

EUROPEAN COMPOSER & SONGWRITER ALLIANCE (ECSA)

Code of Conduct & Ethics

1. Object

This Code of Conduct & Ethics ("the Code") establishes behavioural and ethical standards expected of all ECSA Members, Delegates, Observers and staff involved in ECSA Activities.

Its objective is to promote a safe, respectful and inclusive environment, and to ensure integrity, fairness and accountability in the functioning of the Association.

This Code is complementary to the ECSA Articles of Association and Internal Rules, which shall prevail in case of contradiction.

Nothing in this Code shall replace or limit any rights, obligations or remedies arising under applicable law, nor prevent any party from seeking recourse before the competent courts or tribunals.

2. Scope of Application

This Code applies to all ECSA Member organisations, to the delegates and observers designated by them, as well as to the ECSA staff, in the framework of all ECSA activities involving ECSA Members — notably meetings, projects, events, advocacy actions and online gatherings.

It provides guiding principles to support appropriate and proportionate responses to individual situations, whilst reaffirming the responsibility of Members for the conduct of their designated delegates and observers.

3. Responsibility of Members for Delegates and Observers

Each Member organisation is responsible for:

- designating delegates and observers who shall uphold the values and standards of the Association;
- ensuring that delegates and observers are informed of, and undertake to respect, this Code; and
- taking appropriate measures where the conduct of a delegate or observer does not conform to this Code.

Member organisations shall inform the contact persons without delay upon becoming aware of any conduct by their representatives susceptible to constitute a breach of this Code. The ECSA Board may hold a member organisation accountable for such breach.

4. Standards of Ethical Conduct

All persons shall conduct themselves with integrity, honesty, fairness, transparency and accountability. Those exercising elected functions or decision-making responsibilities within ECSA shall observe a reinforced duty of care.

5. Professional and Respectful Behaviour

All persons shall conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner with each other. Debates shall focus on ideas and policies rather than on persons. Personal attacks, intimidation or hostile behaviour shall not be tolerated.

Persons are expected to remain attentive to personal bias and power dynamics, to encourage inclusive participation, to respect boundaries, and to allow space for diverse perspectives.

6. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

ECSA is committed to inclusive participation and balanced representation, including inclusive selection processes where appropriate. Discrimination in any form shall not be tolerated.

7. Prohibited Conduct

The following conduct shall not be tolerated:

(a) Discrimination — Unfavourable treatment based on a person's actual or perceived identity, including any of the following grounds: sex; gender identity or expression; sexual orientation; race or ethnic origin; nationality; religion or belief; disability; age; socio-economic situation; family status; political opinion; or artistic discipline.

(b) Psychological harassment — Repeated or serious conduct prejudicial to a person's dignity or wellbeing, notably derogatory remarks, bullying, deliberate exclusion, harm to reputation, manipulation, or the creation of a hostile environment.

(c) Sexual harassment — Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, notably sexualised remarks, unwelcome physical contact, or the communication of explicit material.

(d) Abuse or misuse of power — The use of formal or informal authority to exercise pressure or undue influence over another person, notably for personal, professional or sexual advantage.

(e) Retaliation — Adverse treatment of any person who raises or supports a concern in good faith.

Any person requested to cease such inappropriate conduct by the contact persons or the ECSA Board shall comply immediately.

8. Conflicts of Interest

Where an actual or potential conflict of interest arises in the context of matters governed by this Code, the person concerned shall declare any such conflict without delay and abstain from participating to related discussions or decisions.

9. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Sensitive information and personal data shall be treated in a confidential manner, in conformity with applicable data protection legislation, notably the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

10. Reporting Procedure

Submission of reports

Any person who experiences, witnesses, or has reasonable grounds to suspect a breach of this Code is encouraged to report the matter promptly and confidentially — and, where preferred, anonymously — to the three designated contact persons appointed within the ECSA Board. If a complaint concerns one designated contact person, the ECSA Board shall appoint another designated contact person in replacement.

Preliminary assessment

According to the nature and gravity of the matter, the designated contact persons shall conduct a preliminary confidential assessment and may transmit it to the Board for further examination or decision. If one complaint concerns a Board member, such Board Member cannot participate to the Board examination or decision.

Timeframes

The designated contact persons and, where applicable, the Board shall endeavour to address matters without undue delay, while ensuring careful, confidential and equitable consideration. The timeframe may also depend on the nature and complexity of the case.

Procedural guarantees

All parties involved shall have the opportunity to present their observations, subject to the requirements of confidentiality. The person concerned and, where appropriate, their members' organisation may be informed of the substance of the complaint so that they can respond. The identity of the reporter(s) shall not be disclosed without their consent, except where disclosure is required by law or necessary for reasons of protection.

Reports by third parties

Third parties — such as witnesses — may report concerns even where they are not directly affected. Such reports shall be treated confidentially and impartially. Where appropriate, the contact persons or the ECSA Board shall consult any directly affected person before taking formal steps.

Assessment and resolution

Complaints shall be assessed on their merits, taking account of the nature, seriousness and circumstances of the concern. Where appropriate, informal resolution or mediation may be considered before formal corrective measures are envisaged.

The contact persons or the ECSA Board shall inform the relevant parties of the outcome or closure of the procedure, subject to confidentiality.

11. Enforcement and Corrective Measures

Failure to respect this Code may give rise to proportionate corrective measures, which may include:

- verbal or written warnings;

- requests for modification of behaviour;
- requests for explanation;
- mediation;
- suspension of the participation in ECSA activities;
- exclusion from the participation in ECSA activities.

Where the ECSA Board finds that the conduct of a delegate or observer constitutes a breach of this Code, it may require the Member organisation to designate a replacement and/or suspend the individual from participation in ECSA activities.

Actions affecting membership status or governance mandates shall follow the procedures foreseen in the Articles of Association. Serious matters may be referred to the competent authorities where required.

12. Awareness and Implementation

This Code was adopted by the ECSA General Assembly in Vienna, Austria, on 22 September 2026 and went into effect one month after its adoption.