

Agenda Point 6: Amendment to the Code of Ethics

Code of Ethics of the Verein für Socialpolitik

Version December 2021

I. Preamble

The Verein für Socialpolitik places high demands on the professional conduct of its members. In particular, the following principles must be observed:

In their professional dealings, members of the Verein für Socialpolitik are expected to

1. Act with professional and intellectual integrity, honesty, care, and transparency.
2. Encourage the free expression and exchange of scientific ideas based on their merits. This includes the impartial assessment of ideas, acknowledging one's limits of expertise, and disclosing real and perceived conflicts of interest. Economic policy recommendations should be based on state-of-the-art research.

Proposal of the „Code of Ethics“ Working Group: Adding the extra word **unprejudiced**

3. Promote a fair, **unprejudiced**, and inclusive environment and oppose any discriminatory behavior or harassment.

The Verein für Socialpolitik supports universities, non-university research institutions, and national and international research funding organizations to ensure good professional conduct. The individual members of the Verein für Socialpolitik are required to follow the relevant guidelines. In particular, the Verein für Socialpolitik requires that its individual members follow the rules summarized in the following Code:

II. Code of good professional conduct for economists

a) Research Practice

Members of the Verein für Socialpolitik are expected to adhere to the standards of their research field with respect to research procedure, transparency, referencing, and policy deduction.

1. Research should be transparent and verifiable. The underlying assumptions should be clearly stated. Data sets and programs necessary to replicate the results should be made available (e.g., in repositories) within the legal and practical possibilities.
2. Members of the Verein für Socialpolitik should always take adequate precautions to avoid or minimize any harm to research subjects. This applies in particular to research involving vulnerable groups.
3. In scientific papers, the current state of research in the respective field should be addressed and assessed in an appropriate manner. All relevant sources should be listed. This also applies to one's own work.
4. In scientific papers (including discussion papers), all sources of funding, external infrastructure facilities, and other external support used should be indicated.
5. In scientific papers, the authors should state any facts which could potentially lead to conflicts of interest or bias on the part of the authors. This rule also applies to publications in non-scientific media, to the extent possible.
6. When providing economic policy advice or communicating with the media, careful attention should be paid to the difference between factual description and scientific statement on the one hand, and value judgment on the other hand.
7. Third-party funded scientific reports should be impartial, and the underlying research should be conducted in an unbiased way. The interests of the client should not influence the results of the analysis.
8. Whenever a scientific paper, report, or opinion may not be published without the prior consent to the content by a third party, this fact should be clearly indicated in the publication. Individuals with direct or indirect supervisory or evaluative power should support the freedom of research and should not limit the right to publish research results unnecessarily.
9. In their review and evaluation of scientific work and funding applications, reviewers should indicate potential biases and conflicts of interest. Where appropriate, they should abstain from participating in the evaluation.

b) Professional Practice

10. Members of the Verein für Socialpolitik should strive for an inclusive work environment.
11. In their activities, members of the Verein für Socialpolitik should not advantage or disadvantage anyone on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, health condition, marital status, parental status, genetic information, or any other demographic characteristic. Measures that promote the equality of different demographic groups, in particular by eliminating existing inequalities, are permitted. Members of the Verein für Socialpolitik are encouraged to adopt such measures.
12. Members of the Verein für Socialpolitik commit not to harass any person. Harassment includes, but is not limited to, attack, whether verbal or non-verbal, as well as any conduct that a reasonable person would consider demeaning, intimidating, abusive, hostile, or offensive. Members of the Verein für Socialpolitik also commit to not engage in sexual harassment as defined by current general equal treatment laws.
13. Members of the Verein für Socialpolitik should behave in a way such that they do not create a hostile environment which a reasonable person would consider as violating human dignity, even if such behavior does not target specific individuals. This especially applies to exchanges in an academic context (e.g., academic seminars, referee reports, hiring committees).

14. Members of the Verein für Socialpolitik should not promote ideas in their professional practice that aim to be derogative of members of any specific group characterized by the demographic dimensions listed under 11.
15. With respect to persons over whom a member of the Verein für Socialpolitik has direct or indirect academic supervisory or evaluative authority, the member should not abuse his or her position to (explicitly or implicitly) induce any action of such persons that does not correspond to the person's job description and primarily serves the member's own personal, economic, or professional advantage.

III. Implementation

1. Every individual member of the Verein für Socialpolitik commits to compliance with this Code in their behavior and should contribute to such compliance also in their own personal environment.

Proposal of the „Code of Ethics“ Working Group: Adding an extra item and corresponding change to the sequence numbering

2. In cases of accusations against an individual, members and committees of the Verein für Socialpolitik ensure that all parties (possible victims, the person making the accusation, and accused individuals) are protected.
3. The Code of Ethics will be published on the website of the Verein für Socialpolitik.
4. The Verein für Socialpolitik promotes compliance with this Code among all economists in German-speaking countries.
5. An ethics committee and an ombudsperson advise the Board of the Verein für Socialpolitik on ethics issues:
 - The Verein für Socialpolitik, represented by the Executive Board, appoints an ombudsperson for ethical matters. The ombudsperson should be an individual who enjoys the special trust of the members. They serve as a contact person in all matters relating to this Code and mediate to the extent possible in cases of conflict. They are elected by the Executive Council for two years on the proposal of the Management Board.
 - The Verein für Socialpolitik establishes a Standing Committee for Ethical Matters, whose three members are elected by the Executive Council for a term of three years on the proposal of the Management Board. The Committee becomes active in case of need, in particular at the request of the ombudsperson. The Ethics Committee advises on the cases submitted to it and, if necessary, develops recommendations for action for the Management Board.
 - The Ethics Committee and the ombudsperson report once a year to the Executive Council on their activities.