



# CODE OF ETHICS

## *Proposal*

*To be brought forward for discussion and adoption at ANSE  
General Assembly 14, Berlin, September 22 & 23, 2012*

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## Preamble

Why could a Code of Ethics on ANSE level be useful? The answer is: because supervision is an inherently ethical activity. Imagine us flying by helicopter over the European landscape of supervision. It will shortly be obvious to us that all supervisors wield *power*: the power of their specific knowledge and competence, the power derived from their role and position vis-à-vis the supervisee, the power of formal judgment invested in them, the power of their professional experience, and so on.

Furthermore we would see that, to act in a just and careful manner, supervisors will invest in *trust*. They will not only show trust in their own competences, but see to it that they are *trustworthy* in the eyes of their supervisees, colleagues and constituents. They will radiate trust in the supervisee, in his or her potential, uniqueness and humanity, and they will actively substantiate it in *contact* with the supervisee (and others). As trust implies the recognition of shared humanity, the supervisee may be able to feel accepted, to feel at home with himself, with others and the world around him, and to be free to be (or become) what he wants to be.

Still hovering above the supervisory landscape we finally note how supervisors mediate power and trust by *responsiveness*. Supervisors will always feel *responsible* and will act accordingly. As integral part of their professional attitude, supervisors will take on the *responsibility* for their support to the learning process of the supervisee, for the maintenance of their skills and for the reliability of the profession they exercise. Supervisors will not shirk away from being taken to account. On the contrary, they will gladly respond to that.

In dealing with power, trust and responsibility, supervisors and coaches can only maintain their personal and professional integrity if they position themselves autonomously vis-à-vis constituents, clients and colleagues, at all times guarantee confidentiality, carefully handle the process of contracting and always avoid to become a party in conflicting interests. No one can serve more than one master at the time

On request of member organisations and affiliates, ANSE herewith presents its supranational ‘Code of Ethics’. To be practical only the term ‘supervision’ will be used, which for the purposes of this document is to be understood as also designating all other forms of professional guidance national organisations may include in their statutes, such as coaching, consultancy or organisational advice.

The ANSE Code of Ethics reflects the stage of professionalism and the high ethical standards member organisations strive after. Many national organisations and affiliates of the ANSE family have their own codes, most of them rather elaborate and some of them already for years. Other associations are in the process of formulating one.

The ANSE Code of Ethics is neither meant to compete with existing codes, nor to compel national organisations to replace them with this document or to rewrite them. As ANSE statutorily holds no formal power over national organisations this code can not have a compulsory effect – unless the General Assembly should otherwise decide. The ANSE Code of Ethics is therefore meant to serve as a *guideline* against which national organisations may measure their own codes of conduct, ethical guidelines and general moral principles. For that reason: the character of this document is *aspirational*. Its main purpose is to challenge supervisors and their professional associations all over Europe to *aspire* to always act according to the high ethical standards that are essential to the supervisory profession. It is a *code of ethics* and not a *code of conduct*. As such it is not meant to regulate in detail what supervisors should do or not do. This is left to the national organizations, which can be expected to have greater insight in the do’s and don’ts of local practice.

In order to be aspirational and to serve as a guideline, the ANSE Code of Ethics will therefore not repeat in detail what has already been formulated in various national codes. Given the cultural and institutional differences between member countries, and given the diverse tempi,

directions and ways of implementing and practising supervision, ANSE will restrict itself to the formulation of the fundamental ethics that underlie the profession we all share.

This document is organised as follows. Article 1 states the basic values ANSE departs from and the general principles ANSE holds to be imperative. Article 2 formulates the standards of just and careful conduct on the institutional dimension, such as the way ANSE and national organisations should deal with each other; both bilaterally and multilaterally. Article 3 sets forth the standards of codification: what should (national) codes at minimum prescribe? Last (but certainly not least), article 4 states the basic ethics on the individual level of everyday practice .

The ANSE Code of Ethics will be published on the website as a proposal, and formally brought forward to ANSE General Assembly 14, September 22 and 23, 2012 for discussion, amendment and adoption.

**ANSE Board,  
Vienna, March 3, 2011**

## **Article 1 - General Principles**

1. ANSE agrees to and always acts in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, UNDHR) and the protocols of the European Convention on Human Rights ((ECHR).
2. All people are to be treated as equals, to be respected in their integrity, authenticity and fundamental human rights, and to be approached in a just and careful manner.
3. ANSE takes supervision as a profession to be exercised independently, impartially and methodically.
4. ANSE takes supervision as an essentially ethical activity
5. ANSE holds the view that justice and care are essential values of our professional ethics, to be striven after in all supervisory practice.
6. ANSE recognizes and respects the historical, cultural, institutional and supervisory diversity of member organisations, affiliates and individual practitioners.
7. ANSE will act according to the principles and requirements set forth herewith, and challenges national organisations to agree to and always act in accordance with the general principles and requirements set forth herewith.

## **Article 2 - Institutional Requirements**

1. National organisations will act in accordance with the laws of their country. In the instance of any contradiction between the national law and the UNDHR and / or the ECHR, they will to best of their ability give preference to the latter.’
2. National organisations will act in accordance with their statutes and in accordance with their code of conduct or ethical guidelines. In the instance of any contradiction between these documents and the national law, or the UNDHR and / or the ECHR, they will to the best of their ability give preference to the latter.
3. National organisations will recognize and respect the historical, cultural, institutional and supervisory diversity within - and outside - ANSE
4. National organisations will be trustworthy in dealing with each other, adhering to commonly accepted and legally obliged business requirements.
5. National organisations will to the best of their ability enable, facilitate and support their members to professionally act as provided for in article 4 of this code.
6. National organisations will to the best of their ability enable, facilitate and support the education and maintenance of competences of their members.
7. National organisations will to the best of their ability enable, facilitate and support their members in holding themselves accountable to clients, constituents, colleagues and society at large.
8. National organisations will to the best of their ability facilitate debate, discussion and reflection on ethical topics amongst their members.

## **Article 3 - Codification Requirements**

1. National organisations will develop, maintain and improve a code of ethics, preferably in line with the ANSE Code of Ethics.
2. National organisations will regularly and critically compare their code of ethics with those of sister organisations and with the Ethical Code of ANSE.
3. National organisations will in their code of ethics at minimum provide for:
  - 3.1.1. Professional independence

- 3.1.2. Professional impartiality
- 3.1.3. The protection of the integrity of clients and constituents
- 3.1.4. Confidentiality
- 3.1.5. The avoidance of conflicting interests
- 3.1.6. Proper and legally correct contract procedures
- 4. National organisations will to the best of their ability make their code of ethics known to their members, to relevant educational arrangements, to clients and client systems, to all other interested parties and to society at large.
- 5. National organisations will to the best of their ability enforce their code of ethics, and develop and maintain independent arrangements<sup>1</sup> for arbitration and judgement.

#### **Article 4 - Professional Requirements**

1. Supervisors are to be fully aware of the basic values of their trade, as set forth in the statutes and code of ethics of the national organisation they are a member of, and in the ANSE Code of Ethics.
2. Supervisors are bound by the code of ethics of the national organisation they are a member of.
3. Supervisors will always serve the interests and protect the integrity of their clients and constituents to the best of their ability.
4. Supervisors are to exercise their trade autonomously, impartially, and confidentially.
5. Supervisors will develop and maintain their competences to the best of their ability.
6. Supervisors will hold themselves always accountable to clients, constituents and colleagues for the means and methods they apply and for the quality thereof.

### **Appendix**

#### **1. Sources**

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<sup>1</sup> This provision does not necessarily entail that such an arrangement should be positioned *outside* of the institution, organisation or association. In most cases the appointment of an independent chairperson, preferably one qualified to hold the position of judge, will suffice to guarantee independence.

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## **2. List of abbreviations**

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| 1. ANSE family           | - all member and affiliated organisations within ANSE           |
| 2. ECHR                  | - European Convention on Human Rights                           |
| 3. National organisation | - any national association, union or institution of supervisors |
| 4. UNDHR                 | - Universal Declaration of Human Rights                         |

**ANSE Board  
Vienna, March 3, 2011**