

# Publication of the Discussion Paper “A contemporary perspective on the free and responsible practice of science in the 21st century”

*A Letter to ISC Members from Professor Anne Husebekk, ISC Vice-President*

10 DECEMBER 2021

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Dear ISC Members,

As the newly elected Vice-President for Freedom and Responsibility at the International Science Council, and as incoming Chair of the ISC’s Committee for Freedom and Responsibility in Science ([CFRS](#)), it is my role to lead the work of the Council in upholding the Principle of Freedom and Responsibility in Science, as enshrined in Statute 7 of the [ISC Statutes and Rules of Procedure](#).

**Today, on International Human Rights Day, I am delighted to announce the publication of a landmark Discussion Paper,**

**“A contemporary perspective on the free and responsible practice of science in the 21st century”,**

**that examines the meaning of scientific freedom and the responsible practice of science in the 21st century.**

**Access the Discussion Paper:**

<https://stories.council.science/science-freedom-responsibility/>

The right to share in and to benefit from advances in science and technology is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of

Human Rights, as is the right to engage in scientific enquiry, pursue and communicate knowledge, and to associate freely in such activities. Importantly, these rights go hand in hand with responsibilities in the practice, management, and communication of scientific research. Both freedom and responsibility are essential to the ISC’s vision of science as a global public good.

Current global emergencies such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic have demonstrated the key role that free and responsible science can play in protecting human and environmental wellbeing, as well as the dangers of failing to uphold these principles. At the same time, ongoing social, political, and technological developments pose unique and wide-reaching challenges for scientists which must be considered when defining the freedoms and responsibilities of diverse stakeholders in science systems around the world.

The rapidly changing contexts within which scientific research is undertaken and applied in modern society have prompted the ISC to re-examine the meaning of scientific freedom and responsibility through this new Discussion



Paper. Prepared by an [expert writing group](#) of scientists from around the world, the Paper considers new challenges arising from social and technological developments of the last two decades, as well as changes to the ways in which science is used and disseminated. It suggests several key freedoms and responsibilities that must be upheld, to be consistent with the vision of science as a global public good. Finally, the Paper offers guidance to readers in a range of institutional and policy settings on the actions needed to uphold and protect these freedoms and responsibilities.

As you know, all ISC Members were invited to review and provide feedback on the draft version of this paper, which was presented at the [2<sup>nd</sup> ISC General Assembly](#) in October 2021. All input from Members has been considered by the writing group, and the final document reflects many of the suggestions for additions and revisions to the draft content. I, the Governing Board, and the Secretariat thank you for your valuable contributions to this key project for the ISC.

CFRS now invites all ISC Members to read, share and discuss the final publication. The Paper is intended for a broad readership, including researchers, research managers, policymakers, science diplomats, and those in the private sector. As such, we invite you to share it with all those in your network who have a role to play in upholding the free and responsible practice of science in contemporary society.

On behalf of the Committee and the expert writing group, I thank you for your ongoing efforts to uphold the Principle of Freedom and Responsibility in Science, and I look forward to working with you to advance our vision of science as a global public good.

Yours sincerely,

*Anne Husebekk*



Anne Husebekk  
*ISC Vice-President Vice-  
President for Freedom and  
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