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## The Four EURCAWs Conflict of Interest procedure

### Introduction

The independence of the EU Reference Centres for Animal Welfare (EURCAWs) is a legal requirement set in Article 95(3) of the Official Controls Regulation (EU) 2017/625, which establishes they shall act impartially when exercising their tasks as European Union Reference Centres. In particular, given that EURCAWs support and assist the European Commission and the EU Member States in the conduct of official control activities, operators who may be the subject of official controls in the area covered by the EURCAWs must not be in a position to directly or indirectly influence the technical and scientific advice and recommendations from the EURCAWs.

Given this requirement, it is essential for the EURCAWs to have robust mechanisms in place to identify and manage potential conflicts of interest with private or public companies or organisations.

To fulfil these criteria, the four EURCAWs have created a Conflict of Interest procedure (Col procedure) and a systematic and fair process should a conflict of interest or perception of such conflict occur.

The Conflict of Interest (Col) procedure is described in this document.

In addition, the Four EURCAWs have developed a Declaration of Interests (DOI) form, in which individuals declare all relevant interests and project involvements. The DOI is based on the 'Standard Declaration of Interests form' for the members of the EU Platform Animal Welfare, organised by DG SANTE.

### Conflict of Interest Procedure

1. The DOI is to be filled in and signed by each member of the EURCAW Management Teams or Coordination Teams or similar body (as defined by the EURCAW), and the (co-)authors of output specified in the respective Work Programmes of the EURCAWs. Outputs may include reviews, reports or other types of documents, and may also include digital materials such as videos.
2. The DOI is updated and reconfirmed at the beginning of each calendar year by the members of the EURCAWs.
3. New members of the EURCAWs as specified in 1.) must sign the DOI upon starting their work within a EURCAW regardless of the time of the year.
4. It is the obligation of the Coordination Team of the EURCAWs to make sure their personnel signs the DOI and renews it annually.
5. The DOI can be signed digitally or by hand.
6. The evaluation of the DOI is done by the Coordination Team (or similar, as defined by each EURCAW). If in place, the Ethics Committee provides a detailed opinion on the DOIs to the Coordination Team.



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7. The Coordination Team may call the signatory to provide further explanations on the information provided in the DOI.
  8. The signed DOI is kept by the EURCAW on their own intranet site, with access level defined by the respective EURCAW. On the public website of each Centre a statement is made to reflect the content of this Col procedure. It indicates that the members of the EURCAW team are required to submit a Dol form, which has to be approved by the Coordination Team of the Centre.
  9. The signed DOIs will be available to the European Commission upon request.

### Procedure in case of a (perceived) Conflict of Interest

1. Each member of the EURCAWs responsible for the EURCAW-tasks has a continuing obligation to fully disclose to the Director of the Centre (or designate\*) any situation involving actual or potential Conflicts of Interest, as soon as such situations arise. The DOI form must also be updated at the next annual renewal moment.
2. The Coordination Team will assess whether a Conflict of Interest or the appearance thereof, exists. If necessary, the Ethics Committee will be consulted to provide a detailed opinion.
3. If the Coordination Team determines that a Conflict of Interest or appearance of such conflict exists, the team member may be required to immediately address or resolve the issue.
4. Depending on the circumstances, the team member may -in the worst case- be excluded from further involvement in EURCAW activities.
5. The DG SANTE may be consulted, if deemed necessary.
6. Team members who disagree with the decision may submit an appeal to the Management Team within 10 working days, starting from the day after the notification of the Coordination Team's decision. Appeals will be reviewed promptly, and adjustments will be made if considered appropriate.
7. If the incident under review concerns a member of the Coordination Team or the Management Team or – where applicable - the Ethics Committee, the relevant member shall be excluded from the respective procedure.
8. Following an (optional) appeal, the decision of the Management Team is final.

\* Appointed by the Coordination Team

### Attachment

The Declaration of Interest form.