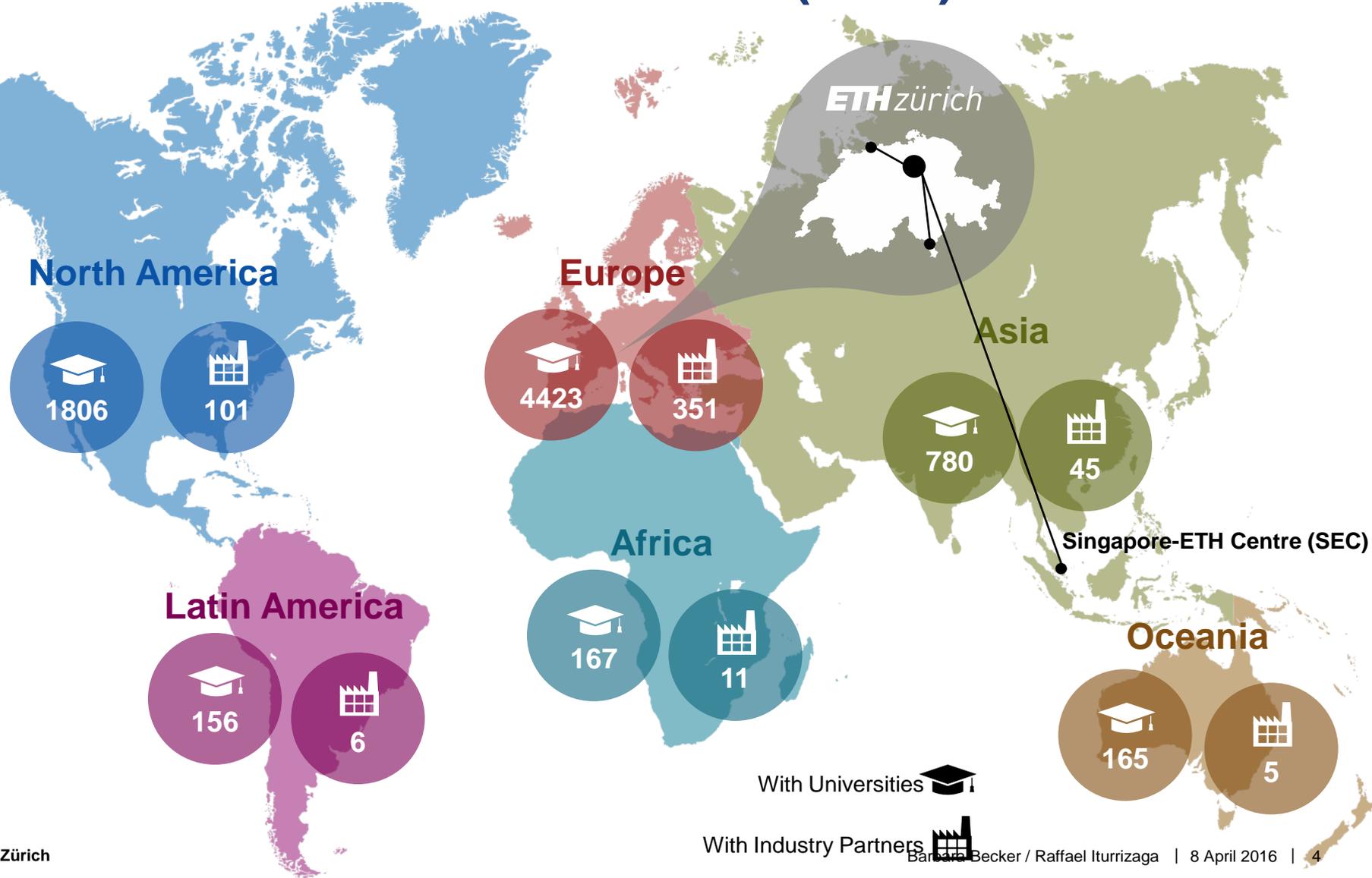
- All researchers participate in teaching
- Early involvement of students in research

Sustainability

- An integral part of research, teaching and operations



1. International Collaboration (2015)



1. ETH Zurich in the world – key principles

- ETH Zurich's primary place of location is Zurich.
- ETH Zurich's students, postdocs, faculty, and more generally all its staff maintain active international networks.
- ETH Zurich, at the institutional level, is networked manifold on a global scale.
- The strategic positioning of ETH Zurich in the global landscape of higher education focuses on Europe, North America and Asia/Pacific.
- ETH Zurich is pro-actively engaging with strategic partners such as countries (e.g. USA, Singapore), and alliances (e.g. IARU, IDEA).
- By doing so, ETH Zurich positions itself as a forward-looking, international technical university, attracting the best talents – from students to faculty – from around the globe.

2. Triggers for the creation of a Code of Conduct

Research with telecommunication data from a police state.

Cooperation with a university which has restricted freedom of speech for scientific subjects which conflict with standpoints of the government.

A survey with questions about politically sensitive issues in a country which punishes dissidents with torture or other inhumane measures.

In the country of collaboration exists discrimination of particular groups of the society. Due to this discrimination some members of the collaboration are treated unequal in publications of research results or wages.

Negotiation for a partnership with a multinational company which may have violated human rights in the past. The company was accused for expelling people from their homeland to exploit the natural resources.

➤ **Bottom-up initiative for ethical guidance**

3. Ethical challenges - Initial clarification

- Collection of comparable guidelines: InterAcademy Council, International Association of Universities, KFPE, OECD, experience of CERN
 - **ETH first university in Switzerland with explicit approach to such ethical standards**
- Collection of case studies, e.g.
 - SNF proposal on using data of Chinese telephone company
 - Media release on restrictions New York University in China, Yale in Singapore
 - Chemical industry in Bhopal
 - Industry collaboration on dual use technologies
- Relevance of guidelines for ETH Zurich, e.g. as guidance for scientists, for communication with partners, for increased awareness, for reputation
- Limits of mandate:
 - Personal (mis)conduct, e.g. littering in Singapore
 - General research ethics („European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity“, European Science Foundation; „Wissenschaftliche Integrität“, Akademien der Wissenschaften Schweiz 2008)
 - Acquisition policies, e.g. production chains of computers

3. Ethical challenges - Discussion items

- Hierarchies of ethical standards and international law / conventions, e.g. human rights as overarching principle
- Moral vs. legal, e.g. research on traffic speed outside Switzerland, GMOs
- Different local standards in a global setting, e.g.
 - Animal Welfare
 - Data Protection / Privacy
 - Academic freedom
 - Religious, racial, sexual discrimination
- Scale: from (informal) individual bilateral collaboration to institutional contracts
- Scope, e.g. on disciplines, academic environment
 - Only the actual activities in a particular cooperation are covered by this code.
 - Violations in other parts of the organisation do not automatically rule out a collaboration with a particular group in this organisation.
 - There are no black lists of countries or universities or companies.
- Binding vs. non-binding

4. CoC for Scientific Cooperation of ETH Zurich - Content

Preliminary remarks: Objectives and scope

Preamble: Values and responsibility of judgement (Swiss context)

I. Normative principles

1. Promote human rights which are particularly relevant for scientific work
2. Promote rules for good scientific practice
3. Prevent unethical exploitation of lower legal or ethical norms in the partner country by ETH researchers
4. Protect members of the cooperation and ETH Zurich against harm
5. Prevent unethical exploitation of the ETH reputation by partners

II. Procedurale principles

6. Right to report ethical concerns
7. Case-by-case decision of Executive Board
8. Warning letter, interruption or termination of unethical collaboration
9. Discussion of ethical standards during preparation of contract
10. Individual guidance through Ethics Commission

5. CoC – Principles of implementation

- Increasing internationalization of scientific collaboration and the related integration of different cultures require a common basis of fundamental ethical values. The CoC defines these values for ETH Zurich.
- Content of the CoC is largely a collection of already existing norms.
- The CoC is legally non-binding, but the ETH researcher and the ETH Executive Board commit to it in a weighting of values.
 - The relevant situations are too different to cover them all by exact regulations.
 - These kind of problems don't happen every day but they are exceptions. There is insufficient empirical data to regulate all different cases.
 - In many cases there is not only one correct solution or no correct solution at all. It is more about a sensible and responsible deliberation.
 - What we expect from our researchers is a careful weighing of interests and values on the basis of all relevant standards.
- We gain experience and learn in living the CoC.

5. The CoC as part of ETH culture

The ETH Zurich culture: **Autonomy requires responsibility:**

- Legally not binding, but moral guidance
 - **Not binding:** The code does not prescribe a certain decision for a particular kind of situation
 - **Guidance:** Scientists are expected to consider the code in their decision and include the criteria and recommendations of the code in their deliberations
- The CoC is not part of the legal procedure of research contracts or any other administrative checking procedure.
- The CoC is not intended to lead to a policing of the researchers but should support their individual decisions.
- The CoC is a starting point for internal discussion to foster awareness of this problem among ETH researchers.

5. First experiences with the Code of Conduct

- About 10 inquiries since the launch of the CoC
 - Most inquiries were raised before the start of the cooperation
 - No cases of necessary escalation or termination due to the CoC
 - The CoC was presented at the *World Conference on Research Integrity 2015* and got encouraging feedback
 - The CoC was discussed in the ETH Domain and received the support from all institutes of the Domain
- Review to Executive Board due in September 2016

Thank you for your attention

