

Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation

Responsible and Respectful Behavior Policy

Preface

The Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP) is committed to fostering an environment of safety and respect for all employees and guests wherein all are welcome to participate in Center activities without fear of discrimination, disrespect or violation of bodily autonomy. The VCDNP strives to uphold the highest ethical and professional standards. Participants in all Center activities are expected to treat their fellow human beings with dignity and respect.

The VCDNP will not tolerate harassment or intimidation in any form of or by its employees or participants, on its premises or during any VCDNP sponsored events.

Expectations and Scope

All members of the VCDNP and participants in VCDNP events are expected to respect the dignity, freedom and rights of other persons. Harassment and discriminatory behavior denigrate all who witness it, not merely those to whom they are directed. An injury to one is an injury to all. The VCDNP expects that all participants will refrain from any harassing or discriminatory behavior. Anyone asked to cease harassing behavior will be expected to comply, regardless of whether or not that request came from a person of authority at the VCDNP or an attendee of a VCDNP event.

The VCDNP expects all members of the VCDNP, event participants and visitors to respect VCDNP property, resources and assets.

The Responsible and Respectful Behavior Policy (hereinafter "Policy") applies to all members of the VCDNP regardless of position or seniority and all participants, including all persons attending or involved in any capacity in a VCDNP event, including but not limited to speakers, vendors, volunteers, event attendees and funders. The Policy applies to any VCDNP event, which shall include meetings, conferences and symposia, assemblies, receptions, scientific and technical events, expert meetings, workshops, exhibits, side events, courses and any other forum organized, hosted or sponsored in whole or in part by VCDNP wherever it takes place, and any event or gathering that takes place on VCDNP premises whether or not VCDNP is organizing, hosting or sponsoring it.

This Policy is not restricted to the VCDNP office but also refers to locations where work-related business may be conducted. These could include:

- Work-related social activities, such as receptions organized by the Center for staff or other participants, stakeholders or funders;
- Conferences and training sessions;
- Official travel;
- Business meals;
- Work-related telephone conversations; and
- Work-related conversations through electronic media.

The Policy is not legal or prescriptive in nature. It supplements, but does not affect, the application of other relevant policies, regulations, rules and laws, including laws regulating the premises in which the VCDNP event takes place.

Definition of Harassment

Under this Policy, harassment is verbal, written or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of a person's race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, genetic information, or any other characteristic as defined and protected by law in the location where a particular program is operating that has the purpose or effect, from the point of view of a reasonable person, of objectively and substantially:

- a. undermining and detracting from, or interfering with, an individual's work performance or access to center resources; or
- b. creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or living environment.

Harassment is not limited to interactions between members of the VCDNP but can involve any individual participating in a VCDNP event or in an event taking place on the VCDNP's premises. Harassing behavior meant to disrupt or hinder the participation of others in VCDNP events, or events held on its premises, will not be tolerated. Harassment on the basis of any other protected characteristic is also strictly prohibited. Such behavior may include:

- Verbal or written comments that are insulting, degrading or threatening;
- Verbal or written comments that are sexually graphic or sexually suggestive;
- Unwelcomed and targeted photography or recording taken without prior consent;
- Sustained disruption of talks or other events;
- Deliberate intimidation, stalking or following;
- Display of offensive or sexually suggestive objects, pictures or graphics;
- Initiation of inappropriate physical contact (contact of a violent or sexual nature);
- Unwelcome sexual attention, including repeated flirtations or advances;
- Deliberate exclusion from VCDNP events or activities based on an individual's characteristics as defined and protected by law; and
- Advocating for, encouraging, or intentionally concealing any of the above behavior.

Harassment can happen or be perpetrated by anyone regardless of age, gender, national origin, religion or sexual orientation.

Anyone witnessed behaving in such a manner will be asked to leave and possibly face barring from future VCDNP events or legal measures depending on the severity of the offence.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

Because of the often coercive nature of sexual harassment, it is separated from general discriminatory behavior for the sake of clarity.

Sexual harassment is any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person. It includes situations where

a person is asked to engage in sexual activity as a condition of that person's employment, promotion, professional advancement or other similar circumstances (*quid pro quo*), as well as in situations that create a hostile, intimidating or humiliating environment for the recipient.¹ Harassment can be verbal, non-verbal and physical, and can include written communication between two or more people. Harassment can take place regardless of the gender of the individuals involved.

Complaints – Procedures

The VCDNP asks that any participants who witness harassing or discriminatory behavior to report it to the VCDNP. Additionally, if you have an incident to report, please report it as soon as possible. The most effective method of resolving actual or perceived harassment is early identification and intervention. Timely reporting helps the VCDNP to take constructive action and protect victims.

If you have an incident to report at an event, you may contact the designated person listed in the event program. You may also contact the VCDNP Executive Director or any other member of the VCDNP to report an incident. A list of VCDNP staff members is available [here](#).

Adjudication and Dispute Resolution

Upon receiving a complaint, the matter may be further investigated by the Executive Director and/or an appropriate designated VCDNP employee. Details of the complaint may later be shared with Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey and Middlebury College Human Resource Officers, depending on the case. Individuals to be notified and actions to be taken will be discussed beforehand with the recipient of the harassing behavior, where possible.

Please note that the VCDNP believes in respecting the wishes of those directly involved in the incident. While you may report an incident, if you are not the target of the harassing behavior, the VCDNP reserves the right to discontinue enforcement if it determines that no harassment took place, that the recipient of the behavior does not wish to further pursue a complaint, or that the information provided is not complete enough to allow an investigation to be made.

Sanctions for the offending party

Disciplinary action for participants found to have violated this Policy may include reprimand, expulsion from an event or activity, temporary or permanent exclusion from future VCDNP events and activities. VCDNP reserves the right to report behavior to appropriate authorities.

Members of the VCDNP that are found to have violated this Policy will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the [Middlebury Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Policy](#). Anyone who wishes to report staff violations can forward their complaints to the VCDNP Executive Director, the CNS Director, or Human Resources Officers at Middlebury College (roster available [here](#)). Staff could also report violations to the [Austrian Equal Treatment Commission \(Gleichbehandlungskommission\)](#).

Offending staff members will be sanctioned in accordance with MIIS policies and/or the Austrian Equal Treatment Commission's verdict. Sanctions may include financial compensation to the

¹ Directive 2002/73/EC – equal treatment of 23 September 2002 amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions states. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1976L0207:20021005:EN:PDF>

victim, suspension, termination or referral to local law enforcement, depending on the nature of the offense.

Prohibition on Retaliation

It is the VCDNP's expectation that members of the VCDNP, event participants and visitors will cultivate respect and responsibility for others, which includes the obligation not to retaliate against another person in response to a complaint. Retaliating directly or indirectly against a person because they have made a report or participated in a VCDNP investigation of a Policy violation of any type is prohibited. Retaliation includes but is not limited to ostracizing the person, pressuring the person to drop or not support a complaint or to provide false or misleading information, or otherwise engaging in conduct that may reasonably be perceived to affect adversely that person's professional, living or work environment. Retaliation is unlawful under both U.S. and Austrian law, whether or not the complaint is ultimately found to have merit.

Assurance of Confidentiality

The VCDNP will conduct investigations with discretion and seek to maintain the confidentiality of information and individuals involved to the greatest extent possible. The VCDNP will only break confidentiality in case of a legal requirement or a situation where an individual is a risk of bodily harm. In such cases where the VCDNP is required to break confidentiality, the relevant parties will be informed.

Implementation of Policy

Assistant Director of International Management and Operations is in charge of implementing this Policy.

Contact Information

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Legal Background

As an international NGO located in Vienna, the VCDNP is bound by the Federal Equal Treatment Act ([Bundes-Gleichbehandlungsgesetz](#)) of 1993.

The VCDNP is also bound by the law of the [European Union. Directive 2002/73/EC](#) on equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion and working conditions. The directive amended [Council Directive 76/207/EEC](#) (1976) on 23 September 2002. The directive addresses matters concerning harassment and discrimination.

As an organization associated with the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey and Middlebury College, the VCDNP is bound to uphold Middlebury wide policies as listed in the [handbook](#).