

# Anti-harassment, bullying and discrimination policy

for members of the  
E3 International Agency Network

**Dear members of the E3 International Agency Network,**

The spirit of E3 is to create a safe, inclusive business-focused community. Therefore, safety and integrity are essential elements of the E3 networking culture. For us, the members of the E3 Mancom, it is of utmost importance to ensure no conflict with this spirit. For this, we need the support of our members. We can only ensure such a networking environment together. As members of the E3 Mancom, we are aware of our function as role models in this regard.

The relationships among our members are defined by mutual respect and trust. We do not tolerate violations of the law, harassment or discrimination. All members of E3, without exception, have full personality rights and the right to protect their mental and physical integrity, especially in an E3 context.

This Policy exists to uphold a safe, positive networking environment among all members of E3. It outlines standards for our networking community and all members are obligated to adhere to the principles defined in this document. Legal and cultural norms vary from country to country and region to region around the world and even within a country or region. It can sometimes be difficult to ascertain what is acceptable in all circumstances. This policy conveys important information about what is considered to be harassment by E3.

Openly addressing potential issues is expressly welcomed. It is the responsibility of all members to be open to discussions about networking practices and environments.

Should you have or notice an issue, there is always someone who can help you. They are described in this Policy.

We thank you for contributing to the spirit of E3 networking culture through your personal conduct.

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## 1. Introducing mutual respect & trust

Every individual and member of the E3 network shall be treated fairly, respectfully and with dignity. We are committed to diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunities, and encourage a respectful and tolerant networking environment in which everyone's unique value is recognized.

We do not allow or tolerate sexual harassment, discrimination, racism, bullying, abuse of power, intimidation, threats, or any other form of harassment.

## 2. Definitions

### **2.1. What is Discrimination?**

Discrimination means treating an individual or a particular group of people differently, especially worse than how you treat others. This can be based on personal characteristics such as race, nationality or ethnic origin, gender, gender identity or gender expression, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital or parental status, age, disability, religion or belief, or any other characteristic. Discrimination violates the dignity of the affected person and their fundamental rights. A serious problem that affects people all over the world.

### **2.2. What is Sexual Harassment?**

Definitions of sexual harassment vary depending on the source. Legal definitions sometimes even change within a country, and these definitions can even look different from those that NGOs, women's rights organizations, or therapists use.

Hence, the following characteristics serve to define sexual harassment:

- Unwelcome behavior that is either tied to one's gender (or gender identity) or is sexual in nature. This includes both uninvited physical contact and verbal statements with sexual innuendo, e.g., advances, remarks, gestures, actions, expressions
- Violating a person's dignity in a way that the behavior makes the person feel uncomfortable, humiliated, or intimidated.
- Often has demeaning, objectifying, or threatening undertones
- Can cause emotional, psychological, and/or social disturbance
- About power and can happen regardless of the targeted person's self-presentation, clothing, body language etc.

## 2. Definitions

Some examples of sexual harassment:

- Making sexually suggestive comments or jokes
- Following someone around, ignoring rejection(s), asking someone out on dates multiple times
- Sending sexually suggestive e-mails, text messages, photos, etc.
- Intentionally touching someone inappropriately
- Visiting someone's hotel room without an invitation

Everyone has an individual boundary of when behavior constitutes a violation of dignity and when it does not. This boundary must be respected amongst all members. To ensure that one does not violate another person's dignity with one's own behavior, one should respectfully ask for their consent before engaging in any act with a sexual connotation. Consent is only possible if a "no" is also respectfully accepted as an answer.

It is particularly important to pay attention to hierarchies and structural dependencies since neither the prospect of professional benefits in exchange for sexual favors is a free consent nor is the threat of disadvantages if sexual favors are not granted. Special caution is required in case of structural dependency (e.g., between Mancom member and member). Maintaining professional distance might be considered the best way to go.

Any actions to which all participants have given their full and free consent without fear of negative consequences are not considered harassment. However, reassurances are always necessary, as it can also be determined during an act that a person does not want it, even though he/she previously assumed that he/she would. Also note, that lack of native speaker fluency, being unfamiliar with new surroundings and cultural "signals and cues". Different standards for "personal space" (in some countries there a closer proximity is usual) are relevant parameters.

## 2. Definitions

### 2.3. What is Sexual Assault?

Sexual assault can be defined as any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the consent of the target. This can include groping, sexual touching, rape, and so on.

Major sexual assault definition (adapted from the Peace Corps): Intentional or forced contact with the victim's breast, genitals, mouth, buttocks, or anus OR disrobing of the victim or offender without contact of the victim's aforementioned body parts for sexual gratification AND any of the following:

- The use of a weapon by the offender
- Physical injury to the victim
- When the victim has to use substantial force to disengage the offender

### 2.4. What is Rape?

Definitions of rape vary depending on the source, like sexual harassment. Survivors can also struggle with labeling their experiences, which can be an important component of understanding and processing an incident. The following questions, adapted from the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN), can be used to determine whether an incident was rape. If an answer to any of the following questions is "no," and if the incident involved sexual touching of genitalia or penetration of any type (oral, anal, vaginal) with any object or body part, the incident can be understood as rape:

1. Were all parties old enough to consent?
2. Did all parties have the capacity to consent? Alcohol, mental capacity, and emotional states can all impact a person's ability to consent.
3. Did all parties agree to take part? Consent is ongoing and affirmative.  
A "yes" at the beginning does not negate a "no" or "stop" later.

Generally speaking, rape is an act of gender violence and is about power, dominance, and control.

## 2. Definitions

### 2.5. Myths

**Myth 1: Women who wear revealing clothes get raped.**

*Fact: Clothing has nothing to do with whether someone is raped or not. Women in school uniforms, or fully clothed from head to toe have been raped. Accusing a woman who has been raped of “asking for it” due to her clothing blames the victim, and not the perpetrator of the crime.*

**Myth 2: Men are unable to control their sexual urges and therefore commit rape.**

*Fact: Men who rape do so to dominate over and control victims, not because they want to have sex. Men who rape make the conscious choice and decision to do so, just like anyone who commits a crime knowingly does so. This myth of uncontrollable sexual urges excuses the perpetrator of responsibility and blames biology instead.*

**Myth 3: She didn’t scream or fight back, so it wasn’t rape.**

*Fact: Women face the trauma of rape in many ways. Some freeze, and are too afraid to struggle. The perpetrator may threaten to kill her if she puts up a fight. In other situations, women may be coerced into having sex. The bottom line is, if sex is forced without a woman’s consent, rape has occurred, regardless of how the woman reacts during the crime itself.*

**Myth 4: Kissing or hugging can lead to rape.**

*Fact: Consent to kissing or foreplay is NOT consent to sex!  
You have the right to change your mind at any time. You have the right to say no, even if you’ve had sex with that person before.*



## 2. Definitions

### 2.5.1. Alcohol and other drugs are no excuse

**Alcohol:** During the events of E3 there will be alcohol available. We want you all to be able to relax and enjoy yourselves. We also want anyone not drinking to feel comfortable. Therefore, we ask you to remember that our events are business events, and thus to act accordingly with respect for your peers. Please ensure that during the events (and in any groups that continue after the formal events), you stay in control of alcohol consumption and avoid any situations where you might fight, argue aggressively, indulge in lewd or indecent behavior, or harass other attendees. Guests must not put the health, welfare, and safety of other attendees at risk by their behavior while under the influence of alcohol.

**Drugs:** To be clear, any illegal drugs are completely banned at E3 events. In addition, please remember different countries have different rules around drugs, and there can be high penalties for attempting to bring drugs into a country. Please use your common sense, if you are even thinking about bringing or trying to acquire recreational drugs while there, please think again. We want our gatherings to be safe, enjoyable and memorable for everyone. You should not say or do anything that could offend, intimidate, or upset another person, whether as a joke or not (including avoiding political discussions). We trust you to bring the same level of respect as you do within your normal working environment.

## 2. Definitions

### 2.5.2. Bullying

Bullying occurs when a person or specific group of people in the E3 network is systematically attacked, harassed, intimidated, or excluded. Typical actions that can constitute bullying when carried out systematically include:

- Avoiding contact
- Withholding or restricting information
- Refusing to engage in conversation
- Aggressive or rude behavior
- Unjustified accusations
- Discrimination
- Harassment
- Threats
- Spreading rumors
- Mocking
- etc.

It is important to note that not all these actions necessarily constitute bullying on their own. However, if they are carried out systematically and with the intent to harm or exclude another person or a particular group, then they can be considered bullying. In addition, bullying is not always top-down; it can also be peer-to-peer.

Bullying can have a serious impact on the affected person's mental and physical health. It can lead to feelings of anxiety, depression, and social isolation. In some cases, it can even lead to suicide. If you are being bullied, it is important to remember that you are not alone. There are people who can help you. Please reach out to a trusted E3 Mancom member for support.

## 3. Consequences and Sanctions

E3 is fully committed to the prevention and elimination of discrimination, bullying and harassment within its network and will not tolerate any of this behavior of ANY member of the E3 network. In other words: E3 upholds a zero-tolerance policy regarding discrimination, bullying and harassment. All allegations of discrimination, bullying and harassment will be promptly investigated and addressed, and E3 will take immediate action to halt unwelcome behavior should it find that discrimination, bullying and/or harassment has occurred.

E3 will investigate and take disciplinary action in response to such conduct.

E3 requires that all members should be considerate of each other and respect each other's personal boundaries. All members share responsibility for the harassment of third parties. They are encouraged to support affected persons who defend themselves by making it clear to the harassing persons that their behavior is unacceptable.

### **3.1. Rights and responsibilities as a member**

As a member of the E3 network, you are entitled to a network that is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment of any kind, whether or not the behavior is legally actionable. You are supported by the E3 network policy.

Furthermore, all members have the right to defend themselves against discrimination, bullying, and any kind of harassment.

We encourage our members to speak up freely and without fear of retaliation. Intimidation or retaliation against individuals who raise good-faith concerns about misconduct occurring in the E3 network is prohibited. "In good faith" means that an individual believes that what he/she asserts is true, whether or not a subsequent investigation proves that report to be true.

Knowingly making an untruthful report of misconduct with the aim of willfully and falsely accusing another person constitutes a violation and will result in appropriate measures being taken. If members feel uncomfortable raising concerns with a certain contact person, or if doing so has been ineffective, they are encouraged to contact one of the other members of the E3 Mancom listed in this document.

## 3. Consequences and Sanctions

### **3.2. If you experience discrimination, bullying or harassment**

- If you feel comfortable and safe confronting the person, you should tell the person to stop, and that his/her behavior is unwelcome. If the behavior does not stop, or you don't feel comfortable confronting the person you should ...
- ... Tell us! Talk to a member of the E3 Mancom that you can trust and file a complaint – in verbal or written form.
- Do NOT sacrifice your personal safety, security, or comfort zone.
- Set limits for what is acceptable and try to be consistent.
- Communicate clearly. Be assertive and insist on being treated with respect and/or tell the person you want him/her to leave you alone. But also do not forget that some strategies may not work the same way in each country.
- If you are in a public place, ask for help from someone around you.
- Document incidents in written form to be able to recap the details of the incident.
- Be aware of the messages that may be interpreted within the context of the country (e.g., words you use, your body language, your appearance).
- You may want to contact an attorney to discuss your legal options and take legal action against the alleged harasser.
- You may want to contact the police.
- You can speak out about your experience to raise awareness about discrimination.

### **3.3. If you witness discrimination, bullying or harassment**

Being a witness of discrimination, bullying and/or harassment is quite unpleasant and sometimes even horrifying. Witnesses of a sexual assault or rape might even face a trauma on their own even without any physical harm to themselves. However, individuals who observe, are informed of, or reasonably suspect discrimination, bullying or (sexual) harassment, must report the action immediately.

### 3. Consequences and Sanctions

#### **3.4. What does E3 do if discrimination, bullying and/ or harassment has been experienced?**

As soon as the E3 Mancom is notified of an actual or alleged harassment, we take the following steps as applicable:

- In some cases, it might be necessary to determine if the affected member is in immediate danger and needs to be removed from his/her location. If necessary, we take measures to facilitate member's departure from the current location.
- E3 Mancom will take the allegations seriously and initiate a thorough investigation.
- The affected member will be heard on the allegations laid against the alleged perpetrator.
- Depending on the allegations made by an affected member, the E3 Mancom will investigate the matter carefully, either on its own or with the help of an independent third party, and discuss the procedure and appropriate sanctions in each individual case. However, no steps may be taken without the consent of the person concerned.
- In case of an investigation processed by an independent third party, the third party will speak to the individuals involved and compile their summary of the incident. They will also then provide a conclusion of their findings. E3 Mancom agrees to follow the guidance of the independent third party.
- If the allegations are confirmed, appropriate action (sanctions) will be taken against the member.
- All contact persons are subject to an absolute duty of confidentiality.

## 3. Consequences and Sanctions

### 3.5. Sanctions

- **Warning** for a first-time or minor offense (e.g., an unthoughtful or rude comment, an accidental touch)
- **Disciplinary action** for repeated or serious offenses (e.g., exclusion from socializing events due to threats, sexual harassment, discrimination, complaints from other members, tensions or conflicts in the E3 network, negative impact on the network's reputation)
- **Expulsion from the E3 network** in particularly serious cases of violation of the Policy (e.g., physical violence, dissemination of false information, violations of data protection regulations)

The decision of whether an offense is minor, serious, or particularly serious is at the discretion of the E3 Mancom.

In addition, the severity of a violation of the Policy is assessed based on the following factors:

#### The intensity of the violation:

- **Frequency:** How often did the violation occur?
- **Duration:** How long did the violation last?
- **Impact:** What impact did the violation have on other members or the E3 network?

#### The severity of the violation, e.g.:

- **Loss of trust** in the member.
- **Damage** to the member's **reputation** inside and outside the E3 network or the E3 network's reputation in public itself.
- **Disruption of the cooperation** within the E3 network, which can lead to conflicts and tensions and make cooperation and exchange more difficult.
- **Loss of members** due to their withdrawal from the E3 network because of violations of the Policy.
- **Legal consequences:** In some cases, violations of the Policy can also have legal consequences.

### 3. Consequences and Sanctions

**Intent:**

- Is this a grossly negligent or intentional fault?

**Remorse and regret:**

- Does the member show remorse and regret? (e.g., apologizing to the affected member, taking responsibility for the violation, offering compensation, taking steps to repair the damage, and intent to adhere to the Policy in the future)
- Is the member willing to make amends? (e.g., apology, social work, participation in a training program)

**Recognizability of the violation:**

- **Breaches of rules that are obvious and clearly recognizable:**  
These are typically found in cases of minor or particularly serious violations.
- **Breaches of rules that are difficult to recognize:**  
These are typically found in cases of serious violations.

We reserve the right to deviate from the consequences under civil and criminal law.

## 4. Contact Person

The E3 Mancom has full responsibility for the network and therefore also bears responsibility for compliance with this Policy. By anchoring the topics with the E3 Mancom, it is ensured that the topics remain continuously on the agenda and are treated with the necessary priority. This way, the E3 Mancom can ensure better control in terms of adherence to the Policy, ensure that information is treated confidentially, and that appropriate measures are taken in case of violations.

The E3 Mancom communicates transparently and openly about the topics of the Policy and is available for questions and concerns of the members. Also, we ensure that all members of the network are informed about the Policy and comply with it. Members can contact the contact persons if they have questions about the Policy or want to express concerns about a possible violation.



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## 5. Final Provisions

This Policy is part of the membership terms and conditions of the E3 network and, as a general guideline, cannot cover all conceivable eventualities. The Policy applies to all members of the E3 network which is why all members of the E3 network must be familiar with the Policy and adhere to the rules contained therein. Violations of this Policy may result in expulsion from the E3 network. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the E3 Mancom.

Always remember: You are part of a business network and a representative of your company. Certain actions that may be acceptable elsewhere may be seen as criminal in other countries.

RESPECT your co-members, their wishes, and their INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS.  
COMMUNICATE clearly and keep up your PROFESSIONALISM.



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