



EuroMeSCo Workout

FEBRUARY-MARCH 2024

The two online EuroMeSCo Workout courses described below are designed to be practical and interactive training programmes. Most of them involve a peer-to-peer dimension, as the majority of trainers are from the think tank and research community themselves. These courses will be **free of charge** for the selected participants. Priority will be given to researchers and think tankers affiliated with institutes or think tanks from the [EuroMeSCo network](#).

In order to apply, candidates are invited to complete the online form before **10 December 2023, 23:59 CET**.

Ethics in Research involving vulnerable populations or politically sensitive information.

Anne DEMOISY. Director of RHIZOME Ethics & Technology; and **Vasiliki PETOUSI**. Associate Professor at the University of Crete.

Thursdays 8, 15, 22, 29 February. 15h00-17h00

Writing Policy Recommendations: Dos and dont's

Laryssa CHOMIAK. Director Centre d'Etudes Maghrébines à Tunis.

Tuesdays 5, 12, 19, 26 March. 15h00-17h00





ETHICS IN RESEARCH INVOLVING VULNERABLE POPULATIONS OR POLITICALLY SENSITIVE INFORMATION.

Anne DEMOISY. Director of RHIZOME Ethics & Technology; and **Vasiliki PETOUSI.** Associate Professor at the University of Crete.

TRAINING OVERVIEW

This course will explore the ethical challenges involved in conducting research with vulnerable populations or politically sensitive information. Participants will learn about the principles of ethical research, to pay attention to regulatory frameworks governing research with vulnerable populations, and the potential risks and benefits of research in politically sensitive contexts. The course will also cover strategies to ensure participant confidentiality, informed consent, and data protection.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The methodological approach of this course integrates lecture-based learning, case studies, group discussions, and hands-on exercises, providing a comprehensive exploration of ethics in research involving vulnerable populations and/or politically sensitive information. With an emphasis on interactivity, participants actively participate in discussions and practical exercises, applying acquired concepts and skills. Throughout the program, participants will benefit from the experience of professionals in the Ethics field.

Participants are encouraged to reflect on their individual experiences and perspectives, fostering the identification of practical solutions for challenges encountered conducting research. By the the end of the course, participants will have acquired a solid grasp of the methodology guiding ethical research. Equipped with practical skills and knowledge, participants will be prepared to apply this ethical framework to their own research endeavors.





COURSE STRUCTURE

Session 1: Informed Consent

In this session, participants will delve into the ethical foundations of research involving vulnerable populations. They will explore the crucial importance of fostering informed consent, assent, and ensuring free participation. The session will clarify the purpose and components of an Information Sheet, discuss the establishment of consistent and equitable participant selection criteria, and highlight the necessity of obtaining Ethics approval.

To reinforce these concepts, participants will engage in two interactive use cases. The first involves creating an Informed Consent Form; and the second focuses on identifying key elements for an effective Information Sheet.

Session 2: Identify sensitive settings

In this session, participants will identify key ethical considerations in research, including the definition and handling of sensitive information, understanding stigmatization, and identifying vulnerable participants. They will explore ethical approaches when dealing with children and illiterate individuals in participant selection and assent processes. Additionally, they will discuss the ethical considerations of conducting online surveys and interviews, offering guidance on best practices.

Two interactive use cases will be presented: the first involves adapting research designs to specific settings, and the second explores a real-world example, the approach taken in the [Horizon 2020 CONNEKT project](#).

Session 3: Research in NON-EU countries

In this session, participants will explore some key aspects of research ethics in Non European countries, the importance of respecting local legal obligations, and that research brings value to the local community. Practical insights will be provided on addressing the safety of both participants and researchers. The session will also cover the importance of an unexpected findings policy, providing insights into addressing unforeseen ethical challenges especially in relation to legal and ethical obligations for breach of confidentiality. Additionally, the session will cover strategies to prevent the misuse of research findings and ethical responsibilities in disseminating information responsibly.

The interactive use case will involve creating an unexpected findings policy, offering participants hands-on experience in identifying and addressing ethical dilemmas in the face of unexpected findings in research.





Session 4: Protect your data

In this session, participants will delve into the essential aspects of research ethics concerning personal data. They will explore the definition of personal data, the significance of privacy, and the timing and methods for safeguarding personal data collected during research. Legal obligations, including an overview of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), will be discussed to provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of their responsibilities. The concept of a Data Management Plan and the role of the Data Protection Officer will also be covered.

Two interactive use cases will enhance practical understanding: the first involves identifying what constitutes personal data, promoting hands-on experience in recognizing and handling sensitive information. The second use case focuses on selecting appropriate data protection measures, such as anonymization or pseudonymization, tailored to the specific requirements of participants' research projects.





WRITING POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS: DOS AND DONT'S.

Laryssa CHOMIAK. Director, Centre d'Etudes Maghrébines à Tunis.

TRAINING OVERVIEW

This course will center on clear argumentation, accessible and public interest writing styles, brainstorming topics that merit policy recommendations, translation of expertise knowledge for broader audiences and decision-makers, as well as meaningful and applicable recommendations. The thematic examples and exercises will draw from participants professional interests and expertise, as well as critical contemporary issues. The course module is both instructive and interactive and focuses on what public policy writing is and is not, who the audience is, who the readers might be, the power of persuasion, as well as choosing appropriate content to support the argument and buttress recommendations.

Session 1: What is Policy Writing and What is not Policy Writing

In the first session, the workshop leader will discuss with participants the purpose of policy-style writing, different audiences, how publications can influence global policy communities, and how writing can be most impactful. The interactive element of this session will include a brainstorming and discussion element to determine what kind of issues/themes/questions warrant a policy brief, based on individual expertise and personal interests, and drawing from pressing contemporary events. Themes defining the session include:

- What kind of questions need answers?
- Who is your audience?
- Who are your readers?

Session 2: The Power of Persuasion

How do we convince a decision-maker, or the general interested public, to listen to us or read our piece? Of course, the topic itself is critical, but so is the construction of a very strong argument and facts to back up the argument, rather than opinions and emotional commitments ("I feel that..."). The second session will focus on the power of persuasion, writing techniques, and discuss what kind of language to avoid. The interactive element will center on the following principal policy writing rules and include classic "elevator speech" exercises:

- Strong Central Argument
- Toning down writing tone
- Simplifying complexity of argument
- Using strong, simple language however complex the issue





- Avoiding industry-insider language
- Be to the point: "Elevator Speech"

Session 3: Key Characteristics of a Strong Policy Paper

In the third session, workshop participants will be exposed to the main elements of a policy brief and different types of policy writings. The interactive component of this session will include discussions around how to choose content to support the principal argument, what information should/could be included and what information should/could be excluded. Based on an example topic (brief), participants will discuss the different sub-headings that will comprise a final product. This session will concentrate on how to draw recommendations most effectively from the main argument and analysis and avoid common pitfalls.

- Summary/Executive Statement
- Introduction
- Content Paragraph (Main Text)
- Conclusion
- Implications/Recommendations

Session 4: Argument Pitch/Interactive Session

The final session will be mostly interactive in which workshop participants (either individually or as joint projects) will be asked to present (5-7 minutes each) a topic/question that necessitates an answer. Participants will summarise what research and facts will support the case and suggest 2-3 applicable policy recommendations. Participants can submit 1-page summaries of a proposed topic ahead of the session for review.

