

LYMEC – Internal Motions document

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10.21 Gender equality within LYMEC

Movers: SU, JnC

Adopted at LYMEC Autumn Congress in Vilnius, Lithuania, on 13 October 2018

Considering that:

- Gender equality is a fundamental human right of crucial importance, a right that LYMEC and all of LYMEC's Member Organisations support.
- ALDE, LYMEC, YDE and CoR organised a Summit of Young Elected Local and Regional Leaders in Brussels 17.9.2018. 18 young politicians participated, 1 of the participants was a woman, 17 were men.

Believing that:

- In order to reach true gender equality, gender considerations need to be included on all political levels.
- Acknowledging the importance of gender equality will contribute to reaching equal representation in politics.
- Improved gender equality within decision-making results in more representative politics, and therefore contributes to democracy.
- Gender quotas cannot be part of a liberal solution.

Calls for:

- LYMEC to actively strive for gender equality within the organisation, i.e. by including gender considerations when planning events, and by encouraging especially women to participate in LYMEC's events.
- Member Organisations to actively strive for gender equality within their organisations, i.e. by recruiting and supporting more female members and candidates.

10.22 Code of Conduct

LYMEC - Bureau

Adopted at LYMEC Spring Congress in Brussels, Belgium, on 6 April 2019

Introduction to LYMEC

LYMEC, European Liberal Youth, is a pan-European organisation dedicated to the promotion and strengthening of liberal and radical values in Europe. LYMEC is composed of liberal and radical political youth and student organisations based in European countries, as well as of young European individuals subscribing to the principles and values of Liberalism and Radicalism. The aim of LYMEC is to strengthen cooperation among the community of young liberals and radicals and channel our combined efforts towards building a better and more liberal political, social and economic environment for all Europeans.

Aims and objectives of the Code of Conduct

In all our activities we embrace and underline the liberal values of freedom with responsibility, and tolerance and equal rights. The main aim of this Code of Conduct is to ensure a safe, inclusive environment based on equality and mutual respect and to encourage full and democratic participation in all the bodies and events of LYMEC. We condemn and reject any behaviour, offline or online, that may prevent the full participation and may bring damage to the respect and dignity of any person that volunteer or work in the organisation or participate in events, with particular reference to discrimination, sexual or emotional harassment, humiliation, prejudice, segregation, stereotype or violence.

This Code of Conduct applies to any individual participating in any offline or online activity of LYMEC, as well as to the staff and elected representatives of the organisation, also when representing LYMEC externally.

General Principles

As advocates for fruitful cooperation among young people from all around Europe, LYMEC rejects and condemn any kind of violence and discrimination, as the ones based on:

- Age^[1]
- Citizenship
- Disabilities or impairments of any kind
- Education and socio-economic background
- Ethics and values.
- Sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression
- Language
- Physical appearance
- Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin

- Religion, belief, faith or non-belief

LYMEC requires that the behaviour of any individual participating in any offline or online activity of the organisation or representing LYMEC externally must be coherent with these values and promotes an inclusive atmosphere and an accessible environment in the organisation and enforces non-violent communication. LYMEC has a zero tolerance approach to any kind of discrimination, threatening behaviour or violence, including but not limited to bullying, degradation, harassment, verbal, non-verbal, physical or non-physical humiliation and intimidation. While we recognise that ideas might be conflicting and debates may get heated, and though we see the freedom of expression as an undeniable right, we reject all attacks on individuals.

Point of contact

The points of contact (PoC) for complaints at LYMEC Congresses are the chairs, at any other event including online activities the PoC is the facilitator in cooperation with the Secretary General, or if the Secretary General is involved/concerned the President and/or Vice President.

Procedures

In the case of witnessing or having received a report of any written, non-verbal or verbal violent or discriminatory behaviour, conduct or discourse, the chair or facilitator of the meeting is required, on their best judgment, to, in successive order and depending on severity of the action:

1. Remind participants of their obligation to act in accordance with the code of conduct;
2. Engage in a one to one chat with the offender to make sure that there is an understanding of the reason of the inappropriate action;
3. Engage with the offender to explain and ask for an apology and/or retraction of the action;
4. Suspend the session and/or ask the offender to leave from the remainder of the meeting or event.

In case the chair or facilitator was also the person receiving the original complaint, the decision should when possible not be taken alone.

We all have an obligation to uphold the ethical standards of LYMEC. If you observe behaviour that concerns you or other participants, or that may represent a violation of this Code of Conduct, please raise the issue promptly, provided you feel comfortable doing so. That will allow LYMEC an opportunity to deal with the issue and correct it, ideally before it becomes a violation of law or a risk to health or security.

Any case of breach of the Code of Conduct may be referred to the Committee of Discipline and Arbitrage but only on initiative by the Bureau, a member organisation or an individual member in accordance with LYMEC Statutes 29(5).

Privacy

In order to protect the privacy of the concerned persons, all persons involved in a mediation process are bound to silence^[2] 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 prior consent. Any written material about the incident that contains personal information should not be stored longer than the purpose and time of solving the issue of the case requires. If the Committee of Discipline and Arbitrage issue a report it must be written in a way so that no persons can be identified from it.

Representing LYMEC

The persons representing LYMEC externally are the members of the Bureau and the Secretary General, and in the case of IFLRY General Assemblies, the LYMEC Representative to the IFLRY Bureau. In certain cases the Bureau may appoint someone else to represent LYMEC, but this is always subject to prior written agreement. Members of Member organisations or LYMEC Individual Members may not speak on behalf of LYMEC unless officially appointed by the Bureau to do so. Elected officials and staff members must refrain from taking positions on behalf of LYMEC if not previously decided on by the Bureau and supported by official policy. LYMEC officials shall not intervene in Member Organisations, or their mother parties, internal affairs such as by making endorsements. Bureau members and the Secretary General should keep in mind that their actions can be seen as taken on behalf of LYMEC, and should always consult the Bureau if in doubt of what they can and may say or do.

^[1] Setting age-limits to LYMEC events shall not be seen as age-discrimination if it is done for compelling reasons such as insurance policy.

^[2] except if any legal procedure requires it or for the safety of the individual

10.23 Introducing a sunset clause to LYMEC resolutions

Adopted at the LYMEC Autumn Congress 2019 in London, United Kingdom, 9 November 2019

Acknowledging that:

- The LYMEC Policy book contains 410 pages and 338 resolutions creating an important number of proposals.
- Resolutions approved at the Congress are automatically added to LYMEC Policy Book and constitute LYMEC positions.

Whereas:

- LYMEC representation is based on the positions embedded in the LYMEC Policy Book.
- Currently, the LYMEC Policy book contains some resolutions that have already achieved their purpose, that are too dated to represent a LYMEC position, or that in part contradicts other LYMEC positions.

The LYMEC Bureau calls:

- that all future resolutions shall include as a mandatory requisite either of the following sentences in the end of the text: "This resolution archives Resolution (number) on (name) adopted in (place and time)" or "This resolution does not archive any previous resolution", in order to be admissible.
- that all future resolutions shall be subject to an automatic 6 year sunset clause, entering into force from the day of their adoption. After the passing of 6 years (to be understood as the similar congress six years after the congress of adoption and not as date to date), unless a discussion on prolonging the validity of a resolution with another 6 years is requested by at least one member organization, an IMS delegate or by the LYMEC Bureau, the resolution will be automatically archived. The motion for prolonging the validity of a resolution shall be made 4 weeks before the Congress along with resolutions and motions. The discussion on prolonging the validity is to be added in the beginning of the order of resolutions. If the motion to prolong the validity of a resolution is approved by Congress, the said resolution shall not be archived. An additional line shall in that case be added to the tags of the resolution, stating "Prolonged at LYMEC Congress in (place) on (date), in order to identify the next point of review/automated archiving.
- that prior to Congress the LYMEC Bureau shall make a list of the expiring resolutions and recommend their prolongation, archival or an updated version. The bureau can submit the necessary motions and resolutions accordingly.
- that the validity period of a resolution is from the congress of adoption to the congress of the same season 6 years later and not a strict 6 calendar years.

10.24 LYMEC EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY PLAN

Adopted at the LYMEC Autumn Congress 2019 in London, United Kingdom, 9 November 2019

INTRODUCTION

An equality and diversity plan is first and foremost intended to outline equal conditions for all employees in the working place. An equal working place means a working place equal to all no matter gender or gender expression, age, background, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion or belief, disability or impairments of any kind, appearance or other personal attributes. An equal working place guarantees equal opportunities to all to be able to do their assigned tasks, develop skills, acquire equal compensation and get received on equal terms. An equality and diversity plan also refers to the work in an organization against conscious or unconscious negative actions, like e.g. enhancing gender stereotypes that can translate poorly and offend or exclude persons from the community.

It is important that all the staff of the organization, European Liberal Youth, is aware of the content of the equality and diversity plan and strive to implement the actions that the plan indicates or clearly outlines. The Bureau carry the responsibility for the implementation by setting example and shaping the culture of the organization. The President and Secretary General, as leaders and forepersons in the organization, carry a specific responsibility for following up on the implementation.

The European Liberal Youth strives to implement equal opportunities on all levels of the organization and in all types of activities. When we conduct activities in the organisation, it is important that we analyse what roles we assign each other, which expectations and responsibilities we are expected to live up to. It is humane to set norms on how to act and how things should be, but organizational norms also risk becoming discriminatory to someone and therefore an open and self-analytic culture is essential to establish. An equal organization is not just about rights, but also serves as a method for productiveness and growth. If the persons included in the activities of the organization, such as staff, persons of trust¹, members and partners, perceive themselves equally treated and are given equal opportunities, they can be assumed to prioritize and endorse the organization henceforth.

¹ Someone holding an elected position in the organization or a member of the Secretariat.

The European Liberal Youth adheres to standards of equality and diversity as laid out in the Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity Strategy of the European Commission and will update this plan over time.

The equality and diversity plan has two chapters:

I The European Liberal Youth as an employer

II The European Liberal Youth as a platform for equal participation

DEFINITIONS

The term '**equality**' is intended to convey a broader meaning in this equality and diversity plan. The definition does not exclude the organization from striving for equality between the sexes, rather the definition in this text strives for equal opportunities for all, no matter gender or gender expression, age, background, religion or belief, ethnicity, race, nationality, disability, appearance or other personal attributes.

The relation to the term '**diversity**' is explained as follows in the Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity Strategy (p. 3) "Diversity in all its forms is referred to throughout, alongside inclusion. This ensures there is a dual focus – not only on including young people but also on strengthening the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to fully accept, support and promote the differences in society."

Diversity and **inclusion** are often described as being two sides of the same coin. "Where inclusion of everyone ensures that all young people can take part, the focus on diversity ensures that everybody can take part on their own terms, recognizing the value of differences in norms, beliefs, attitudes and life experience." (Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity Strategy, p. 4)

OUR VALUES

One of the most central values of the European Liberal Youth, LYMEC is the respect for equality and human rights. Everyone should have the same opportunities to participating in society and shaping their own lives. LYMEC wants to work for an open and inclusive society where people can feel safe to be themselves and develop as individuals no matter gender, age, background, disability, religion, ethnicity or personal attributes. LYMEC stands up against all forms of discrimination, hate crime, racism and exclusion, and envisions an open society where all lives are respected.

This plan for equality and diversity applies to all aspects of the organization and activities of the European Liberal Youth, LYMEC: organization, staff, communication, recruitment and event management.

I THE EUROPEAN LIBERAL YOUTH AS AN EMPLOYER

WORKING CONDITIONS

The European Liberal Youth follows standards and legal obligations of employers registered in Belgium. When central documents of organization, such as the statutes and code of conduct as well as working contracts of the staff of the organization are updated, equal opportunities are to be considered. The European Liberal Youth intends to adhere to its responsibilities towards its employees in terms of e.g. parenthood, disabilities and health conditions as is defined in Belgian law and regulation to workplace (ROI). As an employer for young persons, LYMEC is considerate towards parenthood and equal opportunities e.g. in terms of working hours. Due to the European Liberal Youth being an international youth organization, it carries particular responsibility for healthy and supportive working conditions as an employer for young persons and a platform of young persons.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of Conduct of the European Liberal Youth, as determined by the Spring Congress in Brussels in Spring 2019 states that "We condemn and reject any behaviour, offline or online, that may prevent the full participation and may bring damage to the respect and dignity of any person that volunteer or work in the organisation or participate in events, with particular reference to discrimination, sexual or emotional harassment, humiliation, prejudice, segregation, stereotype or violence." Also "LYMEC has a zero-tolerance approach to any kind of discrimination, threatening behaviour or violence, including but not limited to bullying, degradation, harassment, verbal, non-verbal, physical or non-physical humiliation and intimidation." Should any member of staff, Bureau member, participant at LYMEC events or participant or host at an external event experience proof of such behaviour from a fellow staff member, Bureau Member, fellow participant or LYMEC representative at an external event, this needs to be reported immediately as outlined in the Code of Conduct.

The European Liberal Youth has a working place environment where the staff and Bureau respect and trust each other. All are to feel safe and included in the working community. There is a positive social climate, where

giving and receiving feedback is constructive and furthers the growth of the organisation and the individual. The members of the organisation are met with respect and both staff and Bureau demonstrate professionalism and integrity in their actions.

Use of language sets the tone and signals a respectful, open and self-analytic culture or can portray a lack of respect, professionalism or inclusion in the working place. It is of great importance that members of the staff or the Bureau do not encourage stereotypes in regard to e.g. ethnicity or gender, but rather are sensitive to situations and individuals met. In an international youth organisation it is important not to create norms and label individuals, as it often creates negative images based on subjective perceptions and at worst excludes individuals from equal opportunities. It is the liberal way to be judged based on **your merit**, not based on your personal attributes. Members of the staff and Bureau have to communicate with caution and according to agreed standards and values internally in the organisation, but particularly externally as messages might be referred to by third parties and are not owned by the organisation on social media platforms. Members of the staff and Bureau also have to consider representation in its external communication and what perceptions of the organisation might come from images and voices presented on various topics and in various situations.

The European Liberal Youth strives for open and fair recruitment processes, enabling equal opportunities for all to apply and get recruited. Therefore, recruitment processes are anonymous (as far as possible) up until interviews are held.

SUPPORT STRUCTURES

The European Liberal Youth is a working place where all employees are aware of what discrimination and harassment means and encompasses and the staff and Bureau does its utmost to counter the existence of such treatment. Harassment is, except for a trespass against the ideology of the organization, the discrimination of the rights or integrity of an individual and can decrease the capacity of that individual in the working relationship. Therefore, an open and self-analytic culture is essential for finding ways to detect, process and react to discrimination and harassment. Regular personal development and evaluation talks with the President or the Secretary General and the staff members as forepersons of the staff is a first step towards establishing such a culture.

A second step towards an open and self-analytic culture in the organization is the naming of **two support ombudsmen**, who the staff can turn to (individually or collectively) to report on cases of perceived harassment. Cases of harassment does not only concern sexual harassment, but also other forms of discriminating treatment or bullying in the working place. The named ombudsmen are to be one person from the Committee of Discipline and Arbitrage or one of the Internal Auditors, who also are to be informed by the Bureau of where to turn to with reported cases of harassment and what the process and terms of secrecy ought to be as outlined in the Code of Conduct.

The ombudsmen contact the Bureau to report and pass first discussion on how to process the issue – unless Bureau Member(s) are a part in the harassment case, then the person(s) in question is excluded from the initial discussion. If the issue raised indeed is a breach against the Code of Conduct, the case is presented to the LYMEC Committee for Discipline and Arbitrage, upon decision from the Bureau, which then presents a solution or a legal interpretation for best practices. The ombudsmen are obliged to act on reported cases as quick as possible in order to avoid escalation of an uncomfortable conversation development.

II THE EUROPEAN LIBERAL YOUTH AS A PLATFORM FOR EQUAL PARTICIPATION

The European Liberal Youth, LYMEC has 60 member organisations in over 40 European countries with a total estimated membership of 200 000 Europeans under 35 years of age. In order for LYMEC to function as a platform for political debate, skills development and international partnerships it is important that young persons of varying background feel welcome, respected and appreciated in LYMEC activities. The same standards for equal treatment and support for diversity and the Code of Conduct that apply for the staff and Bureau of LYMEC, also applies to the membership of LYMEC. This applies to all events that LYMEC arranges or attends through members of staff or Bureau.

GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION

The guidelines for equal participation and diversity support are divided between the staff or Bureau members and the membership as follows:

1 Responsibility of the staff and Bureau:

- To treat all members and representatives equal

- To set high standards for interaction

2 Responsibility of the membership:

- To demonstrate respect towards others in the use of language and actions when attending LYMEC events and participating in LYMEC working groups
- To encourage the growth in others and be a sponsor for equal opportunities and diversity

It is the responsibility of the staff and Bureau to do its utmost to counter the existence of discrimination and harassment. Harassment is, except for a trespass against the ideology of the organization, the discrimination of the rights or integrity of an individual and can have a negative impact on the capacity of that individual in similar contexts in the future. Therefore, an open and self-analytic culture is essential for finding ways to detect, process and react to discrimination and harassment. The staff, Bureau and ultimately the President or the Secretary General as leaders are responsible for establishing such a culture. Engagement and presence of LYMEC staff and Bureau is quintessential to actively creating a positive, inclusive and supporting culture, but also the member organisations are obliged to contribute to a positive social climate.

A second step towards an open and self-analytic culture in the organization is the naming of **two support ombudsmen**, who participants of LYMEC events can turn to (individually or collectively) to report on cases of perceived harassment. Cases of harassment does not only concern sexual harassment but other forms of discriminating treatment or bullying at events, meetings or in working groups. The named ombudsmen are to be (congress) chairs, event facilitators or persons from the Bureau or one of the Internal Auditors, who also are to be informed by the Bureau of where to turn to with reported cases of harassment and what the process and terms of secrecy ought to be as outlined in the Code of Conduct.

The ombudsmen contact the Bureau to report and pass first discussion on how to process the issue – unless Bureau Member(s) are a part in the harassment case, then the person(s) in question is excluded from the discussion. If the issue raised indeed is a breach against the Code of Conduct, the case is presented to the LYMEC Committee for Discipline and Arbitrage, upon decision from the Bureau, which then presents a solution or a legal interpretation for best practices. The ombudsmen are obliged to act on reported cases as quick as possible in order to avoid escalation of an uncomfortable situation.

1 Responsibility of the staff and Bureau:

It is the responsibility of the staff and the Bureau to make sure all members and representatives are treated equal and included on equal terms. Also, as LYMEC strives to make sure all persons feel welcome at LYMEC events and in LYMEC activities, individual support or special attention might be necessary for inclusion and equal opportunities, especially in the case of persons new to LYMEC, or with special conditions to participation. Individual support can mean e.g. arranging newbie sessions during LYMEC events in order to break down processes, rules and social interactions. Individual support might also imply that Bureau Members pay extra attention to persons attending LYMEC events for the first time. Technical event information is always communicated to all attendees of LYMEC events individually and event information is communicated with abbreviations explained.

The LYMEC staff and Bureau will prioritize representatives with no prior experience of LYMEC for introductory events such as the EU Parliamentary Group Summer Academy, but otherwise participation selection for events is up to the member organizations to determine (within in the given number of delegates or participants, according to outlined purpose of event or in line with insurance policy). The LYMEC staff and Bureau will do their utmost to accommodate the participants in terms of limitations to mobility or participation within the financial framework of the organization.

The staff and Bureau members are also responsible for setting high standards for interaction, meaning a careful choice of language that avoids enforcing stereotypes and labels. The staff and Bureau members are to be an example to others and ought to demonstrate the values and professionalism that the organization stands for.

2 Responsibility of the membership:

Each person attending a LYMEC event or participating in LYMEC working groups is expected to demonstrate respect towards others in the use of language and actions. This is also stipulated in the Code of Conduct of LYMEC. The European Liberal Youth takes pride in manifesting the values for equal opportunity and an open society for all no matter background or personal attributes. Representatives of LYMEC member organizations and individual members of LYMEC are expected to avoid offensive language, generalizations towards others, racism or hate against persons or ethnic groups. Such language and thus, harassment will lead to immediate actions

by the named ombudsmen, Bureau or ultimately by the Committee for Discipline and Arbitrage.

As liberals, it is in our interest to encourage the growth in others and be a sponsor for equal opportunities and diversity. This also applies to all events arranged by LYMEC or attended by LYMEC staff, Bureau or other representatives. The political values of LYMEC carry little weight unless they are manifested in the actions of the persons that make up the platform.

GUIDELINES FOR REPRESENTATION

As an umbrella organization, LYMEC can only encourage its member organisations to enable equal opportunities for all in their organisation and consider equal access to the educational and political experiences that LYMEC offers its member organisations' representatives.

LYMEC (European Liberal Youth - LYMEC asbl);
Company code 863179343
VAT code BE0863.179.343
Rue d'Idalie 11, 6th floor, PO box2 1050 Brussels;
Tel. +32.484.644068
E-mail office@lymec.eu
www.lymec.eu

