

Safe spaces policy at the Green European Foundation

Intro

The Green European Foundation (GEF) works to strengthen participative and pluralist democracy in Europe by providing political education and acting as a hub for ideas, debate, training and exchange. Through its activities, GEF promotes the vision of a more just, sustainable, social and democratic Europe, while connecting grassroots movements, civil society, academia and political actors in Europe and beyond the European Union.

As a feminist, open and free space for ideas, GEF is committed to ensuring that its values are reflected not only in *what* it does, but also in *how* it works. This Safe Spaces policy outlines how GEF applies these values in practice across its activities and working environments. It represents a commitment to creating safe and brave spaces that foster learning, personal and collective development, meaningful connection, respectful exchange and empowerment for all those involved in GEF's work.

This Policy applies to all GEF staff, board members, consultants, partners, facilitators, volunteers and participants in any GEF-related activity, including online platforms and communication channels.

The core values behind this policy

At the Green European Foundation, we are committed to creating safe and brave spaces grounded in feminist and anti-oppressive values. These are spaces where people feel welcomed, respected and able to participate fully, free from discrimination, harassment or exclusion. We commit to building these spaces based on the following values:

- **Consent**

Participation, interactions and boundaries must be respected at all times. Full consent is a clear and voluntary agreement to engage in a specific activity. It is informed, specific, freely given and reversible.

Informed - People can only consent to something if they have all the necessary information to make an informed decision.

Specific - saying yes to one thing (e.g. having a drink) does not mean saying yes to other things (e.g. kissing).

Freely given - Consenting is a choice people make without pressure, manipulation, or under the influence (e.g. due to alcohol or drugs).

Reversible - Anyone can change their mind about what they feel like doing, anytime.

- **Empowerment**
Creating conditions that enable people to exercise autonomy and self-determination, participate meaningfully in decisions that affect them, and access the resources needed to live with dignity. This includes actively redistributing power, supporting collective and community-based action, and prioritising the voices and leadership of those who are marginalised or underrepresented, including younger generations.
- **Feminism**
A commitment to challenging patriarchal systems and intersecting forms of oppression, and to promoting gender justice, power transformation, reflection and collective liberation.
- **Care and solidarity**
Prioritising wellbeing, dignity and mutual support, and recognising emotional labour, vulnerability and different needs as part of the collective.
- **Awareness of power**
Transform power within and power with towards recognising and addressing unequal power relations that shape who is heard, who decides and who feels safe to participate.
- **Accountability and fairness**
Taking responsibility for actions and their impacts, responding to harm in a transparent and restorative manner, and committing to learning and change, even when that means confronting uncomfortable truths. Applying rules, processes and decisions consistently and transparently, while taking into account different needs, contexts and structural inequalities.
- **Zero tolerance**
Harassment, discrimination, violence and abusive behaviour are not accepted under any circumstances and will be addressed promptly and seriously.

Prohibited behaviours - definitions

Harassment is any improper or unwelcome conduct that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence, humiliation, or intimidation. GEF will not tolerate any harassment on the basis of gender, race, religion, political affiliation, class, social, economic, cultural, linguistic, age, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability or any other discriminatory reason.

Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, whether it is verbal, nonverbal, or physical, including written and electronic communications, and may occur between persons of any gender. Sexual harassment can take many forms, including unwanted sexual gestures, sexual jokes or innuendo, threatening reprisals after denial of sexual advances, verbal sexual advances or propositions, or physical conduct such as touching, assault, or impeding movement.

Abuse is an action which inflicts harm or fails to prevent harm. This includes abuse of power, including but not limited to situations involving professional seniority, position or age.

Bullying is a behaviour which is repeated and intended to hurt another either physically or emotionally.

Encouraging minors to take any illegal or psychoactive substances, including alcohol.

Tone policing, using offensive language, continuously misgendering an individual, and sharing potentially triggering content, among other behaviours.

Use and abuse of hard alcoholic beverages during programme hours.

The above are a non-comprehensive list. Any intentional behaviour that is not mentioned above but undermines the physical, mental and emotional well-being of other individual(s) will be considered as a breach of this policy.

Golden rules for creating a safe and brave space

1. Make space/take space – challenge yourself to **step out of your pattern**.
2. **Challenge the idea or the practice** being voiced, not the person voicing them.
3. Everyone has **equal worth**, and all perspectives are equally valid as long as they are expressed in a way that is respectful of others.
4. Everyone is an **individual**, not just a representative of a group.
5. ‘I statements’ – **own your own perspective** – don’t project it.
6. **Honour differences** and centre them when appropriate (language, culture, orientation, race, class, gender, ability etc.).
7. **Active listening** – be attentive, avoid interrupting others, and address people in the manner they request (using their preferred pronouns).
8. Always express your point of view in a way that is **respectful** of others.
9. **Inclusion matters** – take steps to ensure everyone can participate as equally as possible.
10. **Open communication** – share any concerns, fears, or barriers you are facing that might inhibit your full participation and be mindful of those expressed by others.

Measures for safety and security

To ensure this Safe Spaces Policy is translated into action, GEF will:

- ➔ Share information with all stakeholders involved in activities to ensure co-ownership and a culture of safety.
- ➔ Always ensure there's a Safe Space Point of Contact for all events and that this is communicated to participants clearly.
- ➔ Train confidential counsellors within the organisation to prevent harm and response to situation of breach of this policy.
- ➔ Run yearly prevention trainings and ad-hoc ones to prepare externals involved in the delivery of trainings or events.
- ➔ Consider and apply exclusion processes for those in breach of the Safe Spaces Policy during or after events, including from future events organised by GEF.
- ➔ Receive and address reports submitted before, during or after an event.

What if you want to report a breach of the policy?

At GEF, we encourage everyone to report situations that feel unsafe. In case a situation arises, a report can be made:

- By contacting the Confidential Counsellor and/or the Event Point of Contact (see below) at any point before, during or after an event and/or
- By submitting [this form](#) before, during or after an event. The form can be submitted as anonymous, however not leaving an email address or phone number might prevent GEF from further communicating about the issue raised and/or follow up more specifically. The Confidential Counsellor is the only person with access to the form responses.

Appropriate action may include, but is not limited to:

- Requesting the person causing harm to immediately stop the unwanted behaviour.
- Supporting the person having experienced discrimination and/or harassment, based on their choices and preferences; and with confidentiality.
- Request the person causing harm to leave the event and/or refusing registration at next events.
- Inform - without imposing - of relevant internal and/or external support possibilities.

- Conveying a report to the Member Foundation or Partner with jurisdiction over the person accused of harassment for appropriate follow up actions.
- Contact relevant authorities when appropriate.

These procedures will be guided by principles of privacy, confidentiality, and fairness, with a strong commitment to avoiding revictimisation. All reasonable steps will be taken to minimise distress to the alleged survivor, including avoiding unnecessary repetition of accounts or intrusive questioning. The privacy of both the survivor and the alleged harasser will be respected, the process will be handled confidentially, and the survivor's choices and preferences will be central to how the procedures are carried out. Confidentiality may be limited where there is a legal obligation to report or where there is a risk of serious harm.

What to do when you are a bystander?

As potential bystanders - people who are witnessing incidents of inappropriate behaviour, including discriminative behaviours and/or harassment - we can make a real difference by becoming active.

Here are some techniques we can use to intervene - if we feel safe to do it:

Direct intervention: can be risky – Avoid engaging in dialogue, debate, or an argument with the person who is exhibiting inappropriate behaviour – to avoid escalation. Focus your attention on assisting the person who was harmed, instead of engaging with the person doing the harm.

Distract: derail the incident by interrupting it. Talk to the one targeted. Ignore the person who is exhibiting inappropriate behaviour and engage directly with the person who is being harmed. Talk about something completely unrelated.

Delegate: ask a third party for help when intervening. Do not do it alone. Look for anyone who is ready and willing to help. You can always get in touch with the Point of Contact, if no one else feels comfortable to assist you. When you delegate someone to help you, try to tell them as clearly as possible, what you are witnessing and how you would like them to help.

Delay: if we cannot act in the moment, we can still check in on the person who has been harmed after the incident. Many inappropriate incidents happen in passing or very quickly, and it is not always possible to intervene in the moment. Let us not ignore what happened and move on. We can help the person by speaking to them afterwards, and redirect them to find help, if they wish.

Document: take note on an instance of inappropriate behaviour. Always ask the person who was harmed what they want you to do with the notes. In order to protect the person who was harmed, do not share videos of the incident.

To find support in any of these interventions, do not hesitate to refer to the Point of Contact.

Contact of the Confidential Counsellor:

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She/Her

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Personal data collected under this Policy will be processed confidentially and in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and used only for handling the reported concern.