



ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT POLICY

Balkans Forward Foundation

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy is to ensure that Balkans Forward Foundation (“the Foundation”) provides a safe, respectful, and inclusive working environment free from discrimination, harassment, and any form of inappropriate conduct.

The Foundation is committed to dignity, equality, and respect in all professional interactions, both internally and externally.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals involved in the work or representation of the Foundation, including the Founder, Board members, Executive Director, staff, consultants, interns, volunteers, external experts, and any other person acting on behalf of the Foundation.

It applies to all work-related situations, including offices, events, travel, online spaces, communication channels, and interactions with partners and stakeholders.

3. General Principles

All individuals must be treated with dignity, fairness, and respect.

Discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or any form of degrading or abusive behaviour is not tolerated under any circumstances.

The Foundation expects professional conduct at all times and in all settings connected to its work.

4. Discrimination

Discrimination is any unequal, unfair, or unfavourable treatment based on a personal characteristic.

This includes, but is not limited to, gender, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, age, health status, social background, or any other protected characteristic.

Discrimination may be direct, indirect, or systemic.

5. Harassment

Harassment is any unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.

Harassment may be verbal, non-verbal, physical, or digital.

This includes, but is not limited to, offensive comments, jokes, gestures, exclusion, intimidation, repeated unwanted contact, or any behaviour that creates discomfort or fear.

6. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any form of unwanted conduct of a sexual nature.

This includes unwanted advances, requests for sexual favours, sexual comments, messages, gestures, or any behaviour that creates an uncomfortable or hostile environment.

Sexual harassment is strictly prohibited regardless of context or perceived intent.

7. Responsibility and Conduct

All persons covered by this policy are responsible for ensuring that their behaviour is appropriate and respectful.

Managers and persons in positions of authority have an additional responsibility to prevent, address, and not tolerate discrimination or harassment.

Abuse of power, including using position, influence, or authority to intimidate or exploit others, is strictly prohibited.

8. Reporting Concerns

Any person who experiences, witnesses, or becomes aware of discrimination or harassment is encouraged to report it as soon as possible.

Reports should be made through appropriate internal channels, including the Executive Director, designated responsible person, or the Board, depending on the situation.

The Whistleblower Protection Policy applies to reporting and protection of individuals who raise concerns.

9. Handling of Cases

All reports will be taken seriously and handled promptly, fairly, and confidentially.

The Foundation may conduct an internal review, appoint an independent reviewer, or take other appropriate steps depending on the seriousness of the case.

All persons involved are expected to cooperate.

10. Protection Against Retaliation

Retaliation against any person who reports discrimination or harassment, or participates in a review or investigation, is strictly prohibited.

Any such behaviour will be treated as a serious violation.

11. Consequences of Breach

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, termination of employment or engagement, removal from position, or other appropriate measures depending on the seriousness of the case.

Serious cases may be referred to competent authorities where required.

12. Related Policies

This policy should be read together with the Code of Conduct, Whistleblower Protection Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy, Safeguarding Policy, and applicable legal standards.

13. Review of the Policy

This policy shall be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary to reflect legal standards, organisational needs, and good practice.

