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
  • 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
• New staff – how do we prepare them to handle issues of ethics?
• Service management following regime change
• Research production & information purchasing choices
• Clients may not find a balanced research product useful
• Client confidentiality
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’
THANK YOU!

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