

March 22nd, 2024

## **On the importance of upholding the fundamental principles and values that regulate Argentine scientific and technological development**

As members of the National Committee on Ethics in Science and Technology (CECTE<sup>i</sup>), we wish to express our deep concern about governmental policies and statements by officials. They represent an attack on the scientific community in general, its institutions, and to issues related to ethical values in science. This leads to undermining confidence regarding the relevance of science within our society and contradicts the following fundamental principles and values that regulate Argentine scientific and technological development <sup>i</sup>:

- Respect for human rights,
- Consolidation of democratic values and practices,
- Contribution to peace and justice, with special attention to the most vulnerable sectors,
- Care for the environment, biodiversity, and the biosphere as a whole,
- Open access to knowledge and information,
- Equity in access to the benefits of knowledge,
- Freedom of research and the development of the capacity of critical analysis and innovative creativity.

Budget cuts, staff reductions, and pressures on the science and technology system are contrary to the creation of a favorable environment for the development of critical, reflective, and interdisciplinary thinking. This has a negative impact on careers and projects, especially on the training of researchers and technicians. Restrictions on access to scientific publications severely affect the development of scientific and technological activity. Proposals to modify environmental laws, such as those concerning native forests or glaciers, are not consistent with the principle of caring for the environment, biodiversity, and the biosphere. Reducing scientific research to a merely utilitarian and lucrative science is contrary to the principle of freedom of research, to science as a source of generating knowledge and improvement of quality of life, and to the development of the capacity of critical analysis and creativity.

Highlighting the phrase from the CECTE foundational document that reads: "In times of social crisis, the peculiar notion usually prevails that when the economy falters, ethical standards are either not required or can be relegated to a secondary role," we urge the authorities of the national government and representatives of the Argentine people to stop the unjustified attacks on the institutions of the scientific system, to ensure the financing of universities and research institutions, and articulate a comprehensive plan of public policies that guarantee the necessary conditions for the development of the scientific and technological activity in our country respecting basic ethical principles.

<sup>i</sup>The National Committee on Ethics in Science and Technology (CECTE) was established in April 2001 by Resolution 004/2001 of the Secretariat of Science, Technology, and Innovation of Argentina

<sup>ii</sup> "Proposals for socially responsible science and technology" at <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/ciencia/cecte/proposiciones-cyt-socialmente-responsables>