

The background features a dark blue gradient with abstract white and light blue circular patterns. On the left side, there is a large circular scale with numerical markings from 140 to 260 in increments of 10. Several smaller circles and arcs are scattered across the background, some with arrows indicating direction. The overall aesthetic is technical and modern.

# ETHICAL ISSUES IN PARLIAMENTARY RESEARCH & LIBRARIES

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*THIS PRESENTATION DOES NOT REFER TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT BUT TO  
PARLIAMENTARY RESEARCH & LIBRARY SERVICES AS A WHOLE; IT REFLECTS THE  
PERSONAL VIEW OF THE AUTHOR AND DOES NOT REPRESENT THE VIEW OF THE  
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT*

# WHY ARE ETHICAL ISSUES IMPORTANT?

- How parliamentary research services and libraries handle ethical issues affects e.g.
  - Service reputation
  - Product quality and authority
  - **Value of products and services**
- Relations with clients, staff, suppliers...and the ability of the service to perform in future
- For you and your staff:
  - Professional reputation
  - Position as a public servant
  - Career and possibly even health

# WHAT GUIDANCE EXISTS?

- There is no direct reference to “ethics” in either the ‘Guidelines for legislative libraries’ or ‘Guidelines for parliamentary research services’
- There are generic ethical frameworks for e.g.
  - Library services (which in terms of content issues and client relations can at least partly apply also to research services)
  - Academic/professional research in general
  - Public servants/officials of parliament
  - Procurement (which concerns especially contracted research)
  - Management of people etc.
- Useful but are they precise enough/comprehensive for our situation?

# ETHICS IN INNOVATION & CHANGE, AND EVERYDAY

- New products – what ethical issues do they raise? How is that assessed?
- New clients – for example, service to ‘insurgent parties’ – does this pose particular challenges?
- New staff – how do we prepare them to handle issues of ethics?
- Service management following regime change
- Research production & information purchasing choices – not just a question of balanced products; what is *not* produced or made available, and why?
- Clients may not find a balanced research product useful – how to manage that ethically?
- Client confidentiality as an issue, and in relation to transparency/value for public money

# SOME DILEMMAS

- Potentially conflicts between
  - Our values and ethics
  - Our professional/personal values/ethics *and* client values.
  - Responsibility to e.g. our manager, the service, clients, the institution, democracy/constitution, citizens
- How do we resolve those conflicts?
- Must be practical – satisficing, a ‘good enough’ solution
- But also beware the ‘slippery slope’

# WHAT CAN WE DO?

- Acknowledge that we have (common) issues and build a common body of knowledge on how to recognise and deal with them
- Develop a collective and public framework of ethics that can give guidance and support (Ethics and/or values?)
- Draw on the examples of generic ethical frameworks (libraries, academic research etc.) but adapt them
- This should be a continuous conversation and evolution
- Do we need a support network?

# SOURCES

- [IFLA Code of Ethics for Librarians and other Information Workers](#)
- [The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#)
- [UK Parliament 'PostNote' on research integrity \[in academic research\]](#)
- [Universities UK Concordat to support research integrity](#)
- **Canada – Library of Parliament 'Values and ethics code'**

# CANADA – LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT – KEY POINTS



## VALUES AND ETHICS CODE FOR THE LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

The Library of Parliament contributes to Canadian parliamentary democracy by serving Parliament and Canadians with integrity and respect, in accordance with our core values:

### **IMPARTIALITY**

We ensure impartiality by providing objective information and services without regard to political affiliation.

### **TRUST**

We engender trust by providing reliable information and services in a manner responsive to the needs of our clients, while at all times promoting mutual respect and ethical conduct.

### **EXCELLENCE**

We achieve excellence in all aspects of our operations by delivering relevant and authoritative information as well as innovative and professional services.

1.4 Adherence to this Code is a condition of employment of all Library employees.

2.3 Persons governed by this Code shall carry out and be seen to carry out their duties on a non-partisan basis in order to preserve the Library's reputation of impartiality and to be sensitive to the unique political environment in which the Library operates.

1.2 The Parliamentary Librarian shall appoint a person to be the Library's Values and Ethics Officer who shall be responsible for the application of this Code. This person shall ensure that the Code is applied consistently throughout the Library and shall be available to provide advice and guidance to all persons who are subject to this Code.

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## INTRODUCTION

This Code is intended to offer a broad range of guidance about the standards of conduct expected of employees, but no code can address every situation that could arise or could result in an actual, potential, or perceived misconduct. For this reason, this Code does not relieve persons governed by it of the responsibility and accountability to exercise good judgment and, in circumstances where they are unsure of the proper course of action, to seek appropriate guidance.

This Code recognizes that the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees such freedoms as freedom of expression and freedom of association and such rights as democratic rights subject only to reasonable limits prescribed by law.

This Code replaces the Library of Parliament Policy on Conflict of Interest dated May 1984.

## 1 APPLICATION

- 1.1 This Code applies to all employees and other persons in the service of the Library, including persons having an indeterminate position, a term position, or a full-time or part-time position. This includes students, interns, and persons seconded to the Library from other organizations.
- 1.2 The Parliamentary Librarian shall appoint a person to be the Library's Values and Ethics Officer who shall be responsible for the application of this Code. This person shall ensure that the Code is applied consistently throughout the Library and shall be available to provide advice and guidance to all persons who are subject to this Code.
- 1.3 The Library may establish guidelines respecting the application of this Code.
- 1.4 Adherence to this Code is a condition of employment of all Library employees.

## 2 GENERAL RULES OF CONDUCT

- 2.1 Persons governed by this Code must ensure that they comply with the Code and that they uphold the Library core values of impartiality, trust, and excellence.
- 2.2 Persons governed by this Code may conduct their personal affairs as they see fit so long as they do not compromise or are not perceived to compromise the values and integrity of the Library or its employees.
- 2.3 Persons governed by this Code shall carry out and be seen to carry out their duties on a non-partisan basis in order to preserve the Library's reputation of impartiality and to be sensitive to the unique political environment in which the Library operates.
- 2.4 During and after employment by the Library, no person governed by this Code shall communicate, improperly use, take advantage of, or benefit from information that is acquired in the course of duties with the Library that is not available to the public.
- 2.5 Persons governed by this Code who wish to discuss compliance with it are encouraged to do so with their manager or supervisor or the Values and Ethics Officer.
- 2.6 This Code does not restrict in any manner the conduct of a spouse, partner, or child of a person governed by the Code, and no person governed by this Code may be disciplined or penalized for the conduct of his or her spouse, partner, or child.
- 2.7 The Library respects the right of employees to belong to employee organizations (unions) and to take part in their legal activities.

## 3 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- 3.1 Persons governed by this Code shall conduct their affairs in ways that prevent actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.
- 3.2 No persons governed by this Code may have a pecuniary or other interest that conflicts or appears to conflict in any manner with the discharge of their duties.
- 3.3 No persons governed by this Code shall perform their duties in a way that improperly furthers their or anyone else's pecuniary or other interest.
- 3.4 Persons governed by this Code shall advise their manager or supervisor or the Values and Ethics Officer of any pecuniary or other interest that conflicts or could appear to conflict with their duties as soon as they become aware of such interests.
- 3.5 Final determination of a conflict of interest shall be made by the manager authorized to do so in the Library's *Policy on the Delegation of Human Resources Authorities*.
- 3.6 Every person governed by this Code shall apply responsible practices to optimize the use of public funds, assets, and resources and should not use or allow the use of public property for anything other than officially approved activities.

#### 4 ENGAGING IN OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

- 4.1 For the purpose of this Code, "outside activities" include paid work, carrying on a profession or business, and volunteer work other than the employee's principal employment with the Library.
- 4.2 Persons governed by this Code may also be employed outside the Library and take part in other outside activities unless the employment or activities could place demands on them inconsistent with their Library-related duties, call into question their capacity to perform those duties in an effective and objective manner, or create an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest.

#### 5 GIFTS AND OTHER BENEFITS

- 5.1 Persons governed by this Code shall not solicit or accept from outside parties gifts or other benefits that may have an actual, potential, or perceived influence on their objectivity in carrying out their official duties, that may place them under obligation to the donor, or that may compromise or appear to compromise in any way the integrity of the persons or the Library. However, persons governed by this Code may accept gifts and other benefits if the gifts and benefits:
- are infrequent and of minimal value (e.g., low-cost promotional objects or souvenirs with no cash value); and
  - are within the normal standards of courtesy or protocol.
- 5.2 In accordance with the Library's *Policy on Gifts*, where it is impossible to decline gifts or other benefits that do not meet the permissible principles set out above, the Parliamentary Librarian shall provide direction. The Parliamentary Librarian will then notify the person governed by this Code whether the gifts or other benefits are to be declined or retained by the Library, evaluated in accordance with the Library's *Book Donation Policy*, donated to charity, disposed of, or retained by the person concerned.

#### 6 POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

- 6.1 For the purpose of this Code, "political activity" is defined as any activity:
- in support of or in opposition to a political party or a candidate – including promoting a political party; and
  - speaking publicly on behalf of or against a candidate, party or political cause.
- Voting in a federal, provincial, territorial or municipal election or in a referendum is not considered to be a political activity for the purpose of this Code.
- 6.2 Persons governed by this Code may engage in any political activity so long as it does not impair or is not perceived to impair their ability to perform their duties in a politically impartial manner. When in doubt, persons governed by this Code should discuss the matter with their manager or supervisor or the Values and Ethics Officer.
- 6.3 Persons governed by this Code shall neither engage in political activity at work nor associate their position within the Library with political activity.
- 6.4 Persons governed by this Code may seek nomination and/or elected office in a party leadership campaign, or in a federal, provincial, or territorial election only if they have requested and obtained a leave of absence without pay.
- 6.5 Persons governed by this Code who wish to seek nomination or be candidates in a municipal election should discuss the matter with their Director before making public their intention, in order to ensure that there is no actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest with their duties. Such discussions would also assist in determining whether a leave of absence without pay would be required for the period of the election or of political office if the persons are elected.

- 6.6 The Parliamentary Librarian, Associate Parliamentary Librarian, and Parliamentary Budget Officer shall not engage in any political activity other than voting in an election or in a referendum.

#### 7 SOCIAL MEDIA

- 7.1 Persons governed by this Code who use social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, or blogs, must be aware that contributions to such social media are not considered to be private communications. Persons governed by this Code are expected to conduct themselves on social media in the same way and according to the same standards as they would in person.
- 7.2 Persons governed by this Code may use social media so long as doing so does not impair or is not perceived to impair their ability to perform their duties in a politically impartial manner. Persons governed by this Code must not comment on issues or individuals in a way that could reflect negatively on their work or the reputation of the Library or its employees or the Parliament of Canada.

#### 8 CORRECTIVE MEASURES

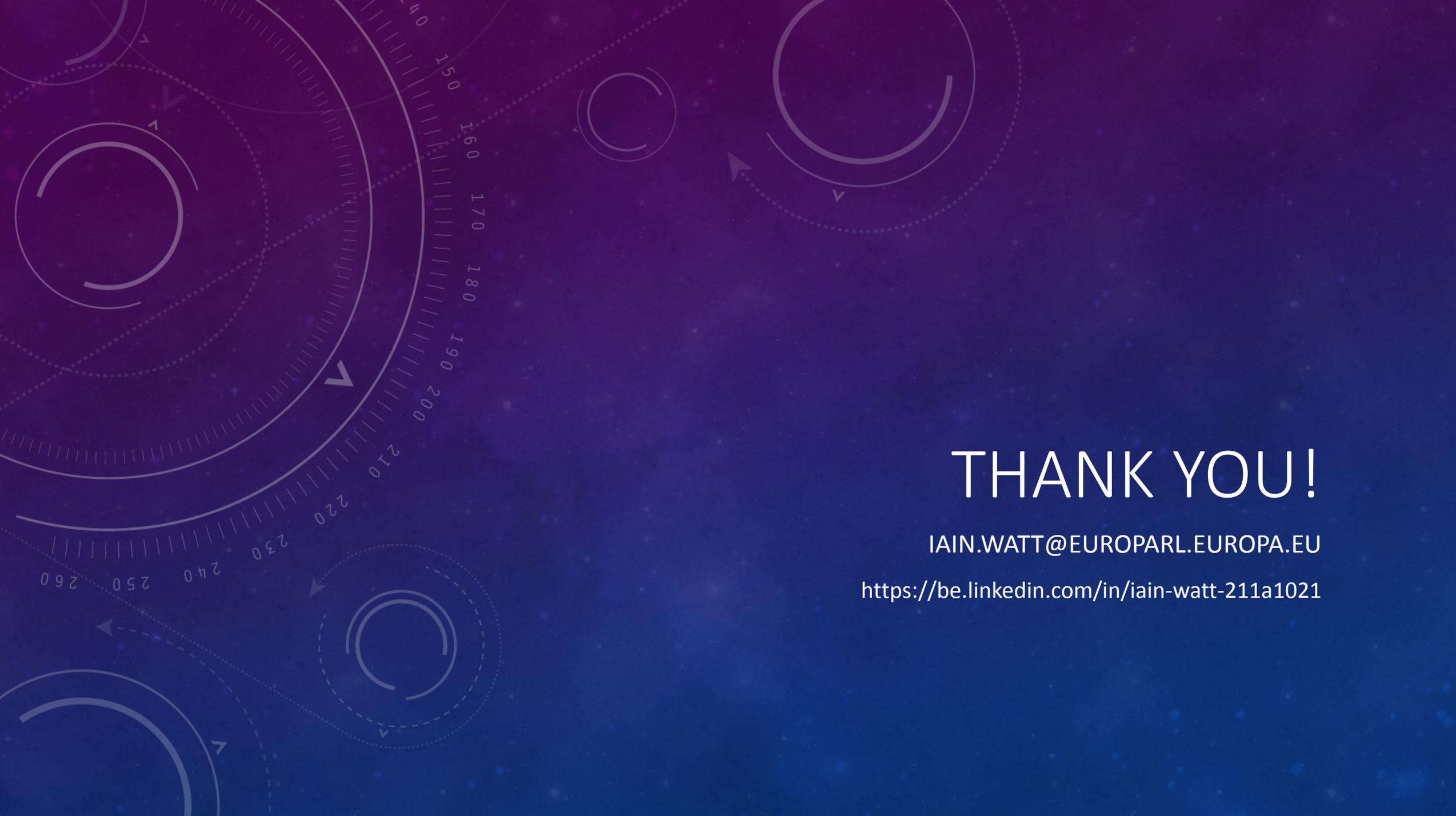
- 8.1 It is expected that most questions of values and ethics will be resolved in discussions between persons governed by this Code and the Values and Ethics Officer, managers, and/or supervisors, through which avenues of resolution will be identified and take appropriate action taken.
- 8.2 However, persons governed by this Code who do not comply with this Code and who knew or reasonably should have known that they were not in compliance may be subject to appropriate disciplinary measures. These measures may include reprimand, suspension, dismissal, and/or legal or other proceedings.
- 8.3 Disagreements about the application of this Code shall be addressed in compliance with the recourse mechanisms prescribed in the collective agreement of the person questioning the application of the Code in the Terms and Conditions of Employment or in the *Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act*.

#### 9 REPORTING OF WRONGDOINGS

- 9.1 Persons governed by this Code who become aware of a breach of the Code or any other wrongdoing or illegal activity in the workplace have a responsibility to report that breach or wrongdoing to the Values and Ethics Officer. Furthermore, persons who in good faith report such breaches or wrongdoings are protected from reprisals for doing so.
- 9.2 After receiving a report under section 9.1, the Values and Ethics Officer shall consult with the appropriate manager or supervisor of the Library. Managers and supervisors have an obligation to follow up promptly and shall advise the Values and Ethics Officer of their findings and the disposition of such reports.

#### 10 RELATED DOCUMENTS

- [Policy on Gifts](#)
- [Policy on the Delegation of Human Resources Authorities](#)
- [Labour/Staff Relations](#) – Collective Agreements with the Public Service Alliance of Canada and the Canadian Association of Professional Employees and *Terms and Conditions of Employment for Unrepresented Employees*

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# THANK YOU!

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