

Rotaract Europe Harassment Prevention Policy

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Introduction

As a non-governmental organization, the European Rotaract Information Center (also called Rotaract Europe or ERIC) is dedicated to fostering leadership, international understanding, and community service among young professionals and students. As part of the larger Rotary International network, we follow Rotary International's commitment to maintaining an environment that is free of any form of harassment described in the Article 26.120. of the [Rotary Code of Policies](#). All members and individuals attending or participating in Rotary meetings, events, or activities should expect an environment free of harassment, including unwelcome physical contact, advances, or comments. As an European organization, we also follow the EU Directive 2006/54/EC, which implements the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment between anyone (all genders) in EU labour law. The objective of this directive is to simplify, modernise and merge existing Community legislation in the area of equal treatment for everyone in employment and occupation. The Directive provides a definition of harassment and sexual harassment. It gives legal definitions for the terms "direct discrimination", "indirect discrimination", "harassment" and "sexual harassment".

Harassment - both physical and psychological - is an offence and harassers will be subject to disciplinary and/or criminal proceedings. This Harassment Prevention Policy informs about the anti-harassment procedures by Rotaract Europe, and its purpose is to determine if formal investigation and disciplinary proceedings are necessary or if the issues can be resolved in another manner.

Since victims are in a vulnerable position, it is of utmost importance that their need for confidentiality must be carefully balanced against the rights of the alleged harasser to be informed and to have access to their personal data.

Definitions

Direct discrimination

Where one person is treated less favourably on grounds of one race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, or any other protected characteristic than another is, has been, or would be treated in a comparable situation.

Indirect discrimination

Where an apparently neutral provision, criterion, or practice would put persons of one race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, or any other protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage compared with persons of other race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, or any other protected characteristic, unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim, and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary.

Harassment

Where unwanted conduct related to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, or any other protected characteristic of a person occurs with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Sexual Harassment

Where any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature occurs, with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, particularly when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.

Victim

Defines a person that has been exposed to unwanted behaviour, discrimination, or harassment.

Alleged harasser

Defines a person that has allegedly conducted unwanted behaviour, discrimination, or harassment based on the statement of a victim or a witness.

Harasser

Defines a person that has been found responsible for unwanted behaviour, discrimination, or harassment based on a properly conducted investigation.

Definitions of Rotaract, Rotaract Europe and Rotaract Europe events can be found in the [Rotaract Europe legal documents](#).

Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all members of Rotaract, Rotary, and Interact, including officers, volunteers, participants, and guests, engaging in any Rotaract Europe event, whether in person or virtual. It also extends to all communication and social media platforms used for Rotaract-related discussions, including online meetings organised by ERIC.

Rotaract Europe is firmly committed to fostering a safe and inclusive environment where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect. Harassment, discrimination, or violation of human rights, based on race, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, or any other protected characteristic, is strictly prohibited.

Harassment can manifest in various forms, including offensive jokes, slurs, intimidation, stalking, unwanted advances, or any other verbal or physical conduct of a harassing or discriminatory nature.

Rotaract Europe encourages all members to report any incidents promptly, and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigation process. Violations of this policy will result in appropriate disciplinary actions, which are defined in the chapter below.

Roles and responsibilities

The ERIC board has the responsibility to either establish a committee responsible for inclusivity and harassment prevention or take on the responsibility themselves.

The Inclusivity and Harassment Prevention Committee is dedicated to proactively preventing harassment and fostering a respectful environment. Its responsibilities are:

- To develop and implement training sessions on recognizing and preventing harassment for all members,
- Regularly review and update the organisation's harassment policy in accordance with legal standards and best practices,
- Provide resources and support for those who experience or witness harassment.

The President or a designated member of the ERIC board is responsible for receiving and responding to reports of harassment. The responsibilities are:

- Receiving confidential reports of harassment or discrimination via email (report@rotaracteurope.eu) and through the reporting form (<https://forms.gle/rRimMm1tJ7yacFks9>),
- Promptly investigating reported incidents and taking appropriate corrective actions as described in this policy,
- Ensuring that the victim and the accused party are treated fairly and with respect throughout the investigation process.

In addition, the ERIC board holds a key role in setting the tone for the organisation and ensuring a commitment to a harassment-free environment. The responsibilities of the board are to:

- Lead by example, demonstrate respectful behaviour and adherence to organisational policies,
- Address and rectify any instances of harassment or discrimination within the leadership team promptly,
- Report to Rotary International about harassment cases,
- Collaborate with the inclusivity and harassment prevention committee to continuously improve and reinforce the organisation's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

All members of Rotaract Europe should contribute to creating a harassment-free environment through awareness and education. Especially, but not only the Country Representatives are responsible for:

- Actively participate in training sessions on preventing harassment,
- Promoting a culture of respect, tolerance, and understanding within the organisation,
- Encouraging open communication and reporting of any incidents.

All together, each Rotaract member should:

- Stay informed about the organisation's policies and procedures related to harassment prevention,
- Foster a culture of respect, tolerance, and understanding within the organisation,

- Be mindful of language and behaviour to ensure it aligns with the values of diversity and inclusion and the values of Rotary,
- If witness or experience harassment, promptly report incidents to the ERIC board by email (report@rotaracteurope.eu) and through the reporting form (<https://forms.gle/rRimMm1tJ7yacFks9>),
- Provide accurate and detailed information to assist in the investigation process,
- Offer support to anyone who confides in them about experiencing harassment,
- Refrain from engaging in or endorsing any form of harassment or discriminatory behaviour.

Reporting process

In the event that an individual either experiences or witnesses an incident of harassment during any ERIC event or other ERIC-organised affairs or discussions, the following procedural steps should be adhered to:

Direct contact with the ERIC board (or respective parties)

The affected party has the option to promptly contact the ERIC board, the Host Organizing Committee (HOC) of the event (if applicable), or their Country Representative if they feel at ease and secure in sharing the situation. This communication allows the relevant team to take immediate and appropriate action, including the prevention of further interaction between the involved parties until the situation is clarified or the participation of the alleged harasser (or both parties, as applicable) is revoked. The anonymity of the reporting party is fully safeguarded.

Formal complaints

If the individual wants to report a case, the formal way of communication can be done in two ways:

Via email

The email with details about the case should be sent to report@rotaracteurope.eu. This will initiate the investigation process, and the same steps listed above will apply if the case is reported in a timely manner that requires immediate action. Again full anonymity is granted when the process starts.

Event Harassment Report

The individual can complete the Rotaract Europe Event Harassment Report, providing a detailed description of the incident. The reporting party has the option to disclose their name and contact information or remain anonymous. This written documentation is essential for initiating further actions in the investigative process.

The form can be accessed here: <https://forms.gle/rRimMm1tJ7yacFks9> and is available on

the ERIC website, social media platforms, event kits, in the Code of Conduct, and at ERIC event venues.

Subsequent to the submission of an incident report, the ERIC board or Rotary International may reach out for additional information pertaining to the case. Once the investigation is concluded, both the victim and the alleged harasser (if known) will be provided with a comprehensive report detailing the findings and the decision reached in the case.

Investigation Process

When receiving a formal complaint, the ERIC board will take action to separate the victim from the alleged harasser to enable an uninterrupted investigation to take place. This may involve a temporary ban of the alleged harasser and the victim from an ongoing ERIC event or meeting or a temporary ban from future ERIC events or meetings. The temporary ban will be put in place until the matter has been resolved.

The President or the corresponding individual who will be dealing with the complaint will invite the victim to attend a meeting, at a reasonable time and location, to discuss the matter and carry out a thorough investigation. The corresponding individual shall be unbiased and have no conflict of interest. The victim has the right to be accompanied at such a meeting by a confidential helper of their choice and they must take all reasonable steps to attend.

After a meeting with the victim, the alleged harasser will be informed by writing via email about the allegation and the corresponding person will initiate a meeting with them. They must take all reasonable steps to respond to the allegation and attend the meeting. The victim will not be named in this step of the investigation and stay anonymous if wished. If the alleged harasser does not respond to the allegation in fourteen (14) calendar days, their side of the investigation will not be taken into consideration. The alleged harasser may apply for a restoration of the deadline to respond to the allegation, if they prove that for objective reasons, they could not respond to the allegations within the original deadline. All those involved in the investigation will be expected to act in confidence and any breach of confidence will result in disciplinary action.

After having been in contact with both sides of the investigation, the corresponding person will forward the case to the corresponding individual at Rotary International. The conclusion of the investigation will be made in correspondence with the Rotary International Code of Policies and with the corresponding individual at Rotary International.

At the conclusion of the investigation, which should happen in a reasonable timeframe, the decision of the investigators detailing the findings will be sent to the victim and the alleged harasser in writing.

Both parties have the right to appeal against the findings of the investigation in accordance with this policy. They may appeal in writing to report@rotaracteurope.eu in a timely manner of two (2) weeks after they were informed of the results of the investigation.

Corrective Measures

If the decision is that the allegation is well founded, the harasser will be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with the following procedure.

A Rotaract member who receives a formal warning or who is banned from Rotaract Europe events or dismissed from Rotaract for harassment may appeal by contacting the ERIC board in writing via email to president@rotaracteurope.eu or the corresponding person at Rotary International.

When deciding on the level of disciplinary sanction to be applied, the Board has to take into consideration aggravating factors such as abuse of power over a Rotaract member in terms of status, position, or other.

If there is a complaint of harassment, the person giving the information will not be victimised for having brought the complaint. However, if it is concluded that the complaint is both untrue and has been brought with malicious intent, disciplinary action will be taken against the person who made the complaint.

Third-party harassment

Third-party harassment occurs when a Rotaract member is subjected to harassment by someone who is not part of Rotary, Rotaract, or Interact but who is encountered in connection with Rotaract. This includes anyone involved in ERIC events or meetings. Third-party people can, for example, be +1 participants at events, Rotaract club guests, potential Rotaract club members, staff, and members of the public.

In order to prevent third-party harassment from occurring, the Board and the HOC teams will follow the following procedure:

- Ensure that this policy is circulated at any Rotaract Europe event or meeting prior to their registration.
- Allegations of any form of harassment from a Third-party to any Rotary, Rotaract, or Interact member whilst attending a Rotaract Europe event or meeting will not be tolerated, and action will be taken.
- Should a person be subjected to Third-party harassment, the person or a witness is encouraged to report this as soon as possible to the corresponding person on the ERIC board or a member of the HOC team.
- Should a potential Rotaract member, +1 participant, or Rotaract club guest disturb a Rotaract member, the alleged harasser will be warned that they will not be allowed to participate in any Rotaract Europe events or meetings again and may not be accepted as a Rotaract club member. Should their behaviour recur in harassment,

they will be informed that they are not allowed to participate in any Rotaract events or meetings in the future and will not be allowed to join a Rotaract club.

Disciplinary action

Any criminal acts shall be reported to the police, and the ERIC board will share information relating to the incident with Rotary International to ensure that ERIC maintains a consistent approach to the cessation of our events and meetings.

In accordance with the individual case of harassment, the alleged harasser can be subjected to the following potential disciplinary actions by the ERIC board but is not limited to:

- Verbal and written warning,
- Temporary ban from Rotaract Europe events and meetings until the end of the occurring event,
- Temporary ban from Rotaract Europe events and meetings until the resolution of the investigation,
- 1-year ban from Rotaract Europe events and meetings,
- 3-years ban from Rotaract Europe events and meetings,
- A permanent ban from Rotaract Europe events and meetings.

If such actions are applied for the alleged harasser, the ERIC board will inform the respective MDIO (Multidistrict Information Organization)) to which the person belongs about the case to prevent any further incidents.

If the case is proven by a further investigation led by Rotary International, based on their decision, it can lead to the permanent termination of Rotaract and Rotary International membership.

Monitoring and Review

Observing the evolving landscape of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), Rotaract Europe recognizes the growing need to report DEI incidents. Heightened awareness and active participation from our members have led to increased incident reporting, underlining the urgency for a robust response.

This trend emphasises the need for Rotaract Europe to adapt swiftly, ensuring a safe and respectful environment for everyone involved.

In response to the rising reports and to foster a culture of inclusivity, Rotaract Europe is committed to the following action plan:

- Organising workshops to promote understanding and empathy among diverse communities within Rotaract, emphasising respectful conduct and recognizing unconscious biases;

- Enhancing reporting channels, ensuring anonymity, and providing accessible methods for members to report incidents;
- Conducting regular surveys among members to gauge the effectiveness of DEI initiatives and pinpoint areas for improvement (data-driven evaluation);
- Establishing a transparent review process involving the DEI committee and Rotaract members to assess the effectiveness of implemented programs;
- Encouraging feedback from members through meetings, focus groups, and anonymous suggestion boxes online;
- Identifying gaps and areas of improvement through data analysis and member feedback;
- Adapting policies and training programs based on collected data and member input to address emerging challenges effectively.

In Rotaract Europe, the responsibility for driving these changes lies with the Inclusivity & Harassment Prevention Committee (when such a committee is established by the ERIC board or this role lies within the ERIC board in case no committee is formed in the respective year). It is responsible for formulating, implementing, and evaluating DEI initiatives and providing the necessary resources; the leadership, endorsing policy changes and supporting the DEI committee initiatives; active participants, providing feedback and supporting fellow members, all while fostering a culture of inclusion.

By empowering our members, fostering transparent communication, and continually evaluating our initiatives, Rotaract Europe aims to create an environment where diversity is celebrated, equity is upheld, and inclusion is the norm.

Training, Prevention, and Awareness

Rotaract Europe is determined to adopt a safe, inclusive, and humble environment for all members of the community. To achieve this, Rotaract Europe is establishing a comprehensive educational plan that promotes a culture of respect, equity, and inclusion.

Training Sessions

Periodic workshops and comprehensive training will be conducted to ensure that the Rotaract members have the knowledge and skills necessary to prevent and respond to harassment.

These training programs will include the following topics:

- Defining harassment, identifying different forms of harassment, consequences of harassment,
- Intervention strategies,
- Policies, internal reporting channels, and resources.

The training and workshops will be offered to the ERIC Board, Country Representatives, and all members and guests.

Awareness Campaigns

In addition to training sessions and workshops, Rotaract Europe will run awareness campaigns designed to promote a culture of equity, respect, diversity and inclusion.

- The information and articles around harassment prevention and equity will be shared on a regular basis in Rotaract Europe communication channels like social media or the official web page.
- Created educational materials like policies, online resources, and brochures will be developed and distributed among the Rotaract members.

Additional Resources

Rotaract Europe is aware that the members may require external assistance. Added to the internal reporting and support procedures, the members may use external resources, such as:

- Rotary International materials;
- Helplines;
- Counseling Services e.g. mental health experts and therapists;
- Community Support Groups;
- Legal Assistance.

A list of national helplines:

- Austria - Telefonseelsorge: 142
- Belgium - Télé-Accueil: 107, 106
- Bulgaria - 1300 National Helpline
- Croatia - Plavi Telefon: 48 33 888
- Cyprus - 77 77 72 67
- Czech Republic - Linka bezpečí: 116 111
- Denmark - Livslinien: 70 201 201
- Estonia - Eluliin: 372 655 8088
- Finland - Mielenterveysseura: 010 195 202
- France - SOS Suicide: 01 45 39 40 00
- Germany - Telefonseelsorge: 0800 111 0 111
- Greece - Klimaka: 1018
- Hungary - Magyar Lelki Elsősegély Telefonszolgálat: 116-123
- Ireland - Samaritans: 116 123
- Italy - Telefono Amico: 199 284 284; Numero Anti Violenza e Stalking: 1522
- Latvia - Droša Linija: 371 67222922
- Lithuania - Jaunimo Linija: 8 800 28888
- Luxembourg - SOS Suicide: 45 45 45
- Malta - Appogg Supportline: 179
- Netherlands - MIND Korrelatie: 0900 1450
- Poland - 24h/7 Emergency Helpline for Women Victims of Violence +48 600070717
- Portugal - SOS Voz Amiga: 21 354 45 45
- Romania - Alianța Română Anti-Suicid: 0800 801 200
- Slovakia - Linka detskej istoty: 116 111
- Slovenia - TOM - telefon za otroke in mladostnike: 116 111
- Spain - Teléfono de la Esperanza: 717 003 717
- Sweden - Mind Självvmordslinjen: 90101

Document history

Written on 30.12.2023 by the ERIC inclusivity and harassment prevention committee.

Last updated:

Once adopted, the Rotaract Europe Harassment Prevention Policy shall constitute an integral part of the Statute of the European Rotaract Information Centre as the new Annex 8 thereto.