



National
Council of
Ethics for the
Life Sciences

117/CNECV/2023

**OPINION ON ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR
PUBLIC INTEREST DECISION MAKING
IN LIFE SCIENCES**

June 2022



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Executive Summary

The decision-making processes of public interest, at both governmental and institutional level, are particularly demanding in the current context of pluralistic and egalitarian societies, deserving a thoughtful reflection. In contemporary democratic societies, built on the respect for Human Rights, it is recognised that public policies aim to formulate a standard for civic action, while respecting the plurality of individual values and the diversity of community values.

Given the demands of decision-making processes in the public interest, the weight of emotional states and other factors influencing decisions, the evolution of social networks and technologies and their impact on how society accesses essential information, the CNECV considered it essential to establish requirements for ethical legitimisation of decision-making processes in matters of public interest.

With a special focus on health policies and scientific research in the life sciences, the CNECV valued in its opinion:

1. the competence, self-reflection and joint work of public decision-makers, which would reduce the risk of bias in decision-making, as well as the declaration of possible conflicts of interest;
2. decision-making processes resulting from a plural, independent, open and documented dialogue, by means of adequate information, which promotes the active participation of citizens, with adequate means of consultation. In this way, a participative democracy will be promoted, in the construction of consensus and the validation of decisions;
3. decisions based on robust and objective knowledge, which consider individual and community values, provide for their future impact and regular review, promoting consistency between decisions in the same sectors or areas;
4. This effort on the part of consultative bodies encourages reflection from citizens to decision-makers, thus contributing to their proximity.



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Through its reflections, the Council intends to specify the conditions necessary for the legitimacy of decision-making processes, which should contribute to greater confidence on the part of citizens in decision-makers and institutions and also in their support for decisions taken in the public interest.

The present opinion was adopted on 9 June 2022 at the 266th plenary session of the CNECV.

National Council of Ethics for the Life Sciences

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