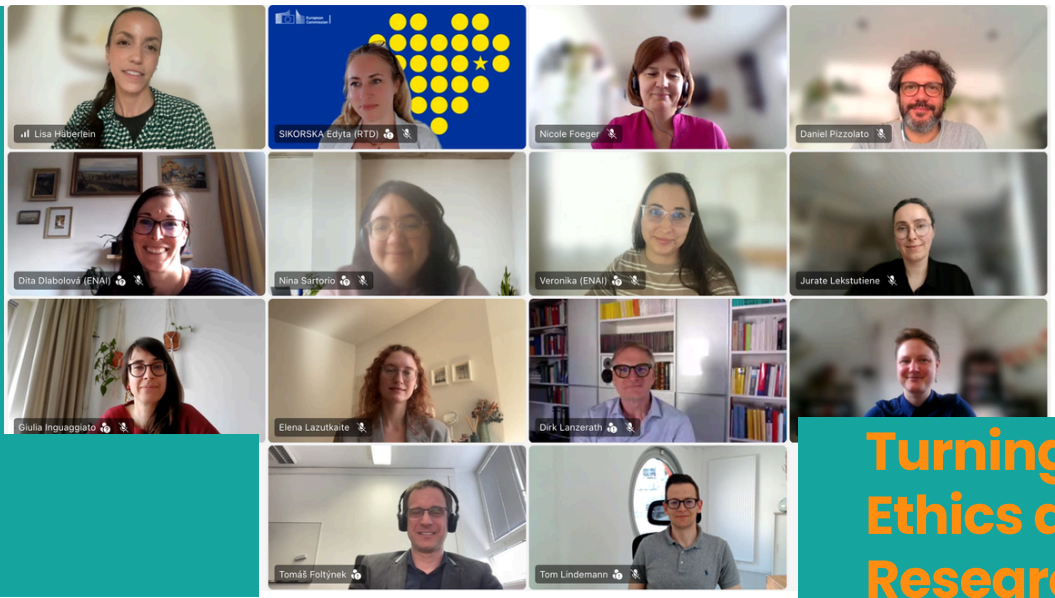
NOVEMBER 2026

simplify

IMPLEMENTING ETHICS AND INTEGRITY GOVERNANCE

NEWSLETTER



Turning Research Ethics and Research Integrity into Practice

From European ambition to national action: connecting people, practices and policies for stronger RE/RI governance

WELCOME TO THE FIRST SIMPLIFY NEWSLETTER

SIMPLIFY is moving from project launch into an active implementation phase. Across Europe, we are connecting networks, institutions and experts to strengthen the practical implementation of research ethics (RE) and research integrity (RI).

Our focus is increasingly on translating shared principles, existing knowledge and policy ambitions into sustainable practices at national and institutional levels. Through national initiatives, institutional pilots, peer-learning activities and collaborations with existing projects and networks, we are working to make RE and RI governance more accessible, coherent and responsive to real-world needs.

This first newsletter provides an overview of what SIMPLIFY has initiated, what is already taking shape across Europe, and where we are continuing to build momentum. It also highlights opportunities to contribute: because meaningful implementation depends on the experiences, questions and ideas of the people and institutions working with research ethics and integrity every day.

IN THIS ISSUE

- Building shared language and translating it into practice
- Connecting the European RE and RI community
- From European collaboration to national action
- What comes next - and how you can get involved

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Why SIMPLIFY?

Across Europe, a wealth of guidance, tools and expertise for RE and RI already exists. Yet putting these resources into practice remains challenging: institutional structures differ, implementation is uneven, and valuable knowledge is often difficult to navigate. SIMPLIFY brings the European RE/RI community together to change this.

As the operational platform for ERA Action 18 on Research Integrity and Ethics, it brings together six leading European networks: **EUREC**, **ENRIO**, **ALLEA**, **EARMA**, **ENAI** and **The Embassy of Good Science**. Each contributes distinct expertise, priorities and practical perspectives, spanning research ethics committees, research integrity offices, academies, research management professionals and wider academic communities.

By connecting these constituencies, SIMPLIFY creates opportunities to mobilise existing expertise, strengthen collaboration and engage a broader range of stakeholders. This approach recognises the diversity of national systems and institutional environments while creating a shared basis for implementation, mutual learning and continuous improvement.



SIMPLIFY and the ERA



Our ambition is to move beyond fragmented initiatives towards a more connected and mutually reinforcing European implementation environment — one in which responsible research is supported not only by recognised principles, but by the structures, expertise and institutional commitment needed to put them into practice.

Through a participatory Community of Practice, institutional mapping, training and real-world piloting, SIMPLIFY develops, tests and refines approaches that can support institutions in building sustainable RE/RI governance and practice.

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BUILDING SHARED LANGUAGE — AND TRANSLATING IT INTO PRACTICE

ENRIO–ALLEA WEBINAR • 10 SEPTEMBER 2026

A shared understanding of research integrity is essential for stronger research systems. The ENRIO–ALLEA webinar "Delineating Research Integrity: Towards a Common Understanding of Scope and Definitions" explored the boundaries of RI and how a clearer conceptual framework can support policy and practice across Europe. The event was especially timely as ALLEA revises the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and ENRIO launches its new Handbook on Key Research Integrity Concepts.



Together with key stakeholders, participants explored:

- What is the scope of research integrity?
- How should principles, concept, and practices relate to one another?
- Why does a common understanding matter for research integrity policies and practice?
- How can different stakeholders apply a shared conceptual framework?



What do we mean when we talk about Research Integrity?

As the discussion made clear, this is not merely an academic exercise in semantics. How RI is defined shapes what policies, training, and oversight mechanisms actually cover, and where responsibility sits between researchers, institutions, funders, and policymakers. A shared framework helps ensure consistency as the European Code, national codes, and institutional guidelines continue to evolve – together, rather than drifting apart.

- **The recorded webinar can be accessed here**
- **Link to ENRIO Handbook on Key Research Integrity Concepts**
- **Link to ALLEA's Code of Conduct**

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CONNECTING THE EUROPEAN RE and RI COMMUNITY !!!

Bonn • June 2026



Strengthening Ethics Review and Governance in the Social Sciences and Humanities

How can ethics review and governance better accommodate the diversity of research practices across the social sciences and humanities? This question shaped the workshop *"Building Trust in European Research: Evolving Models of Ethics Review and Governance in the Social Sciences and Humanities"*, co-organised by **EUREC**, **NEKS**, and SIMPLIFY.

The discussions examined how ethics review arrangements developed in different research traditions can respond to the methodological diversity, evolving research relationships and context-specific ethical questions encountered in social sciences and humanities (SSH) research. Exchanges between colleagues working in SSH fields and those with experience in biomedical ethics review offered an opportunity to examine where established approaches can be adapted, where different forms of support may be needed, and what can be learned across disciplines.

Several interconnected challenges emerged:
Ethics review arrangements need to account for research that is iterative, participatory or community-based, where ethical considerations may develop throughout the research process rather than being resolved at the point of approval. Researchers may also encounter questions involving politically sensitive settings, participant relationships, researcher safety, AI-assisted methods and data governance.

These issues raise broader questions about the role and recognition of RECs, their institutional resources and their capacity to provide support beyond formal review. They also highlight the importance of connecting procedural safeguards with institutional responsibility, research quality, public trust and meaningful engagement with research participants and communities.

For SIMPLIFY, the workshop contributed to an ongoing exchange about how ethics governance can become more responsive to diverse research environments while maintaining appropriate standards and accountability. It also reinforced the value of connecting existing expertise rather than developing solutions for different disciplines in isolation.

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Taking the discussion forward

The dialogue continued through contributions to the 38th ESPMH Conference, where SIMPLIFY partners explored the diversity of research ethics oversight models across Europe, drawing on insights collected through the EUREC network. The discussion addressed questions concerning the relationship between international convergence and national or discipline-specific approaches, the links between RE and RI, the influence of ethics review on research practice, and the implications of differing national governance frameworks for international collaboration. These questions connect directly with SIMPLIFY's ongoing work on the role of RECs within a broader ethics governance system.



In October, SIMPLIFY coordination met in Bonn to continue discussions on strengthening RE governance across Europe. The exchange focused on two complementary areas: the legal and policy frameworks shaping RECs in health-related research, and the evolving role of RECs within a broader ethics governance system that extends beyond the biomedical field.

These discussions address important questions for research institutions across Europe: how can committees better exchange information on relevant policies and emerging ethical challenges? Where is greater alignment in European approaches needed, and how can ethics governance respond to changing research environments, including developments in the social sciences, humanities and new and emerging technologies?



The discussions also highlight the importance of strengthening collaboration between RECs, supporting the development of shared approaches where appropriate, and ensuring that ethics governance remains responsive to the needs of researchers and society.

By connecting these perspectives, SIMPLIFY contributes to ongoing efforts to strengthen cooperation, support institutional learning and explore how research ethics governance can evolve in ways that promote responsible research and societal trust across diverse European contexts.

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ECEIA 2026: Bringing European Integrity Communities Together in Batumi

Batumi • September 2026

The **European Conference on Ethics and Integrity in Academia** (ECEIA 2026), held in Batumi, Georgia, brought together researchers, educators, practitioners and policymakers across Europe and beyond, particularly in EU-associated countries, to discuss challenges currently shaping research and academic integrity - from AI and authorship to ethical publishing and institutional responsibility.

A particular highlight was the opportunity to gain insights into Georgia's national **ETHICS** and **INTEGRITY** projects. For SIMPLIFY, connecting with projects that have worked to advance RE/RI in their national contexts means learning from their experiences, understanding different approaches to implementation and exchanging perspectives on shared challenges.



Wha'ts our take-away?

- Recognising the importance of bringing together projects and communities that are working towards similar goals in different national and institutional contexts.
- Exploring how experiences from different contexts can inform ongoing work on the implementation of RE/RI practices.

SIMPLIFY's participation also included its first General Assembly meeting, bringing together project partners and invited external participants, including National Contact Points connected with ERA Action 18. Discussions focused on national implementation of ERA-related activities, national action plans and opportunities for exchange between national actors and SIMPLIFY.

ECEIA 2026 was therefore an important opportunity to extend SIMPLIFY's network, connect with national initiatives and establish a basis for continued exchange and mutual learning on implementation.

The conference book of extended abstracts is available **here.**

Save the date: The next European Conference on Ethics and Integrity in Academia will take place in Dublin, Ireland, from 21st to 23rd June 2027. We hope to see you there!

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From Existing Resources to Practice: AI Ethics Training for Research Ethics Committees

Vilnius • October 2026

How can existing resources reach the people who need them and contribute to stronger research ethics practices? A training initiative in Vilnius provides a concrete example of how SIMPLIFY helps putting this principle into practice.



Organised within SIMPLIFY, the training brought together research ethics committee (REC) members to explore the ethical assessment of AI-related research, drawing on training materials developed through the ongoing **AIOLIA project**. Through practical exercises and case-based discussions, participants examined how ethical principles can inform the assessment of complex AI research scenarios.

The initiative reflects an important aspect of SIMPLIFY's implementation strategy: making existing resources more visible, supporting their uptake and encouraging their practical application. Rather than duplicating work already underway, SIMPLIFY builds on resources developed through other European initiatives such as AIOLIA and helps connect them with the professional communities they are intended to support.



The Vilnius training illustrates how collaboration between ongoing projects can strengthen the reach and continued use of existing materials. By supporting their dissemination and practical application, SIMPLIFY contributes to their long-term sustainability while addressing emerging ethical challenges in research.

Beyond the formal programme, the event also served as a valuable networking opportunity. Bringing together REC members from the Baltic and Nordic region as well as other parts of Europe, it allowed participants to connect with colleagues, exchange experiences and learn from different national approaches to ethics review. Such peer exchange is central to SIMPLIFY's aim of strengthening collaboration among RECs and fostering a more coherent European approach to RE governance.

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FROM EUROPEAN COOPERATION TO NATIONAL ACTION

ERA Action 18 • Kick-off of Peer Learning Groups • October 2026

Seven Peer-Learning Groups: Turning Shared Priorities into Joint Action

In collaboration with the European Commission and ERA Action 18, SIMPLIFY supports national activities through seven peer-learning groups (PLGs), bringing together network partners, ERA National Contact Points, ERA stakeholders and experts. Based on consultations with the ERA Action 18 National Contact Points, several topics of interest for 'peer learning' were identified, including the creation of national registry of contact points for RI and RE, RI & RE barometers, national roadmaps, the practical implementation of the ALLEA Code, RECs in the social sciences, humanities and other non-medical disciplines. In addition, two groups will further assess the needs of RI and RE actors in addressing research security questions and the impacts of artificial intelligence.

The groups provide a structured setting for practical cooperation, joint tool development, dialogue and peer exchange. They are intended to connect European policy priorities with national and institutional experience, helping stakeholders identify implementation gaps, exchange emerging practices and advance shared solutions. Together, the peer-learning groups aim to strengthen practical cooperation across Europe and support the development and implementation of resources and approaches that can be used, adapted and sustained in different settings.

National Implementation alongside the Peer-Learning Groups

In parallel with the peer-learning groups, SIMPLIFY is beginning to translate needs identified across different national contexts into targeted activities that can support RE/RI implementation. These first steps focus on fostering dialogue, building connections, strengthening local capacities and exploring opportunities for future collaboration and implementation. Collaboration with the **Ukrainian Research Integrity Office** (UkrRIO) is one example of these efforts. Discussions have explored opportunities for joint activities bringing together Ukrainian universities and international partners through workshops, seminars and training sessions on research integrity and academic integrity. These are intended to provide a platform for mutual learning, sharing good practices and strengthening collaboration among Ukrainian research institutions, while connecting national developments with wider European networks and experiences. Further ideas include shaping the development of RI policies and a strategic framework for the Ukrainian research landscape, supporting the development of RI training, contributing to discussions around a roadmap for RI education in Ukraine, and identifying opportunities to strenghten institutional RI structures and practices in collaboration with relevant national stakeholders. UkrRIO's proactive engagement makes it a frontrunner and an example of how national initiatives can help advance the uptake of responsible research practices!

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National Initiatives: Building on Existing Networks and Local Needs

Connecting European and national perspectives in Italy

SIMPLIFY was presented during the first national meeting of the Rete per l'Etica della Ricerca (RER), hosted by Sapienza Università di Roma, bringing the project's objectives and vision to a national forum for dialogue on responsible research.

The meeting brought together representatives from Italian universities and the Italian National Research Council (Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, CNR) to exchange perspectives on three increasingly interconnected areas: Research ethics, research integrity, and research security. Discussions highlighted the importance of strengthening institutional frameworks and fostering collaboration to address the evolving challenges of responsible research in an increasingly complex research environment.



The key takeaway from the meeting was the importance of connecting European-level initiatives with national and institutional experiences. Although research organisations operate within different governance systems and regulatory contexts, many face similar challenges in implementing RE/RI requirements. Dialogue with national networks such as RER can help identify these shared needs, exchange effective practices, and ensure that European solutions respond to the realities faced by institutions and research professionals.

The presentation of SIMPLIFY provided an opportunity to introduce the project's ambition to support research-performing and research-funding organisations, research ethics committees, research integrity offices, and research management professionals in simplifying procedures while maintaining high standards of ethics and integrity. Through the development of practical resources, guidelines, training materials, and opportunities for collaboration, SIMPLIFY aims to help institutions translate shared principles into effective, sustainable practices.

Towards a National Research Ethics Committee Network in Czechia: A New National Initiative "SURENET CZ" Launched

SIMPLIFY is delighted to support the launch of SURENET CZ ("SUpport of Research Ethics and NETworking in CZechia"), the first national initiative from one of our EUREC Network members supported through the project. The initiative aims to establish and sustain a national network of institutional RECs across Czechia, bringing together committees working not only in the health field, but also in the social sciences, humanities and technology. The network comes at an important moment for the Czech research community, with significant legal developments expected in the field of RE. Regular meetings and workshops will provide a space to exchange experience on topics such as informed consent, biobanking, interdisciplinary research, and the ethical implications of AI.

SURENET CZ illustrates the kind of bottom-up, context-sensitive development that SIMPLIFY seeks to encourage strengthening existing communities while creating lasting connections between institutions and professionals.

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Institutional Pilots: Developing Action Plans That Respond to Institutional Needs

SIMPLIFY's institutional pilots are central to testing how European resources and shared approaches can be translated into sustainable institutional practice.

Rather than applying a single model across organisations, SIMPLIFY works with pilot institutions to develop individualised action plans for implementation. These plans are being shaped collaboratively to reflect each institution's specific needs, existing structures, priorities and capacity for change.
This approach also supports one of SIMPLIFY's core objectives: understanding and addressing different levels of readiness for RE/RI implementation. Institutions vary in their governance arrangements, available expertise, existing procedures and experience with implementation. Identifying these differences is essential for developing support that is proportionate, practical and effective.

Emerging pilot plans already illustrate this diversity. For example, **University of Trento** is exploring an educational approach that connects RE and RI with collaborative research and research security training, two pressing issues also within the ERA. The activity will begin with the development of a library of training materials, with the aim of progressing towards institutional implementation and curriculum integration. Other pilot collaborations in countries including Ireland, Belgium, and the Netherlands are exploring institutional change in line with their respective contexts and priorities.

Different institutional approaches demonstrate how implementation can be tailored to various institutional circumstances while contributing to shared objectives. Through collaborative planning, institutional testing and structured peer learning, SIMPLIFY aims to identify practical measures that help organisations strengthen their capacities, address gaps and embed responsible research practices in their everyday work. Lessons from the pilots will inform the further development of project resources and help establish approaches that are usable, adaptable and sustainable beyond the project lifetime.



WHAT COMES NEXT FOR SIMPLIFY?

The coming months will be an important period as SIMPLIFY moves further into implementation. We will continue to connect communities, learn from existing practices, develop practical resources and test approaches with stakeholders.

CONNECT	Strengthen European, national and institutional communities working on RE/RI.
LEARN	Map and learn from existing governance structures, practices and implementation experiences.
DEVELOP	Create practical guidance, tools, training and other resources that respond to real institutional needs.
TEST	Work with research organisations and stakeholders to explore how approaches function in practice.
SUSTAIN	Build communities of practice and capacity that can continue beyond the project lifetime.
INFORM POLICY	Translate lessons from implementation into recommendations for stronger European RE/RI governance.

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JOIN THE SIMPLIFY JOURNEY

Your Experience Matters. Your Questions Can Help Shape What Comes Next!

SIMPLIFY is an open platform for exchange. We welcome researchers, research organisations, research ethics committees, research integrity offices, funders, policymakers, networks and other stakeholders interested in strengthening the practical implementation of RE/RI.

Become part of our Community of Practice



Would you like to be part of our activities?

Do you have questions, experiences, challenges or ideas that could contribute?

Whether you are developing a national initiative, implementing RE/RI practices at your institution, working with existing training materials, or simply looking for ways to learn from others, we would love to hear from you.

You can contribute by sharing:

- **Your experience:** What has worked or proved challenging in your institutional or national context?
- **Your questions:** Where do you see gaps in current RE/RI guidance, support or governance?
- **Your ideas:** What tools, training, collaborations or peer-learning activities would be useful?
- **Your initiatives:** Are you developing a national network, institutional pilot or implementation activity that could benefit from exchange with others?

Reach out and join us!

Contact the SIMPLIFY project team to share your perspectives, explore opportunities to collaborate or express your interest in upcoming activities: **simplify@eurecnet.eu**

Follow SIMPLIFY on **LinkedIn**

Visit the **SIMPLIFY project website**

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