

# Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility



## MLE Research Integrity

### Challenge Paper 3. Dialogue and Communication

2<sup>st</sup> country visit

Athens, 12 & 13  
March 2019

# Challenge Paper 3

## Dialogue and Communication

### **Based on**

- Review of existing literature and documentation
- Discussions at the MLE Kick-off Meeting in Brussels on the 15th November 2018
- Feedback from 14 countries participating in MLE
  - RI Country report cards



# Dialogue and Communication

## Identified themes

- Best practices in developing the culture that fosters open communication and dialogue
- Dialogue among the three levels of RI: institutional, national, transnational
- Dialogue with the public
- Dialogue to prevent research misconduct and increase responsible research



# Published research

**Godecharle et al., 2018**

## **Perceptions of RI – universities vs industry**

(qualitative analysis of interviews with 22 employees from Belgian universities, spin-off companies and large multinational pharmaceutical companies)

- Researchers and research managers have different perception of research misconduct, procedures for dealing with research misconduct, strategies to prevent research misconduct, research integrity, mentorship, trustworthiness of research, and perception of the “other” sector.



# Published research

**Antes et al., 2018**

## **Cross-cultural differences in perception of RI**

- Differences between the USA-born researchers and those born outside of the USA, with the former group significantly better distinguishing the seriousness of violation of federal research regulations and science ideals



# Published research

**Li and Cornelis, 2018**

## **Cross-cultural differences in perception of RI**

- Perceptions of Chinese researchers and those from Flemish research community in Belgium.
- Chinese respondents had higher acceptance of research behaviours that violated the principles of *honesty, fairness and verifiability*, and did not differ from their Flemish colleagues in the perceptions of violations of *responsibility, objectivity and truth*.





# Published research

## **Grey et al., 2019**

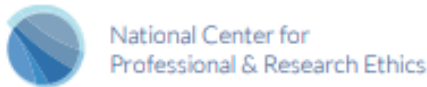
How 3 different academic institutions dealt with allegations of concerns with more than 200 publication with overlapping authorship from these institutions

- Developed a quality checklist: a number of discrepancies and deficiencies in the reports
- Only one out of 3 institutions published the findings of the investigations.



# Published research

## Grey et al., 2019



### Peer Review Form for Research Integrity Investigation Reports

Check one:	Yes (cite page #)	No	In Part	Cannot Assess
<b>General Scope</b>				
Does the report include an executive summary?				
Is the report clear and understandable?				
Are the allegation(s) clearly presented?				
Is the charge to the committee clearly described?				
Is the scope of the investigation sufficient to address the scientific integrity issues?				
<b>Investigative Committee</b>				
Is the committee appropriately constituted to carry out its charge?				
Are there any external members on the committee?				





# European surveys

## **2013: Survey of the Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation on national systems for handling research misconduct cases (15 countries)**

- Misconduct investigation results made public: 7 countries had a closed procedure but generally public decisions, and 8 had closed procedures and decisions.
- Need for more dialogue and harmonization between institutions so that similar cases may have different outcomes at different institutions



# Surveys on RI

## **2014 Survey of RI guidance documents in countries in EEA**

49 guidance documents from 19 countries

- Only 5 had the requirement for the scientists to communicate with the public.



# Surveys on RI

## **2016 Survey of RI practices in Science Europe member organisations**

27 responses from 33 different organizations that are members of Science Europe (mostly funding organizations)

- Institutions should have clearly and visibly published the guidance for good research practice and procedures for dealing with allegations of misconduct.
- Institutions should have dedicated contact person(s) for individual researchers to contact for guidance on RI or in cases of research misconduct. Contact information should be clearly visible on the web-site.



# Surveys on RI

## **2016 Survey of RI practices in Science Europe member organisations**

27 responses from 33 different organizations that are members of Science Europe

- RFO should emphasize the importance of RI at each step of grant application procedure: 1) in the calls for applications, 2) writing of a grant proposal, and 3) grant peer review procedure
- RI should be stressed in research practice by incorporating the expectations of good practices in the grant agreement or contract.



# Surveys on RI

## **2016 Survey of RI practices in Science Europe member organisations**

International collaboration – mobility

**OECD Global Science Forum “Best Practices for Ensuring Scientific Integrity and Preventing Misconduct (2007) Link:**

<http://www.oecd.org/science/inno/40188303.pdf>

**OECD Global Science Forum “Investigating Research Misconduct Allegations in International Collaborative Research Projects – A Practical Guide” (2009) Link:**

<http://www.oecd.org/science/inno/42770261.pdf>

**World Conference on Research Integrity – Montreal Statement on Research Integrity in Cross-Boundary Research Collaborations (2013) Link:**

<https://wcrif.org/documents/354-montreal-statement-english/file>



# Surveys on RI

## **2017 Survey of guidance on RI and misconduct at European universities**

18 universities from 10 European countries

- In comparison to 2014, the availability of RI documentation on the web pages increased and the guidance included new topics in 2016.
- Institutional RI guidance documents also more often referred to national or international RI guidance, such as the European Charter for Researchers





# Experience from WCRI

## **CLUE (Collaboration and Liaison between Universities and Editors) Recommendations on Best Practice**

1. National registers of individuals or departments responsible for research integrity at institutions should be created.
2. Institutions should develop mechanisms for assessing the validity of research reports that are independent from processes to determine whether individual researchers have committed misconduct.
3. Essential research data and peer review records should be retained for at least 10 years.



# Experience from WCRI

## **CLUE (Collaboration and Liaison between Universities and Editors) Recommendations on Best Practice**

4. While journals should normally raise concerns with authors in the first instance, they also need criteria to determine when to contact the institution before, or at the same time as, alerting the authors in cases of suspected data fabrication or falsification to prevent the destruction of evidence.
5. Anonymous or pseudonymous allegations made to journals or institutions should be judged on their merit and not dismissed automatically.
6. Institutions should release relevant sections of reports of research trustworthiness or misconduct investigations to all journals that have published research that was the subject of the investigation.



# Experience from WCRI

## RePAIR Consensus Guidelines (Prevention and Management of Misconduct Related Retractions)

### Researchers

- Maintain compliance to the highest ethical standards
- **Address and communicate likely breaches of RI as appropriate**
- **Sustain and create local environment to discuss ethics issues**
- Use rigorous research methods
- Maintain careful and accurate research record
- Archive research data and documentation
- Regularly review raw data
- Perform robust and transparent data analysis
- **Cooperate with institutional, journal and government inquiries**



# Experience from WCRI

## RePAIR Consensus Guidelines (Prevention and Management of Misconduct Related Retractions)

### Institutions

- Designate RI officer or equivalent administrative officer
- Ensure prominent and public posting of RI officer contact details
- **Create environment fostering ethical behaviour and responsible research**
- **Establish clear and confidential channels to report RI allegations**
- Perform timely and thorough assessment and investigation of RI allegations
- **Protect both the complainant and respondent privacy**
- **Provide findings of RI investigation when misconduct is found (redacted according to institutional policy)**
- Identify publication that warrant retraction or correction and notify journals
- **Cooperate in investigations and communicate with relevant stakeholders**



# Experience from WCRI

## RePAIR Consensus Guidelines (Prevention and Management of Misconduct Related Retractions)

### Publishers and editors

- Effectively screen manuscripts for signs of poor RI practices
- **Publish clear policy and process guidelines for RI misconduct**
- Examine suspicious allegations, beginning with open and professional communication with author(s)
- **Notify institutions when misconduct is suspected after examination; require authors to submit information on RI officer early in the manuscript publication process**
- Determine which publication warrant retraction or correction
- **Cooperate with institutional investigations**
- **Publish freely available retraction, correction or expression of concern**
- **Ensure retracted/corrected articles are clearly identifiable and indexed in bibliographic databases**



# Experience from WCRI

## RePAIR Consensus Guidelines (Prevention and Management of Misconduct Related Retractions)

### Regulatory or funding agencies

- **Post publicly information for reporting misconduct concerns**
- If applicable (mandated) perform thorough, timely and impartial oversight and/or investigations of misconduct allegations
- Assess appropriate penalties for findings of misconduct
- Ensure that legal mandates and sanctions are executed
- **Notify public of the findings of research misconduct**





# EU projects

**PRINTEGER** – analysed media discourse about RI and related themes: 179 daily press articles for Italy and 674 for the UK from January 2000 to March 2016.

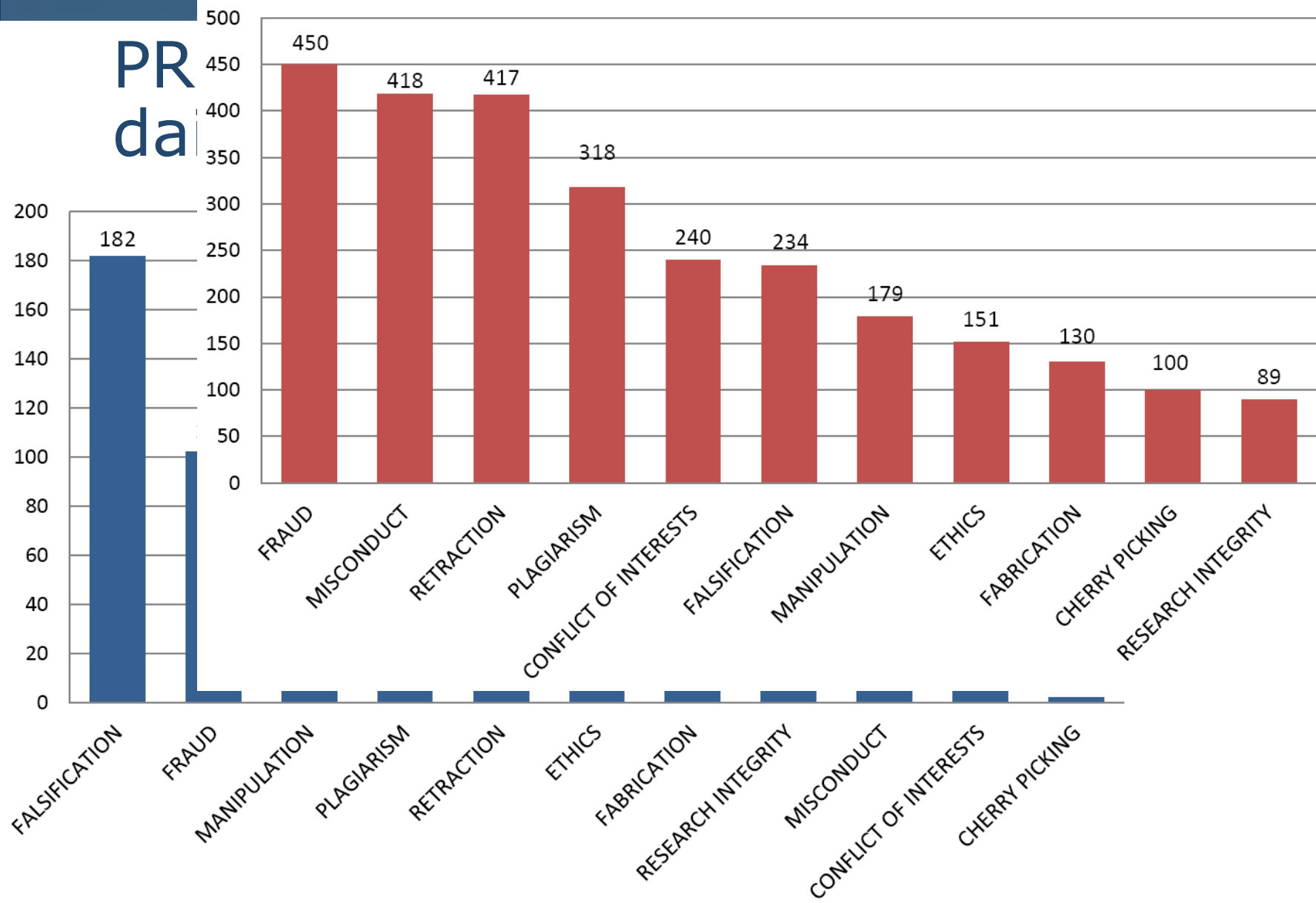
In the 15-year period, the topics related to RI were increasingly covered by media.

Peak for UK over 110 articles in 2010 (Climategate and Wakefield Lancet paper), for Italy over 40 in 2013 (Stamina stem cell therapy).

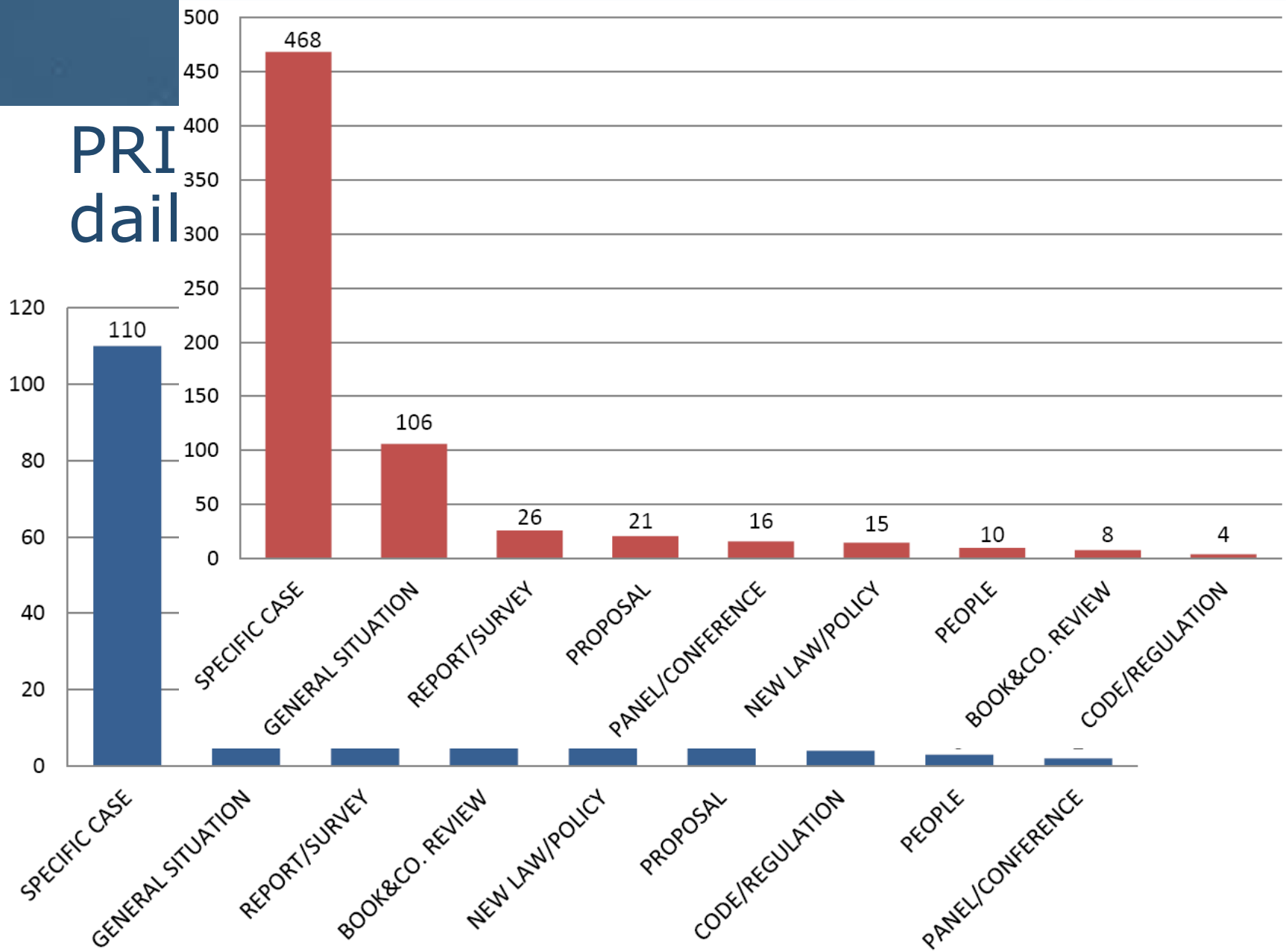
Most common themes – research misconduct, usually a specific case in medical and health research.



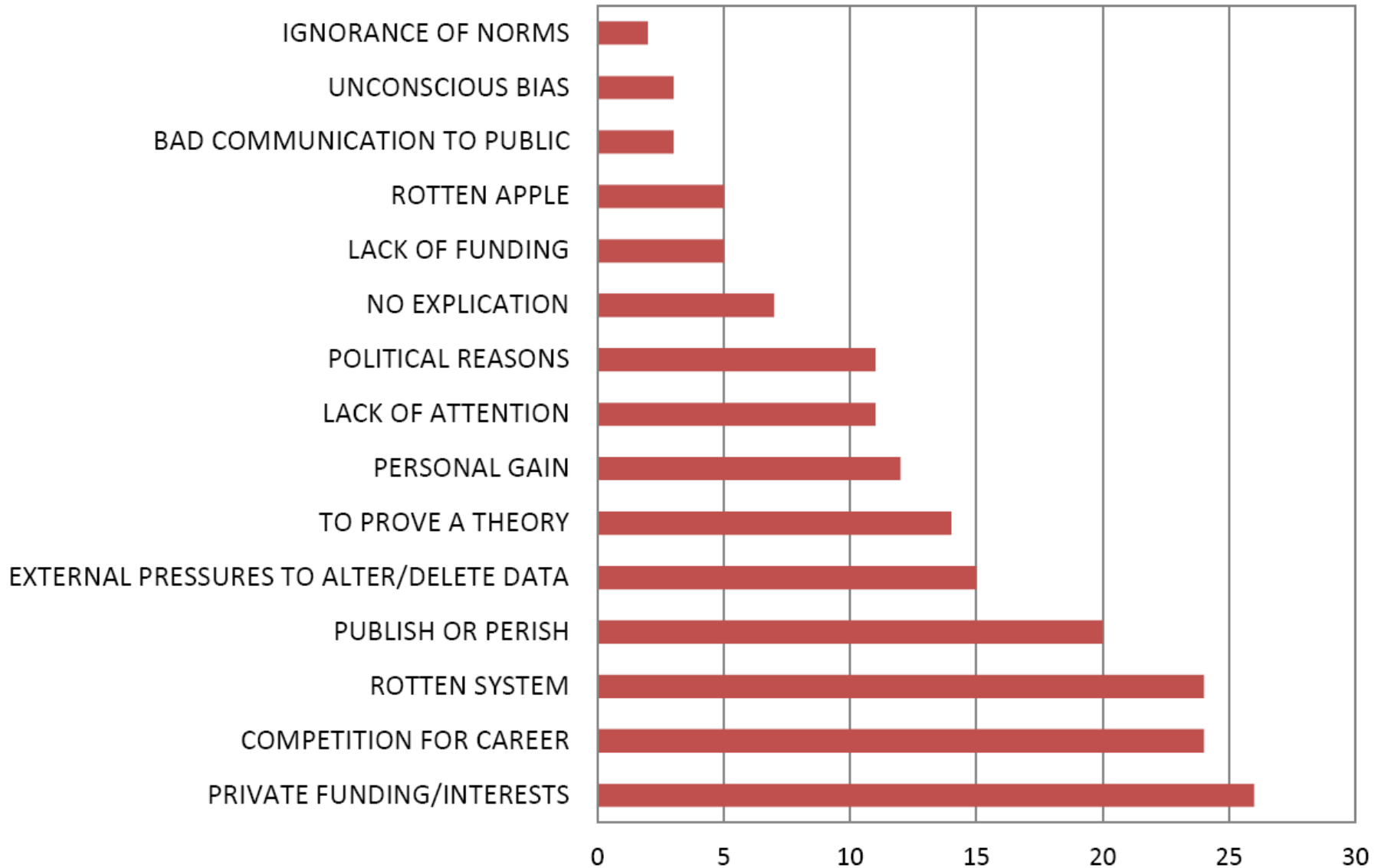
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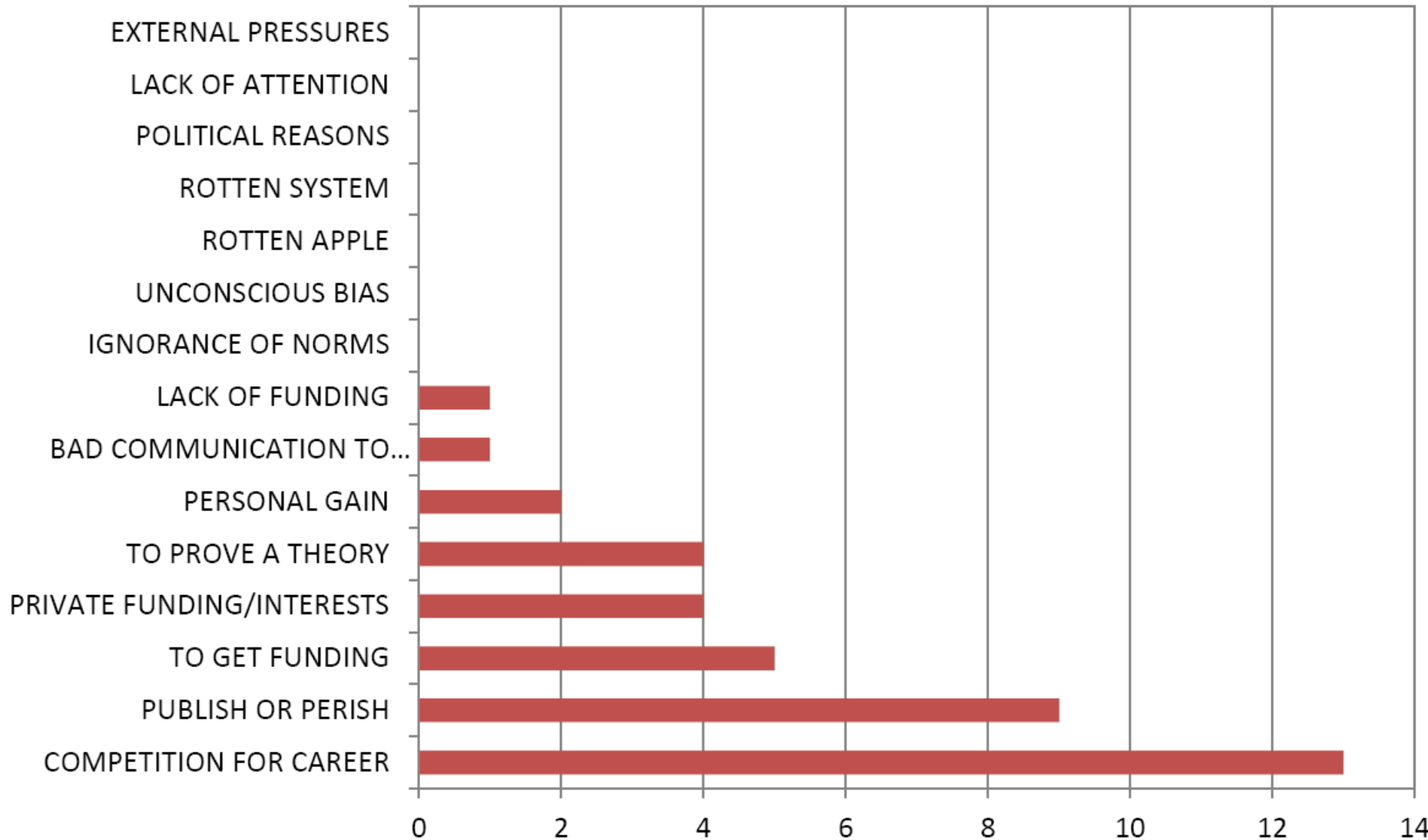
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# PRINTEGER – Media: causes of misconduct



# PRINTEGER – Media: causes of misconduct



# EU projects

**PRINTEGER** – analysed media discourse about RI

Proposed solutions for research misconduct in the media different from what they reported.

Suggestions: improving peer review system and research process

Descriptions: individual investigations and sanctions.

Promotion of RI rarely addressed.





# Country report cards

## **Public perception of RI and coverage of RI in lay press**

Range of experiences – from negative perception of RI due to presentation of research misconduct cases in the media, to high trust and very interactive relationship between the research community and the public to promote responsible conduct of research.

Long tradition: Denmark, Finland and Norway

Innovative approaches: Luxembourg (<http://Science.lu>), Ireland (<http://Forskning.no>), Sweden (<http://www.codex.vr.se/index.shtml>)



# Country report cards

## **Communication between different stakeholders in RI**

Range of experiences:

Some countries report little collaboration (or unknown collaboration)

Some have already well-functioning communication and collaboration at institutional level

Some have recently build such systems



# Country report cards

## **Public availability of outcomes from investigations**

Range of experiences:

From full transparency, over anonymized case presentations to full confidentiality.

Similar to other countries, described in previous surveys of misconduct investigation practices in Europe.



# Challenges

## **Q1: How to ensure the dialogue and participation of all stakeholders in RI?**

The stakeholders include:

1. Policy makers (ministries, government)
2. Research funding organizations
3. Research performing organizations (universities, institutes)
4. Professional societies
5. Individual researchers
6. Journal editors
7. Industry/private sector
8. International bodies for RI
9. The public (including advocacy groups, such as patient advocacy groups)



# Challenges

**Q2: What are good practices in communication when allegation of misconduct is made, during misconduct allegation investigation, and when the case is concluded?**

**Q3: What are good practices in communicating importance of RI to different stakeholders?**

- 1.to the individuals (reported and reporting)
- 2.to the organisation
- 3.to the journal(s)
- 4.to the research funder
- 5.to legal/regulatory bodies
- 6.to the public

