

Sensitive Partnerships Committee

UNICA IRO Meeting – 08.11.2023

Presentation of ULB tools



Context

- ULB defines itself as [...] :
 - *a committed university*
 - *[that] has constantly demonstrated its independence and its commitment to the great struggles for democracy, individual liberties and human rights;*
- Strategic objectives of our Rector:
 - Strengthen and stimulate our international presence and visibility
 - Ensure that our international relations are consistent with our values

ULB's Tools

- Preventive dimension : Human rights assessment
- Reactive dimension: Human rights Clause
- Sensitive Partnerships Committee
- Dual use Committee

Preventive dimension: Human rights assessment

- The primary responsibility for evaluating a partnership lies with the members of the university community involved in creating new partnerships;
 - Student exchange agreements
- The Policy does not target entire countries, it focuses on the partner and the object of the cooperation;

The partner

Is there a risk that the partner institution or organisation could directly or indirectly contribute to a serious or systematic violation of human rights ?

Sub-questions:

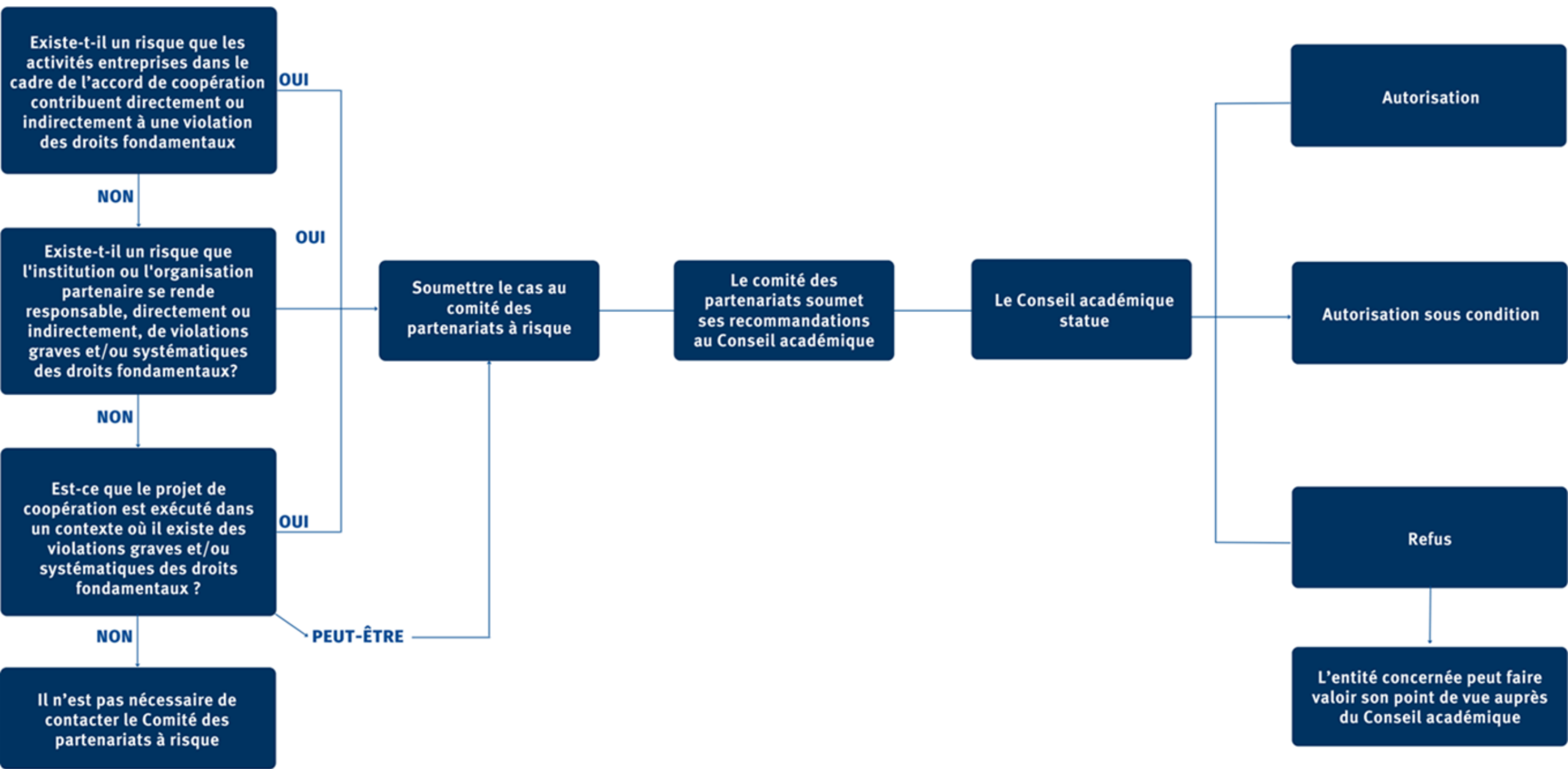
- Has the partner been involved in human rights violations in the recent past?
- Has the partner been accused of being involved in violations of human rights in the recent past?
- Is the partner active in a sector linked to violations of human rights?
- Does the partner come from a region known for its violations of human rights?

The activities

Is there a risk that the activities undertaken under the agreement will contribute directly or indirectly to a violation of human rights?

Sub-questions:

- Could the cooperation as such lead to serious and/or systematic violations of human rights?
- Could the results of the cooperation lead to serious and/or systematic violations of human rights (e.g.: the results of the cooperation, particularly in the context of joint research, would provide the partner with a means of committing violations)?
- Is there a risk that human rights will be violated as part of the project?



Reactive dimension: Human rights Clause

- Inclusion of a clause in student exchange agreements
- Reaction tool if the breaches occur after signature or if they were not known when the partnership was signed
- Mutual clause
- The policy does not rule out dialogue

«Both parties subscribe, within their partnership, to the respect of human rights and academic freedom. Each of the parties may terminate this agreement with immediate effect if the other party is responsible for a serious or systematic violation of human rights or academic freedom».

Sensitive Partnerships Committee

- Committee created in April 2021 by the Vice-Rector for External Relations
- Composed of experts from geographical or thematical areas
 - Will be changed in the renewing of the composition
- Committee makes recommendations to the Academic Board
- Separated from Dual use committee

Challenges

- Application of a common red line
 - National level → creation of a single desk
- How to sensibilise the community?