

# Code of Conduct

## *ESN Latvia*

*Approved on 20<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of ESN Latvia, 5.11.2023., Valmiera*

The Erasmus Student Network Latvia (ESN LV) is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all and to ensuring that no individual is discriminated against in the planning and delivery of any of our projects or activities.

### **Abbreviations:**

ESN LV - Erasmus Student Network Latvia

NB - National Board

LB - Local Board

AB - Arbitration board

CoC - The Code of Conduct

OC - Organizing Committee

GDPR - General Data Protection Regulation

## **1. Aim of the Code of Conduct**

This Code of Conduct (CoC) sets out to ensure that every person feels safe, included and respected during their involvement with ESN LV. We make clear our zero-tolerance policy towards any kind of discrimination or threatening behavior. We reaffirm the importance of our core values, those of unity in diversity, openness, tolerance and respect. We demonstrate our dedication to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity among our members and volunteers.

We recognise our responsibilities as an international youth organisation and are committed to meeting them in full. An organisational culture that embraces equality and values diversity will help us to ensure that everyone feels involved and included in our plans and activities.

## **2. Persons to whom the CoC applies**

This CoC applies to any individual, group or section participating in any activity of ESN at the *national* and the *local* level and it covers conduct at:

- All meetings and events



- All ESN-related online activity
- All external representation of ESN
- All communication between members

The sections are responsible for communicating the Code of Conduct to all of their members. By being a member of a local section of ESN Latvia or part of any bodies of ESN Latvia one immediately falls under the jurisdiction of this Code of Conduct.

### **3. Discrimination, harassment and violence**

ESN is an environment which respects and welcomes everyone, and in which no form of bullying, harassment, violence, disrespectful or discriminatory behavior is tolerated. Our policy extends to, but is not limited by, discrimination on the basis of:

- Age
- Disabilities or impairments of any kind
- Education and socio-economic background
- Ethics and values, political or religious beliefs
- Gender including sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression
- Language and literacy
- Physical appearance
- Race including color, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Role or experience within ESN

ESN Latvia believes that ESN members enjoy the environment that is fair and respectful and is committed to an environment which:

- is free from
  - o disrespect: including but not limited to spreading rumors, criticizing (constructive criticism is accepted, without a personal attack), ridiculing, or dismissing achievements and degrading someone in front of other people (public humiliation), false accusation.
  - o discrimination and favoritism: including but not limited to recruiting volunteers based on preferred national/racial/religious/ethnic background and friendship;
  - o abuse of authority/power: including but not limited to the use of intimidation, threats, blackmail or coercion;
  - o passive aggressive communication;
  - o harassment: including but not limited to sexual harassment;



- promotes the fair and respectful provision of feedback on performance.

## 4. Behaviors

All persons participating in the activities of ESN LV must act in accordance with these values and work to cultivate an inclusive and accessible network. Individuals should be respectful and constructive in their communication and engagement with others.

- **Hostile behavior and respectful language:** In ESN LV, we are using respectful language. This applies to all positions, regardless of personal and professional relationships and other discriminatory factors. ESN LV will not tolerate any instance of verbally, psychologically or physically aggressive behavior, both face-to-face and online.
- **Appreciation and respect of each other's work and effort:** Individuals should be respectful and constructive in their communication and engagement with others, including but not limited to verbally despising someone's work and openly claiming it useless for the network.
- **Inclusion:** Members of ESN LV commit to be inclusive, by adapting whenever possible to any handicap, food restriction, gender identification (pronouns) or other personal particularity.
- **Drug Policy:** ESN LV is not tolerating any illegal drugs at their events or trips. If illegal drugs are found, the OC, LB or the NB reserves its right to ask the person to leave the event/trip for the rest of its duration. Heavy intoxication of alcohol will not be tolerated as well.
- **Commitment:** Even though ESN is a volunteering organization, by taking on a role in National or Local board or any other position, you commit to fulfill your responsibilities and tasks that the position requires, in an honest manner (including taking good care of section's and NO's property).
- **Punctuality:** In ESN LV, we believe that being on time is the most important way to express our respect to each other. Please be on time with your projects and during local, national and international events.
- **Brand reputation:** When wearing or having merchandise connected to ESN, ESN LV or any of its local sections it is required to behave in line with what the organizations



are standing for. This includes but is not limited to: inappropriate behavior under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

- **Environmental sustainability:** ESN LV encourages its members to respect the environment by using sustainable materials, creating as little waste as possible. Moreover, during events ESN LV is promoting more sustainable food consumption by striving for providing more sustainable food options.
- **Sexual behavior and consent:** In ESN LV we would like to provide the most welcoming and comfortable environment for our volunteers. Any type of sexual references and inappropriate behavior are not allowed in our network and it can bring serious consequences. This includes interaction both in person and online.

Violations of this CoC should be reported to the designated Point of Contact (5.) and will be dealt with according to the relevant procedure (5.1–5.4.) and consequences (6.).

## 5. Point of Contact

The Point of Contact is responsible for ensuring that all parties present are aware of their rights and obligations under this CoC. In case of witnessing or experiencing any kind of bullying, degradation, harassment, verbal, non-verbal discriminatory behavior, you should report it to the Point of Contact, provided you feel comfortable doing so.

- a. In case the problem includes **exchange students and local active or board members**, the Point of Contact is first the Local Board of the relevant section and then if needed the National Board.
- b. In case the problem includes **local active members and/or local board members**, the Point of Contact is first the Local Board of the relevant section and then if needed the National Board.
- c. In case the problem includes **local active or board members and national members**, the Point of Contact is first the National Board and then if needed the *National Arbitration Board (AB) (if the AB positions are vacant, International Arbitration Board can be involved for more serious cases)*.
- d. In case of problem includes **only national members**, the Point of Contact is the *National Arbitration Board (AB) (if the AB positions are vacant, International Arbitration Board can be involved for more serious cases)*.
- e. During a **local/national event**, the point of contact is the head of the organizing



committee (OC). If there is a conflict of interest, then the point of contact can be LB or NB if needed the National *Arbitration Board (AB)* (*if the AB positions are vacant, International Arbitration Board can be involved for more serious cases*).

### **5.1. Procedure**

In the case of witnessing or receiving any complaints, the **Point of Contact** is required, on their best judgment, in a successive order and depending on the severity of the action, to:

- Remind participants of their obligation to act in accordance with the CoC;
- Engage in a one-on-one conversation with the offender to make sure that there is an understanding of the reason of the inappropriate action;
- Engage with the offender to explain and ask for an apology and/or retraction of the action;
- Give a warning to the offender, if the warning is not respected proceed with stronger consequences;
- Suspend the session or ask the offender to leave from the remaining of the meeting/event;
- The section involved can decide to ban the offender from participating in ESN events for a given period of time (the period is decided depending on the severity of the situation that is unique to each case, the period can be starting from several events to one month, a semester, year or full expulsion of the network);
- If the Point of Contact was alone when receiving the complaint, the decision should, when possible, not be taken alone;
- The actions of Point of Contact should be transparent but taking in mind GDPR rules.

A second option in the case of knowing a CoC violation is whistleblowing, which is to fill out a form and submit it online.

### **5.2. Violation of the CoC**

If the CoC has been violated with respect to a group that is *present*, the same procedure as described above applies. Any of the present members of the group have the right to demand an excuse and/or a mediation procedure as described above. The offended group also has the right to nominate one of its members to exclusively represent its interests in the mediation process. If the CoC has been violated with respect to a group that is *not present*, any participant of the meeting can bring the incident to the Point of Contact.

### **5.3. Safety**

If the Point of Contact feels at any time that there is a risk of injury to any person, they



should ensure that the venue is safe for all participants and contact the relevant authorities if necessary and possible according to the Latvian law.

#### **5.4. Privacy**

In order to protect the privacy of the persons affected, all parties involved are bound to silence, except if any legal procedure requires disclosure or for the safety of an individual, and discretion about any facts they come to know during the mediation process. The Point of Contact shall not disclose the identities of the parties concerned without consent.

### **6. Consequences**

If an individual or section does repeatedly fail to comply with the Code of Conduct, the National Board reserves its right to not send these individuals or the group as representatives of ESN LV to international or national events. If a major incident is happening during one of ESN LV events or trips the individual will be sent home at their own expense.

In case of a major violence of the Code of Conduct, the member can be expelled from the network, they must resign their role, hand over all the passwords and information and they are not welcomed at the events of ESN LV anymore. The National Board can use its power to expel and ban individuals that have majorly disrespected the Code of Conduct after consultation with the National Arbitration Board (*if the AB positions are vacant, International Arbitration Board can be involved for more serious cases*).

