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CHARTER OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS FRENCH POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

This charter of ethics sets out the key rights and responsibilities of the academic community, both in the relationships between its members, and in their relationships to the objects of their studies and to their clients, readers of their scientific works and publications, and students or doctoral students in the context of their teaching or fields of study. Reforms in universities and in research, increasing international competition, competition for funding, the near-instant dissemination of results on the Internet and developments in the publishing industry all transform the conditions for the pursuit of our activities and provoke a reflection on our practices. This charter is the result of a collective effort and its objective is to identify the most common problems that our discipline (and more generally the exercise of our profession of teacher-researcher and researcher) faces - freedom of expression, the role of political scientists in society, professional integrity, protection of intellectual property, harassment, discrimination - and to outline the few general principles which should guide our action. It is largely based on existing charters, including those of the APSA, the AFS, the BSA, the Universities of Geneva and Laval as well as the European Charter for Researchers (signed by the CNRS).

This charter is neither exhaustive nor definitive. It is designed to be amended, enriched and improved on the basis of requests and suggestions of AFSP (*Association française de science politique*) members, legal decisions and forthcoming consideration by the Ethics Committee (whose role and composition are specified below). This charter will be presented at the annual meeting of the AFSP at its conference in Strasbourg (31 August-2 September 2011).

Principle of Freedom

Freedom and critical thinking are necessary for the development of knowledge and the evolution of scientific approaches specific to our discipline. The AFSP upholds the freedom of choice of research topics and teaching subjects, freedom in how they are treated and freedom to interpret and publish results, in accordance with current legislation and the principles of this charter.

Principle of Civility

Conflict of interpretations, debate, controversy and scientific critique are not only legitimate but necessary for the development of the discipline, provided that they are practised with mutual respect and recognition of the right of others to express their points of view; they must be expressed in a civil tone, without unnecessary personal or institutional attacks.

Principle of Integrity in Scientific Approach

The principle of scientific integrity applies to the research work itself, but also to the dissemination and publication of results. Concern for knowledge implies an attitude of integrity at all levels of research and education. It assumes a rigorous attitude in the practice of the methods of investigation

and in the interpretation of observations, impartiality of reasoning and openness to challenges of points of view. The contribution of other researchers to the production of knowledge must be recognised. Previous or concurrent research on which it has been based must be cited. Proven plagiarism is of course completely prohibited. The data collected should normally be made available to the scientific community within a reasonable period of time. Anonymity of sources must be safeguarded, in accordance with current legislation. All novel scientific knowledge is expected to be widely disseminated. The simplification sometimes required by popularisation must not lead to a distortion of scientific data or a bias in the points of view supported. No one should become involved, as a scientist, outside their fields of expertise.

Principle of Impartiality

Two essential principles are involved: non-discrimination and prohibition of conflict of interest. The issue of impartiality arises in many aspects of our activities, in particular in processes for grading, recommending, recruitment and promotion, and assessment of papers or research projects. The principle of non-discrimination relates to the struggle, at all levels of professional practice, against any discrimination related to criteria outside the scope of the professional activity itself. Conflict of interest occurs when personal interest is objectively likely to compromise the impartiality and independence necessary to carry out a given professional activity. In all of their professional activities, researchers and teachers must declare any conflict of interest in which they could be involved. They must not obtain from their position an unfair advantage for themselves, their relatives or members of their team.

Principle of Responsibility

The principle of responsibility is defined, on the one hand, in relation to research subjects and funders and, on the other hand, to students and research collaborators. In relation to research subjects, the principle of responsibility involves obtaining their informed consent and complying with the agreement negotiated with them, in particular as regards confidentiality and anonymity. In relation to funders, it encourages the establishment of an explicit contract, the refusal to accept clauses which would contravene impartiality and scientific independence and, equally, funders' instructions about research guidelines and methods. The principle of responsibility toward students, doctoral students and research collaborators relates in part to the principles of integrity and impartiality above, in particular as regards the requirement of citation or reference to all or part of a piece of research. Added to this, there is the establishment of a clear framework for relationships and collaboration, and compliance with commitments made in this context.

Ethics Commission

An Ethics Committee, consisting of 7 AFSP members, is elected by the Association's Governing Council every three years, after the renewal of the Governing Council. It is composed of two PhD or post-doctoral students, two lecturers or research fellows, two university professors or research directors and a chairperson. The latter must be a member of the Council and a professor or research director.

The Committee is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the principles of this charter. It can be asked by AFSP members to provide an opinion on any specific ethical problem related to their professional activities. When it deals with personal situations which have been submitted to it, its role is purely advisory and its advice strictly confidential.

In addition, the Committee receives and processes requests for amendment to the charter. It is expected to make regular changes to the charter by proposing amendments to the Governing Council. If the Council is in agreement, the new provisions will come into force after the annual meeting has ratified them.