

Anti-Discrimination Policy
of the European Federation of Psychology Students'
Associations (EFPSA)

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Synopsis

Discrimination as defined by the Council of Europe (2015) is “when people are treated less favourably than other people are in a comparable situation only because they belong, or are perceived to belong to a certain group or category of people. People may be discriminated against because of their age, disability, ethnicity, origin, political belief, race, religion, sex or gender, sexual orientation, language, culture and on many other grounds”.

The United Nations in their Report on the World Social Situation in 1997, Chapter VIII presented by Larry Willmore to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, note that even if not all kinds of social exclusion stem from discrimination, all kinds of discrimination lead to a certain exclusionary behaviour.

From the results of the Eurobarometer survey on Discrimination in 2015, the most common types of discrimination are due to Ethnic origin, Gender, Sexual orientation, Age, Religion and beliefs, Disability and Gender Identity. To further clarify, discrimination due to gender was classified as being discriminated because one was a male or a female, while discrimination due to Gender identity was measured for those who are transgender.

Motive

The aim of this policy is to create standardised guidelines for the EFPSA Working Community to ensure and encourage a working environment free of discrimination. It will also involve the seven categories that experience most perceived discrimination and will discuss European laws that are already present to safeguard the rights of these minorities. This will support EFPSA’s commitment to equal opportunities for all individuals. EFPSA endorses diversity and does not, for any reason, allow any type of discrimination. Therefore, this policy is directed to anyone who is affiliated with the Federation. Thus, anyone who belongs to the Federation shall adopt this policy and not carry out any kind of discrimination irrelevant of one’s own opinion.

Outcome

This policy aspires to create a sense of belonging and freedom of expression within the Federation without any fear of oppression and discrimination. This policy will outline the most prominent factors that facilitate discrimination, it will demonstrate the repercussions they have on individuals and will express EFPSA's stance on those matters.

Working Community

With *Diversity* being one of the core values of EFPSA, the Federation believes that variety does not hinder society but moreover, it is an asset that should be sought. EFPSA is in line with a primary human right protected by Article 19 of United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights; freedom of expression. Freedom of opinion and expression are fundamental rights of every human being. EFPSA believes that individual self-respect and fulfilment are based on the premise of freedom of expression; and that this fundamental right lays the groundwork for the basis of democracy, rule of law, peace, stability, sustainable inclusive development and participation in public affairs.

By this policy EFPSA declares that any member or individual affiliated with it has the right to express their opinion, religion belief, ethnic background, sexuality, gender identity or political belief without being discriminated.

In order to ensure diversity within its Working Community, EFPSA strives to have **Executive Board members from 50% + 1 of all Member Organisation countries/regions**. In the case that this criterion is not met, the rule has to be waived for the duration of one mandate by the legislative body of EFPSA, prior to the approval of the Executive Board.

Widespread Discrimination

Discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin is regarded as the most widespread form of discrimination in the EU (64%), followed by discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation (58%), gender identity (56%), religion or belief (50%), disability (50%), age (being over 55 years old, 42%) and gender (37%) (Eurobarometer on Discrimination, 2015).

The percentage of participants who believe discrimination is prevalent has risen since 2012, particularly with regards to sexual orientation (12%), gender identity (11%) and religion or beliefs (11%).

Ethnicity

When researching ethnicity, 94% of Europeans revealed they would be at ease (83% comfortable, 11% indifferent) working with a white colleague. While 83% stated they would be at ease working with a black person, 83% with an Asian and 63% with a Roma person (known by the exonym “Gypsies”). When asked whether they would feel comfortable with their adult children having a relationship with people from different ethnic backgrounds, regardless whether they have children or not; 69% said they would be at ease with an Asian person, 64% with a black person and 45% with a Roma person. This contrasts with the 92% of Europeans at ease with a white partner for their children (Eurobarometer Survey, 2015).

For several decades the EU emphasised on discrimination based on nationality and sex. However, recently EU member states officially agreed on introducing new influences to tackle the discrimination based on of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. For this reason, an implementation of a new legislative treaty; the Racial Equality Directive, ensures equal opportunities and behaviour in employment, occupation and even social spheres regardless of racial or ethnic backgrounds.

“There is widespread support for measures in the workplace to foster diversity, such as training on diversity issues (80%), monitoring of recruitment procedures (77%), and monitoring the composition of the workforce (69%)” (Eurobarometer on Discrimination: Social acceptance and discrimination on the grounds of religion and ethnicity, 2015). EFPSA is in line with these measures as Diversity is one of its core values and Trainers from the EFPSA Training Office deliver both trainings and workshops where diversity is seen as a target and listed as a strength. Diversity is also part of the recruitment process as a certain percentage of the Executive Board has to be ensured for representation. Furthermore, Diversity is also taken into consideration when selecting participants of Events such as the European Summer School.

EFPSA also encourages international organisations to join as partner organisations of the Federation. EFPSA not only stands against any kind of ethnic or racial discrimination but rather encourages. EFPSA reserves a number of spots for partner organisations from non-European countries/regions in its Events to ensure multiculturalism regardless of ethnicity.

Sexual Orientation

In certain countries, specifically certain cities or towns some people are still getting beaten up, harassed, discriminated or prejudiced because of the individuals they love. Discrimination should not be part of Europe, nevertheless, 60% of European citizens claim that they perceive discrimination due to sexual orientation and gender identity as pervasive phenomenon. Even if these numbers are alarming, 71% of European citizens also stand for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans rights (LGBT). Věra Jourová (European Union's Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality) states that this should be taken as a message for all governments as a part of the Juncker Commission. Discrimination can be eradicated by implementing particular and distinct actions. EFPSA does this by putting diversity as a core value and does not see the sexual orientation as something that could hinder the community but rather an asset; therefore it disregards this factor during interviews, includes diverse types of sexuality during workshops as well as creates an open and safe space for every individual that belongs to the community to be who they are. These go hand in hand with three sections; *employment, non-discrimination and education*, on the list of actions done by the European commission to advance LGBTI equality.

Another action listed by the commission is to tackle hate crime and hate speech. Hate crime is the act of crime motivated by racial, sexual, or other prejudice, typically one involving violence. On the other hand, hate speech is speech which attacks a person or group on the basis of attributes such as gender, ethnic origin, religion, race, disability, or sexual orientation. EFPSA enforces the fact that these actions should be tackled by having this policy paper in place. EFPSA condones any action to harm another human being either physically or verbally due to any minority they might belong to; including sexual orientation.

Gender Identity

In the report on *gender discrimination in employment and access to goods and services*, the European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA-Europe) and Transgender Europe (TGEU) state that one has to move away from discrimination towards those that are planning to, are undergoing or are planning to undergo gender reassignment surgery and include gender identity and gender expression as well as these are mainly the reasons for discrimination happening. Furthermore, 52% of Europeans believe that a candidate's image, manner of dress or presentation, are a disadvantage with regards to employment opportunities.

Gender identity and gender expression are defined as the Yogyakarta Principles to “each person’s deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of body (which may involve, if freely chosen, modifications of bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical or other means) and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech and mannerisms”.

EFPSA takes measure not to discriminate against any candidates that apply to be part of the Federation on the basis of looks, manner of dress or presentation. EFPSA condones any actions taken based on this and supports equal opportunities in employment. EFPSA believes in the integration of Trans individuals and therefore includes the “other” option when an application asks for the gender identity, to give the option of non-binary individuals to freely express their identity within the federation. This will also make sure that persons within the Federation are addressed properly.

Furthermore, despite this section being dedicated to Gender Identity, EFPSA also supports the inclusion of Intersex people and condones any discrimination towards any person due to this matter.

Religion or Beliefs

EFPSA supports freedom of speech, freedom of expression and freedom of religion or beliefs. EFPSA encourages open discussion as long as that discussion does not attack an individual or group on the basis of attributes such as gender, ethnic origin, religion, beliefs, race, disability, or sexual orientation amongst others.

When asked how comfortable one feels with having a colleague that belongs to a minority, the three that ranked higher on the “totally uncomfortable” section were a Roma person, a Muslim and a transgender or transsexual person. This shows that religion is still an influencing factor when it comes to discrimination and stigmatisation based on our stereotypes.

Events organised by EFPSA ask for dietary requirements, taking into consideration religious customs.

Disability

Although only 45% of Europeans would know what their rights are if they were victims of discrimination an even lesser percentage (35%) would report it to the police. In the report on Disability and non-discrimination law in the European Union it states that in the year 2000 an Employment Equality Directive was adopted. “The Directive has had a significant impact on the level of protection provided to victims of disability discrimination in the EU Member States. Prior to the adoption of the Directive, only three Member States prohibited employment related disability discrimination in civil law; today all 27 Member States prohibit such discrimination” (European Commission, 2009).

EFPSA is in line with the directive as it ensures that all Events are accessible to people who have physical disabilities. All applicants are also asked if they require help regarding any intellectual or physical disabilities and what are the necessities they require.

Gender

Equality between women and men is one of the European Union's founding values. It goes back to 1957 when the principle of equal pay for equal work became part of the Treaty of Rome. 27%

of respondents stated that they feel that their sex is an influencing factor when applying for a job. “From 2000, policy pressure rose to align EU gender equality law and the new fields of EU non-discrimination law”. In 2004 there was an expansion of the law against gender discrimination and the provision and access to goods and services.

Psychology is a big sector. EFPSA supports equal empowerment to all genders while acknowledging the under acknowledged women in the field. EFPSA is open to any gender and any gender has the same likelihood of being selected for any position.

Age

56% of Europeans believe that a job applicant’s age, if over 55 would be a disadvantage with regards to employments. EFPSA states that age is not a factor when one applies to become a part of the working community. The only criteria one has to fit is that they are a current psychology student or that they have graduated within the past two years.

Age was one of the highest rates were one was discriminated against in the 12 months preceding the Eurobarometer survey. EFPSA believes in the equal opportunities of employment and makes it clear that age does not have an influence when a decision is taken for a role to be filled.

EFPSA is also open to and does not discriminate against any certain age with regards to the work generated through the Federation, including when it comes to the publishing of journals, the organising of Events, the provision of Services and the development of policies, among other activities.

Conclusion

As research has shown, discrimination happens on a daily basis due to various factors. Many times persons face discrimination due to various factors depending on various situations. Nowadays the concept of ‘intersectionality’ is being explored. This concept is often used in critical theories to describe the ways in which oppressive institutions (racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, xenophobia, classism, etc.) are interconnected and cannot be examined separately from one another. This policy builds upon the strategy developed since the Amsterdam Treaty to combat and is consistent with the horizontal objectives of the European Union.

EFPSA endorses diversity; we are aware of our differences, we respect, celebrate and welcome them as a valuable asset. At the same time, we cherish cross-cultural learning, respect and unity. Therefore we encourage exchange on a scientific, cultural and personal level.

Issues of discriminatory treatment, harassment, or intimidation on any of these bases should immediately be reported to Ethics Committee directly. If allegations are made to the Board of Management, the Board of Management will refer these allegations to the Ethics Committee and if the Ethics Committee finds any of these allegations to be substantiated, prompt action will be taken.

Glossary

EFPSA – European Federation of Psychology Students' Associations

BM - Board of Management

EB – Executive Board

MO – Member Organisation

MR – Member Representative

TF – Task Force

EFPSA Working Community – Persons who have a role in the federation

ESS – European Summer School

CoE – Council of Europe

EU – European Union

UN – United Nations

Eurobarometer - a series of public opinion surveys conducted regularly on behalf of the European Commission since 1973. These surveys address a wide variety of topical issues relating to the European Union throughout the EU Member States.

Ethnicity - the fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition.

Sexual Orientation - a person's sexual identity in relation to the gender to which they are attracted.

Gender Identity - a person's perception of having a particular gender, which may or may not correspond with their birth sex.

Transgender/ Trans - denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with their birth sex.

Disability - a physical or mental condition that may impact a person's movements, senses, or activities.

Belief- an acceptance that something exists or is true. *Religion* - a particular system of faith and worship.

Race – different groups of beings having distinct physical characteristic.

Age - the length of time that a person has lived or a thing has existed.

Yogyakarta Principles – A set of International principles outlined in 2006 relating to sexual orientation and gender identity: a universal guide to human rights which affirm binding international legal standards with which all States must comply.

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