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Towards a community effort to identify ethical principles for research in hydrology

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The hydrological community in Europe is growing rapidly in both size and, more importantly, scientific relevance and integrity. The Hydrological Sciences (HS) Division of EGU actively is promoting the above development by identifying research targets, stimulating the involvement of young scientists and managing a scientific open access journal based on a public peer review process. The management of the Division itself and the organisation of the General Assembly are carried out transparently, with the aim to seek an improved involvement of top and young scientists, with a bottom up approach.

I believe the HS community is animated by a strong enthusiasm which, however, is not adequately supported by economical funding. In my opinion this is a major problem which HS should consider and discuss. The relevance of the societal and environmental problems dealt with by hydrologists, in a professional way and with exceptional scientific skills, is without doubt and therefore the limited amount of funding is not justified in practice.

In my opinion, in order to refine the structure of the HS community, and promote its visibility, we should formally identify HS ethical principles for research in environmental science. The principles should highlight the role of hydrology as well as the ethical and scientific solidity of the HS community. Establishing ethical principles is even more important in view of the transparent approach HS is adopting for reviewing and publishing contributions and in view of the increasing need to transparently prove how public funding for research is administered.

Establishing ethical principles for hydrology is not a trivial task. Hydrology is characterised by a relevant uncertainty in data, models and parameters. Hydrology is also relying on a large variety of approaches, ranging from statistical to physically based.

The purpose of this poster is to present a collection of ethical principles for scientific research presented by the literature and/or adopted by institutions. The aim is to stimulate a discussion within the HS community in order to finally propose a collection of principles and rules of conduct that can apply to hydrology. I believe that the visibility and the solidity of the HS community will benefit by placing emphasis on the role of ethics.