Concerns:

Timekeeping within the framework of research projects and mandates

EPFL declaration addressed to public and private bodies financing research, and to economic and industrial partners.

Considering the Recommendation of the Commission of the European Communities of 11 March 2005 on the European Charter for Researchers and on a Code of Conduct for recruitment of Researchers, and particularly the “priority that should be given to the organization of working and training conditions in the early stage of the researchers careers, as it contributes to the future choices and attractiveness of career in R&D”:

It is neither realistic nor appropriate to attempt to make the slightest distinction - in the case of PhD candidates, assistants and junior scientific staff - between periods of time devoted to teaching, continuing education and professional development, research and dissemination of results.

Teaching is essential to the training of junior researchers but teaching duties have to be kept to an appropriate level, one that does not prevent them from carrying out research activities according to the working plan and within the budget limits agreed upon between the EPFL and the funders.

Consequently, when justifying the effort actually devoted to a research project and the salaries paid from the corresponding credits or subsidies, EPFL requires the person concerned (PhD candidate, assistant or junior scientific staff) to keep a record of the number of full, and possibly half, working days. This record will be kept on a monthly basis and will be signed jointly by the person concerned and the person responsible for the project and for the management of the corresponding funds.

These monthly records should be considered equivalent to time sheets for those bodies and funding agencies that require them.

It follows that:

- one person-month corresponds to 18 full working days, after deduction of vacation entitlement and public holidays and taking into account the average rate of absence for medical reasons;
- owing to the hazards and unpredictable nature of scientific research, the initial budget, as submitted with the application or as initially defined within a contract, can be based only on an estimation of the number of person-months necessary for the carrying out of the project and its Work Packages (WPs). All allocations between projects and other Work Packages will thus be balanced a posteriori by the person responsible for the project and corresponding funds, within the limits of the approved budget. The scientific/technical reports concerning the project constitute the sole justification;

- this declaration forms an integral part of any research contract or mandate with a public or private partner that requires time sheets.

Fait à Lausanne, le 13 septembre 2010

Benoît Deveaud-Plédran
Dean for Research, EPFL