CODE OF ETHICS

Comparative Maritime Law is a key periodical in maritime law and the law of the sea not only in Croatia but also in the region. As an open access law periodical, it focuses on publishing peer-reviewed academic and professional articles, and some other important papers: professional translations of international legal instruments and documentation, digests of leading domestic, foreign, and international court and arbitral decisions, book reviews, and reports from relevant meetings, conferences, symposia and similar events. The journal is published annually by the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts: Adriatic Institute. The aim of this Code of Ethics is to support all those involved in publishing the journal: the editor-in-chief, the editorial board, authors, and peer reviewers. This Code of Ethics is established in accordance with the COPE Code of Conduct and Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors (2011), the COPE Guidelines on Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing (2015), and the Rules for Publishing of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (2007).

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The publisher nominates the editor-in-chief who convenes the editorial board as a body composed of members with appropriate qualifications who can actively contribute to the development and good management of the journal. The editor-in-chief is responsible for the choice of articles and other materials submitted for publishing in the journal. The editor-in-chief’s decision is based on the paper’s importance, originality and clarity, the study’s validity, and its relevance to scientists and the readership of the journal. The editor-in-chief’s deputy has the same responsibility while executing the editor-in-chief’s functions. Editorial decisions are not affected by the origins of the manuscript, including the nationality, ethnicity, political beliefs, or race or religion of the authors. The journal supports freedom of expression, taking into consideration the legal requirements regarding libel, copyright infringement, and plagiarism. Any mistakes, incorrect or misleading statements must be corrected immediately and with due care. The editor-in-chief consults with the members of the editorial board and the peer reviewers nominated by the Department of Social Sciences of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. No unpublished material should be used without the express written approval of the author. The editor-in-chief is responsible for the integrity and confidentiality of the author’s work during the review procedure and in preparation for publishing. The editor-in-chief must not have any personal, financial, or other relations that would place him or her in a conflict of interest regarding editorial decisions.

The tasks and duties of the editors are to support and promote the journal, the preliminary review of the manuscripts submitted for publication, the pursuit for the best authors and materials, the writing of the editorials, and attending and contributing to the editors’ meetings. The editor-in-chief must consult with the members of the editorial board at least once a year to discuss the management of the journal and any changes or improvements in its policies, taking into account new professional and scientific criteria in editing and publishing the journal. The editors should strive to meet the needs of the readers and authors, maintaining a high standard of quality of the journal. The procedures regarding the nomination of peer-reviewers and the publishing of individual submissions in the journal are regulated under the Rules of Publishing of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, which
must be observed by the editors. The best practice of editing includes the notice of the date of submission of the paper and the date of its acceptance for publication. The editorial board provides and regularly reviews the Guidelines for Authors and the Peer-review Form. It also authorises a person to publish the relevant information about the journal on the designated website, as well as to cater for the electronic backup and preservation of access to the journal’s content. Information about the journal published on the internet clearly notes the copyright and licence terms.

2. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF REVIEWERS

Peer reviewers (hereinafter: reviewers) assist the editor-in-chief in making editorial decisions and through editorial communications with the authors assist them in improving their papers. The reviewers should respond in a reasonable time, and only agree to review a manuscript if they are confident they can return their review within a mutually agreed timeframe. They should inform the editorial board if this might not be the case. The reviewers must inform the editorial board if there is any conflict of interest (for instance, personal relations, financial interests, or any other circumstance that might affect their impartiality). The final decision on conflict of interest lies with the editor-in-chief. The manuscripts received for review and the information or ideas obtained through the peer review must be kept confidential. They must not be shown to or discussed with others except as authorised by the editorial board, and in no case may they be used for personal advantage. All academic and professional papers undergo double-blind peer review in accordance with the Rules for Publishing of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. The reviewers must not contact the authors directly but only through the journal’s editorial board. The reviewers should express their views clearly with supporting arguments. They should be objective and constructive in their comments, which will help the authors improve their manuscripts. A reviewer should also call the editor’s attention to any substantial similarity or overlap between the manuscript under consideration and any other published paper that they have personal knowledge of.

3. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF AUTHORS

Each piece submitted for publication represents a work by one or more authors who have substantially contributed to the forming and interpretation of the main ideas of the work and research results. The authors should present their ideas, statements, and results clearly, honestly and without falsification or inappropriate data manipulation. They must describe their methods clearly and unambiguously, and cite sources so that others may confirm them. Whilst the authors are given freedom of expression, they must ensure the originality of the contents of their papers. If in the writing of their papers the authors use any texts, results or work of other authors, they must appropriately refer to the original sources according to the customary rules of citation. The authors must not publish a manuscript on the same research simultaneously in more than one journal. There may be an exception, with the permission of the editorial board and with a clear reference to where the work was originally published. The authors must be familiar with the standards of journal publishing, licensing and open access, and edit and submit their manuscripts in accordance with the Guidelines for Authors.
4. MEASURES AGAINST UNETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

In its editorial practice, there is a set of measures taken to preserve the ethics and quality of works published in the journal. In the event of misunderstandings or non-compliance by authors or reviewers with the accepted standards, the following steps are taken:

1) Informing authors or reviewers: In the initial stages, an approach is taken to inform authors or reviewers in the event of misunderstandings or non-compliance with the accepted standards. This may involve providing additional information or instructions to enhance understanding and implementation of the ethical guidelines.

2) Written warning: If unacceptable behaviour persists, authors or reviewers may be contacted in writing to highlight the misconduct and for a warning to be issued. This step aims to emphasise the seriousness of the situation and to encourage a change in behaviour.

3) Publication of an editorial with details: In more extreme situations, the editorial team may decide to publish an editorial with details of the inappropriate behaviour. This step can have serious consequences for the reputation of the author or reviewer.

4) Letter to an institution: If the author or reviewer is employed by a specific institution, a letter can be sent to the institution where the author is employed to inform it of the inappropriate behaviour.

5) Retraction of the contribution: In the most severe cases, a decision can be made to formally retract the contribution from the journal and inform the institution where the author or reviewer is employed.

6) Imposition of an embargo: As an additional measure, the editorial team may impose an embargo on the contributions of the individual for a specified period to restrict their participation in the journal.

7) Informing relevant authorities: In extreme cases, if warranted by the situation, relevant authorities may be informed about the specific case and its outcome for further investigation and action.

These steps constitute an integrated system to preserve the ethics and integrity of scientific and professional publications.