

**APART (Professional Association of Traceable Reputation's Auditors)**

**CODE OF ETHICS**

*(approved by the "Comitato di Gestione Provvisorio" - elected "ex point 5" of the Deed of Incorporation dated 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 2017- during the meeting of 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 2017*

**Art.1 – Objectives**

The following Code of Ethics aims to define the rules of behaviour for its Members in order for them to carry out their professional activity in harmony with the aims and objectives of the Association.

**Art. 2 – Board of Arbitrators**

The Board of Arbitrators, nominated by the Assembly, is responsible for verifying that the Code of Ethics is being enforced. It must provide its correct interpretation and censor the mistakes and breeches by the Members within the membership and professional contexts.

**Art. 3 – Relationship of the APART Member with their colleagues**

1. Each Member must always maintain a spirit of loyalty and collaboration with their colleagues. Therefore, they must refrain from using illicit means - such as denigrating others' skills or offering benefits outside the working relationship - in order to obtain a work contract.
2. Members must not try to forcefully replace a colleague that has been awarded a work contract by the Client. In the case that a Member is called to fulfil a work contract awarded to another colleague, they must inform the latter in agreement with the Client.
3. Members getting work contracts thanks to the work carried out by others - that is obtaining a work contract in a sector in which they lack the relevant skills - and making it known that they belong to the Association, are committing an act of professional misconduct.
4. Members registered with a Professional Association must respect the Code of Ethics of their Association. Any verified violations to the said Code must be reported to the Board of Arbitrators, who will evaluate the relevance of the violation with respect to this Code of Ethics.

**Art. 4 – The APART Member's relationship with the Association**

1. Members - who are also registered with CROP NEWS ONLUS ASSOCIATION and recognize and follow its Statute and Regulations – consider APART their point of reference in developing their abilities and professional skills with regards to the creation of reputational ratings and profiles, and they must follow the principles of dignity, moral integrity, objectivity and loyalty when relating to other Members and Clients.
2. Members must be willing to exchange general information and information regarding their professional work within the context of the Association.
3. Members accept and follow the Statute, the APART Code of Ethics, the decisions made by the statutory bodies, as well as any agreements made between APART and other professional organizations and associations at a national and international level.
4. Members must be up-to-date with the payment of the annual membership fee required to be registered with the Association.
5. Members pledge to carry out programs for professional updating in accordance with the Association's guidelines within the required period and to report it to the Association.

#### **Art. 5 – Confidentiality Obligations**

Members must treat all information, not specifically destined for public dissemination and acquired for a professional assignment, with the highest level of discretion.

#### **Art. 6 – Membership Assignments**

- 1. Members cannot operate under the APART name unless a specific mandate is granted by the Governing Council or by an authorized Associative Body.**
- 2. Members who have received and accepted a mandate, an assignment or a nomination by the Association must honour it with professionalism, pursuing the assigned objectives with determination, dedication and within the required period.**

#### **Art. 7 – Professional Assignments – Obligations**

- 1. In the fulfilment of their professional activity, Members:**
  - a. Must only carry out assignments relevant to their specific competences, applying the Association Regulations where expected for the specific task. Members cannot be replaced by a third party, unless it has been formally agreed with their Client. Members can be assisted by their subordinates and colleagues, who must operate following the Member’s orders and must act under their control and responsibility.**
  - b. Must operate with competence, diligence, caution and regard of the existing rules, in line with the Association’s documents.**
  - c. Must carry out their assignment within the reasonable timeframe necessary to carry out such tasks.**
- 2. Members who have accepted an assignment must carry it out until its completion. However, if they cannot complete their assignment due to an event of force majeure or for another legitimate reason, they must promptly inform their Client and facilitate the job of their successor.**

#### **Art. 8 – Personal Benefits**

- 1. Members can use their APART membership only as a qualification title, and not to obtain underserved personal benefits unlawfully.**
- 2. Members operating for and on behalf of APART must do so on a voluntary basis. Specific assignments and related payments can be entrusted to Members only if granted by the Governing Council or by an authorized Associative Body.**

#### **Art. 9 – Professional Fees and/or Compensation**

- 1. Payments for professional assignments and/or compensation must take into account: the price list set by the Association, the existing laws and the market rates. Members must charge according to the difficulty and complexity of the assignment and the level of responsibility undertaken.**
- 2. When more Members form a board of experts, each of them determines their own fee according to their actual participation in the assignment.**

#### **Art. 10 – Disciplinary Measures**

- 1. In case of a violation of the Statute, of the APART Code of Ethics or of the interests of the Association, which has been reported either by at least one Member, by an official procedure of the Governing Council, by the Supervisory Board or by a third party at which**

the professional activity of the Member is aimed, the Board of Arbitrators will start an investigation informing the Member of such investigation.

2. Once it has heard from all parties involved, if the party is found guilty, the Board of Arbitrators will take one of the following disciplinary actions:
  - a. Reprimand
  - b. Censorship
  - c. Suspension
  - d. Dissolution of the relationship with the Association

The sanction is enforced only after hearing from the accused Member. The communication must be in writing and, if the Board of Arbitrators deems appropriate, the Member must appear personally in front of the Board, after sufficient notice is given.

**Reprimand:** it consists in reprimanding the Member for the fault committed and in exhorting them not to do it again.

**Censorship:** it consists of a formal declaration to the Member regarding the fault committed and the consequent reproach.

**Suspension:** formal act of temporary suspension of the Member's relationship with the Association. The duration of the suspension is determined by the Board of Arbitrators, and it can last up to six months.

A Member's suspension also takes place in the event of:

- Interdiction from holding public office
- Issue of an arrest warrant

At the end of their suspension, the Member is admitted back in the Association without reserve as long as they are up-to-date with the payment of the Association fees.

#### **Art. 11 – Dissolution of the relationship with the Association**

The dissolution is approved as a consequence of non-compliance with this Code, only after hearing from the Member, and it comes into effect in order to safeguard APART's dignity and professional décor.

The withdrawal of the subscription to the Association takes place in the event of serious or repeated violations regarding what the Member formally agreed to at the time of subscription, as well as in relation to what is specified in the selection process criteria and qualifications of APART Members.

It must be stressed that to renew the subscription to ASSOCIAZIONE CROP NEWS ONLUS, every year the Member must provide the Association with the authorization/power of attorney to request and collect the following certificates:

- A. **Criminal Record:** must be clean. In the event of a crime reported in the certificate, APART Governing Council reserves the right to NOT expel the Member after a careful evaluation of the type and seriousness of the crime.
- B. **Pending Charges (in the place/s of residency of the past 10 years):** must be clean. In the event of a crime reported in the certificate, APART Governing Council reserves the right to NOT expel the Member after a careful evaluation of the type and seriousness of the crime.
- C. **Preventive Measures:** must be clean. In the event of a preventive measure reported in the certificate, APART Governing Council reserves the right to NOT expel the Member after a careful evaluation of the type and seriousness of the measure.

The withdrawal of the Member's subscription to the Association also takes places in the event of:

- A. **Failure to comply with the APART Code of Ethics**

**B. Failure to use the APART logo appropriately**

**C. Failure to subscribe or renew the subscription to CROP NEWS ONLUS ASSOCIATION in the amount of Euro €1,00 (one-off for the subscription, plus one annual payment for the renewal) paid by the Member directly to APART.**

**Furthermore, another motive causing the dissolution of the relationship with the Association is in the event that the Member's behaviour causes damage to the image of the Association.**

**Art. 12 – Disciplinary Proceeding's Penalties**

**In the case that the disciplinary procedure isn't started by an official procedure and is judged to be unfounded, the Board of Arbitraries will evaluate whether there are the premises to adopt a disciplinary sanction against the Member who initiated the procedure.**

**Art. 13 – No Appeal against the Decisions of the Board of Arbitraries**

**The decisions of the Board of Arbitraries are binding and not open to appeal.**