

# Online safer spaces policy

## Equinet, 2021

### Introduction

Equinet is committed to make all its gatherings, events, conferences and seminars, be they in-person or online, as safe and inclusive as possible for everyone.

Equinet recognises that online spaces have their own specificities. Therefore, this online safer space policy complements our already existing [Safer Spaces Policy for Equinet events](#). For issues not defined in the present document or in case of doubts the Safer Spaces Policy for Equinet events will be applicable.

### What is a safer space?

A safer space is a space where everyone can feel welcome and comfortable to share their ideas, contribute, and meaningfully engage with others.

At Equinet, we believe that the way we interact with each other is as important as the content of our discussions. Safer spaces are central to our work: when everyone feels safe, we all progress better towards our common goals. While no space can be entirely safe for everyone, we can commit to make them as safe as possible.

### Safer space principles

When gathering online, we encourage all our staff, members, partners and external guests to respect the following rules:

- Engage respectfully and peacefully. While differences in opinions and experiences are expected, the voicing of opinions that offend or create a harmful and hostile environment is not acceptable
- Use inclusive language. Remember that language barriers may take different forms (level of English, impairment, disability) and may be heightened online. Try and use plain English, gender-neutral language and speak at a reasonable pace.
- Respect people's identities and pronouns. Be aware that gender identity and pronouns should not be assumed based on how people look. We recommend participants to indicate their pronouns (he, she or they) on their Zoom nameplate and, in case of doubt, to ask other participants about their pronouns.
- Be mindful of group dynamics. When we gather online, we cannot rely on body language to communicate. Check that everyone is involved in the discussion, including participants who may only be able to or feel more comfortable using the chat box.
- Ask for consent before taking pictures, screenshots or recordings of other participants, publishing and sharing them or identifying others on social media.
- Share responsibility in keeping the space safer for everyone.

Behaviours such as intimidation, stalking, bullying, violation of consent, offensive language and offensive comments based on the personal characteristics of a person, or incitement to such behaviours, are considered a breach of this policy.

Sexual harassment and discriminatory harassment, already included and defined in our general Safer Spaces Policy, will not be tolerated either.

### What Equinet does to make its online spaces safer

A trust person is at the disposal of all participants. Their role is to first and foremost listen to the complainant. They can, always respecting the will of the complainant, act as a mediator between the

parties involved in the incident or guide the complainant should they want to file an official complaint with Equinet. The trust person does not play a role in the assessment of complaints.

Equinet's staff is responsible for content moderation during the event, which includes identifying offensive language and comments in spoken and in the chat, addressing them on the spot and communicating the issue to the trust person or the directors when necessary. Equinet is also particularly attentive to potential intrusion from uninvited guests and will do everything possible to ensure cybersecurity.

### Complaint procedure

Equinet's full harassment procedure can be found in our general Safer Spaces policy. Its main principles are:

- All complaints are treated confidentially
- The complainant's wishes are at the centre of the procedure
- Complaints are assessed by the Executive Director or the Deputy Director, or by a Board member if they are involved in the case
- Following the assessment, possibilities for action include:
  - Mediation to resolve the issue through dialogue (if wanted by the complainant)
  - Sanctions against the perpetrator
  - Communication of the case to the police in the case of a crime, in accordance with national laws
- Possible sanctions include:
  - For Equinet staff members: a verbal or written warning, dismissal in case of repeated behaviour
  - For members of an equality body, external speakers and participants: ban from the event and from other Equinet events, communication of the case to their HR department

### What you can do in case of a breach

Below is a list of people you can contact during the event via the Zoom chat box, email or text message.

If you want to lodge a complaint directly, you can contact the Executive Director or the Deputy Director.

Please include the following information in your communication:

- name of the offender
- nature of the incident / explanation on what happened and why you feel the safer space policy has been breached
- Supporting elements such as screenshots, copy of chats or emails, or else.

Sarah Cooke O'Dowd (she/her) Communication Officer, Equinet Trust person	<a href="mailto:Sarah.CookeODowd@equineteurope.org">Sarah.CookeODowd@equineteurope.org</a>	+32 2 212 3184
Flavia Colonnese (she/her) Policy & Advocacy Manager, European Youth Forum Trust person	<a href="mailto:flavia.colonnese@youthforum.org">flavia.colonnese@youthforum.org</a>	+32 2 793 7526
Anne Gaspard (she/her) Equinet's Executive Director	<a href="mailto:Anne.Gaspard@equineteurope.org">Anne.Gaspard@equineteurope.org</a>	+32 2 212 3181
Tamás Kádár (he/him) Equinet's Deputy Director	<a href="mailto:Tamas.Kadar@equineteurope.org">Tamas.Kadar@equineteurope.org</a>	+32 2 212 3183