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Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to raise serious concerns regarding the conduct observed during a presentation held at Leoben University on Nov 18th 2024, which focused on the Jadar Project in Serbia, presented by the Chair of Mining Engineering and Mineral Economics. I wish to address several aspects of the lecture that represent breaches of The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (Revised Edition 2023) including **Stereotyping and Discrimination, Promotion of Misinformation, Failure to Present Comprehensive and Balanced Information, Bias and Lack of Objectivity, Unprofessional Tone and Language and Humiliation and Disrespect Towards Opponents.**

The statements and behaviors exhibited during the presentation by everyone present not only undermined the principles of scholarly integrity but also fostered an environment of bias and disrespect towards an enormous amount of Serbian experts, local farmers, activists and the Serbian public at large, who have come out in the hundreds of thousands in defense of Nature, human rights, national sovereignty and the environment.

As one of the organizers of the movement against this mine, I take very seriously the lies, labels and personal attacks towards the collective movement and its organizers, a movement that the lecturing staff from yesterday know they openly lied about.

Below, I outline the specific actions that contravene the ethical guidelines outlined in the European Code of Conduct:

1. Humiliation and Disrespect Towards Opponents

During the lecture, the panelists made disparaging remarks about people in Serbia who oppose the Jadar Project, referring to them as “people who only watch TV and believe the TV.” Such statements are a direct violation of the principle of “Respect”, which is a central tenet of the European Code of Conduct. As the document states:

“Researchers should show respect for all individuals involved in or affected by research, including participants, colleagues, and the wider public. This includes respecting the dignity, rights, and opinions of others.” (Section 1.1)

The use of derogatory language to dismiss the views of a large segment of the Serbian population, including the Serbian Academy of Sciences, not only shows a lack of respect for their opinions but also undermines their dignity and the dignity of the highest ranking scientists in Serbia.

2. Stereotyping and Discrimination

The panel referred to the Serbian population opposed to the mine as ignorant, saying they “do not understand the complexity of the Jadar Project,” a sweeping and discriminatory characterization that misrepresents the views of individuals based on their opposition to the project.

It is also scientifically inaccurate to categorize a decentralized peoples’ movement of this magnitude, where hundreds of thousands are in the streets and in self-organized protests in over 50 towns, and supported by the Serbian Academy of Sciences, as ignorant.

The European Code of Conduct emphasizes the importance of avoiding bias and discrimination:

“Researchers must avoid any form of discrimination and bias in research and its communication.” (Section 1.3)

Such language promotes harmful stereotypes and discredits individuals based on their legitimate concerns, which is a violation of this principle.

3. Promotion of Misinformation

The panel also claimed that the protests against the mine were largely the result of opposition members spreading misinformation for their own interests. This accusation, presented without substantial evidence or critical analysis, undermines the integrity of the research process. The Code of Conduct stresses the importance of “Transparency” and “Accuracy” in research and communication:

“Researchers must ensure that their research findings are communicated accurately, in a way that is transparent, balanced, and free from bias.” (Section 1.4)

By presenting an unsubstantiated narrative, the panel failed to meet the required standards of transparency and impartiality. Such claims should have been supported by evidence and balanced discourse, which of course is impossible to do because the claims are lies.

4. Failure to Present Comprehensive and Balanced Information

Another concerning issue was the panel's reliance on marketing jargon and piecemeal information, which lacked scientific rigor and objectivity. The Code of Conduct calls for thoroughness and completeness in research presentations:

"...should present research findings fully, in a manner that allows for independent verification. This includes providing context and acknowledging the uncertainties or limitations of research." (Section 2.1)

By not addressing the significant scientific opposition to the Jadar Project, the panel presented a skewed view of the situation, which undermines the integrity of the discourse and does not allow for a comprehensive understanding of the issue at hand.

5. Bias and Lack of Objectivity

The panel's characterization of the opposition as radical nationalists who are "a few oppositional parties against progress and against joining the EU" is an example of biased and remarkably inaccurate representation. This type of language directly conflicts with the Code's principle of "Objectivity" to:

"...ensure that their research, and its communication, is free from bias and presents a fair and balanced view of the issue." (Section 1.2)

It is scientifically inaccurate to define this movement in such prejudiced terms. We're a movement that has unified people of varying ideologies, political and religious preferences, education levels, ages and life experiences.

By framing the opposition in such extreme and one-dimensional terms, the panel failed to provide a realistic portrayal of the public debate. **It is insulting to the intelligence and hard work of those who have built this movement, and to the hundreds of thousands who have joined us on streets, to present the movement in such a way.** This undermines the credibility of the lecture and the academic institution as a whole.

6. Unprofessional Tone and Language

Finally, the tone used by the panelists, which involved mocking and ridiculing opponents of the mine, violated the principle of "Professionalism" in research communication. The Code of Conduct emphasizes the importance of maintaining a professional demeanor:

"Researchers should behave with integrity and professionalism in all aspects of their work, including the dissemination of research findings." (Section 1.5)

The condescending remarks made by the panelists were unprofessional and detracted from the academic nature of the event, making it difficult for the audience to engage in a productive and respectful discussion.

Conclusion and Request for Action

In light of these breaches of The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, I respectfully request that the university review the conduct of the lecture and take appropriate measures to ensure the presenters and lecturers who allowed this to happen never do so again. I also ask that you ensure that future presentations adhere to the principles of academic integrity, respect, and objectivity for the sake of your students. The reputation of the university and its commitment to fostering an environment of rigorous scholarship depend on upholding these standards in all research and public-facing activities.

I request that you please send me the steps the university will take to address these concerns.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely,



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President

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