

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



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Principles, standards and procedures to protect and promote children's rights

2025 revision

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For the purposes of this document, a **child is defined as any person under the age of 18**. The terms used in this document, whether masculine or feminine refer to **persons of all gender identities**. This document is **publicly available and published on the organisation's website** (www.eurosoc-digital.org) with the intention that all persons who wish to receive information about the principles of E#D in working with children and child protection procedures can familiarise themselves with it.

EuroSoc#Digital gGmbH: scope of work

This Child Protection Policy serves to safeguard children and young people participating in the educational offers of Eurosoc-digital gGmbH

It applies to all staff, volunteers, interns, project partners, and external service providers who are in contact with youngsters within the framework of our work.

EUROSOC#DIGITAL

EUROSOC#DIGITAL was founded in Berlin in 2013 as a non-profit organization dedicated to creating innovative educational formats, raising awareness on European topics, and inspiring young citizens to engage in public debates. Our mission is to empower youth to take an active role in shaping European democracy and to support the European integration project. Through our projects, events, and services, we provide young participants with the knowledge and tools to better understand European affairs and become proactive citizens. Our clients and partners include European institutions, universities, educational organizations, companies, and public administrations.

A key focus of our work is European political education. We develop and organize tailored programs that engage young people in meaningful participation processes. These initiatives range from structured civic engagement programs for school and university students to creative and accessible formats designed for young individuals who have been less engaged in politics.

Empowering youth participation in democracy

EUROSOC#DIGITAL is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to fostering democracy and civic education. We design tailored education and training programs that bring democratic principles to life, with a strong emphasis on youth participation. Our goal is to promote democratic engagement among young people, making political decision-making more transparent and accessible. At the core of our educational approach lies informal civic education, equipping young individuals with the knowledge and skills to understand democracy, take action, and navigate the political landscape of the EU.

EuroSoc#Digital gGmbH: scope of work

Engaging youth in European affairs

For years, EUROSOC#DIGITAL has been actively informing, mobilizing, and inspiring young people to engage with European democracy. We develop innovative educational formats that explain political decision-making processes in an engaging and accessible way, motivating young participants to become active citizens. Our projects foster a deeper understanding of European affairs and everyday politics, ensuring that young people not only grasp the importance of democracy but also recognize their role within it. Through interactive methods such as simulation games and hands-on workshops, we provide young citizens with practical insights into political processes.

Promoting youth participation in democracy

Democracy is not a given – it thrives when citizens, especially young people, actively participate. Our programs empower youth to explore democratic values, compare democratic and autocratic systems, and understand the significance of their engagement. We emphasize the inclusion of young voices in regional, national, and European political discussions, helping them see the impact of their participation and motivating them to take an active role in shaping the future of their societies.

Tailor-made education programs for young people

Our diverse range of youth-centered projects includes European political simulations, democracy-focused workshops, future and business labs, and digital learning tools. These formats help young participants comprehend EU decision-making processes and their own role in the democratic system. By using innovative pedagogical methods, we cater to various educational backgrounds, from high school students to university attendees, and even hard-to-reach youth groups. Our adaptable learning strategies ensure inclusivity and accessibility, breaking down barriers to civic engagement.

A dedicated team with a European vision

Our team at EUROSOC#DIGITAL consists of passionate civic educators and consultants with extensive experience in intercultural communication and youth engagement. As Europeans with diverse backgrounds, we bring a rich perspective to our work, fostering meaningful dialogue and collaboration across borders. Our broad European network of facilitators and trainers ensures the successful implementation of our projects, creating impactful learning experiences for young participants across the continent.

EuroSoc#Digital gGmbH: scope of work

Collaborating for a stronger European future

Our esteemed partners and clients include the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Federal Foreign Ministry, leading European universities, and prominent foundations such as the Robert Bosch Foundation and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. Together, we work to inspire and equip the next generation of active European citizens, strengthening democracy by fostering youth participation and engagement.

At EUROSOC#DIGITAL, we believe in the power of young people to shape the future. By providing them with the necessary tools, knowledge, and opportunities, we ensure that their voices are heard and that they become proactive contributors to the democratic process.

E#D Child Protection Policy

This document determines our principles, standards and procedures by which we protect children and promote their well-being. It **obliges all employees, external collaborators and volunteers**.

In all our activities, we strive to create conditions that enable children to feel safe, protected from all forms of violence and exploitation, and to be treated with respect—while being especially empowered to think critically and express their own ideas and opinions. In this context, every child, in all their diversity (including gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, and other characteristics), is entitled to equal rights. We strongly advocate for a society and an education system that are based on equality of all people no matter their gender, their social, cultural, educational or ethnical background, pluralism, democracy and the rule of law as well as social responsibility—to enable every individual to fully develop their personal potential and competencies.

E#D bases its work on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which, according to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, is based on four general principles:

1. The principle of non-discrimination;
2. The right to life and positive development in all aspects of life;
3. Well-being of the child as a priority when making decisions or carrying out procedures that affect the child active participation;
4. The right to express opinions and participate in issues that affect their lives.

Our work is guided by the following principles in all aspects of its work, whether it involves direct or indirect work with children:

1. Physical and psychological safety, health and general well-being of children appreciation for every child.
2. Respect and understanding children of diverse needs and capabilities creating supporting environment for learning.
3. Preventing discrimination, exclusion or marginalisation of children encouraging meaningful participation of children.
4. Protecting the privacy and identity of the child cooperation with key stakeholders in the protection and promotion of children's rights.
5. Zero tolerance of any form of violence, exploitation or ill-treatment of children.

The child protection policy of the EuroSoc#Digital gGmbH is based on the rights of the child and contains four categories:

1. **Key principles** which we are committed to preventing, protecting and responding to harm done to children and how we promote their rights,
2. **People** (responsibility and expectations we have from employees, external collaborators and volunteers and the support we provide them for the implementation of this policy),
3. **Procedures and actions** in the protection of children involved in the activities of the E#D (with the aim of the organisation acting in the best interest of the child, protecting and promoting their rights; how we contribute to the protection of children with our activities and efforts and how we act in cases when children are harmed; standards of conduct which describe the procedures we use to ensure a safe environment for children) i
4. **Responsibility for monitoring** (the ways in which we monitor implementation and review the policy itself).

1. Key principles of child protection

The EuroSoc#Digital gGmbH is guided by the following principles in all aspects of its work, whether it involves direct or indirect work with children:

- physical and psychological safety, health and general well-being of children
- appreciation for every child
- respect and understanding children of diverse needs and capabilities
- creating supporting environment for learning
- preventing discrimination, exclusion or marginalisation of children
- encouraging meaningful participation of children
- protecting the privacy and identity of the child
- cooperation with key stakeholders in the protection and promotion of children's rights
- zero tolerance of any form of violence, exploitation or ill-treatment of children.

These categories also contain some specific provisions according to the **main type of activity** being carried out by E#D, which are:

1. **education programs with adults who work with children**
2. **education programs with children**
3. **events and travel with children**
4. **research with children**
5. **publications about work with children and for children**
6. **advocacy and campaign in the area of children's rights**
7. **children as project activities' participants.**

Children participating at E#D activities

All projects and activities of the E#D that relate to children or in which children are involved are based on respecting child protection principles, and especially the principle of protecting the interests and well-being of the child.

In order to act in accordance with its motto: *Happy, sustainable, inclusive, modern and democratic school!*, the EuroSoc#Digital gGmbH always strives in its activities to **ensure such conditions** that will allow children to feel **safe, protected** from any form of violence and exploitation and respected and especially **empowered for critical thinking and expressing their ideas and attitudes.**

In this sense, **every child in all its diversity** (gender, age, racial, ethical, religious affiliation and other characteristics) has an equal right to education and the right to meaningfully participate in relevant programs.

The right of **every child to participate** is in special focus with regard to the context of activity. As E#D considers the child - to be the centre of the educational

process, it pays particular attention to **listening to and empowering the voice of children and young people** through various research activities and focus groups, encouraging children and young people to co-create project activities and empower children and young people as initiators of change in their schools and local communities.

Also, as one of our key beneficiaries are educators, in all activities, especially educational ones, E#D acts in the direction of strengthening and raising awareness of understanding the importance of the student's voice and creating a safe and stimulating environment for its stronger expression.

Research with children

The EuroSoc#Digital gGmbH in all the programs and projects it implements, in which children and young people are interviewed, respects the principles and provisions of the **Code of Ethics for Research with Children** and the instructions of the ministries and agencies responsible for education, unless they are inconsistent with the Convention and /or other relevant internationally recognized documents.

Programs, publications and educational content

E#D projects are aimed at expanding and deepening general, scientific and professional knowledge about children, and the acquired knowledge is used to promote the general well-being of children. Accordingly, E#D wherever possible and suitable for activities and publications, requests, along with a positive opinion from the relevant ministry and agency, a peer review by relevant experts from the academic community.

Also, in its **publishing and advocacy activities**, it promotes the same conditions for children and advocates for their positive development, especially in the system of upbringing and education, but also in other areas of society.

Within its vision, E#D **advocates for a society and education system** based on the **principles of equality, equality, free choice, pluralism, democracy and social responsibility**, which enables each individual to fully develop personal potentials and competencies.

2. People – individual responsibility and expectations

Employees, partners, external collaborators and volunteers of E#D have the obligation and responsibility in their work to protect and promote the welfare of children and to provide space for cooperation and respect for the needs of the children. They also have an obligation to **assess any risk** that a certain activity may have for an individual child or children as a group, and to reduce the identified risks. Likewise, they have the **obligation to report any suspicion of abuse or exploitation** of children that they come across to the competent persons in the organisation, as well as to the competent institutions. Failure to report prohibited behavior is also considered a violation of this policy and internal rules. In accordance with the procedures and strategic documents of the E#D, **only certified trainers and trained volunteers of the E#D can participate in direct work with children and young people**. Information about this document and all its principles, rules and procedures is contained in the certification process, and in their individual work and service contracts.

Strictly prohibited behaviours

All persons who are involved in direct work with children as part of E#D programs or projects may not:

- physically harm the child in any way;
- develop relationships with the child that could in any way be offensive or considered exploitative;
- behave in a way that embarrasses, humiliates, belittles or degrades a child or otherwise represents any form of emotional abuse;
- discriminate against or favour a particular child;
- develop romantic and/or sexual relations with the child;
- behave in a manner that is indecent, harassing, disturbing or sexually provocative;
- use inappropriate language, make suggestions and offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive or humiliating;
- act in a way that could put the child at risk of being abused;
- fail to respond adequately to observed dangerous or violent behaviour of the child and towards the child;
- expose the child to inappropriate content such as violence or pornography;
- take or publish photos, videos or written works of a child for the purpose of promoting activities without the written consent of the child and the parents or guardians
- plan meetings, focus groups or interviews with children without written consent of the child and the parents or guardians.

E#D will apply the measures prescribed by the Work Regulations to a person who is found to have violated these standards in any way.

Positive practices All persons who are involved in direct work with children as part of programs or projects (employees, trainers, volunteers, external collaborators), and represent E#D, are obliged in their work to:

- **behave with equal respect and appreciation** towards every child regardless of gender, gender identity, national, ethnic and religious affiliation, social status, physical or mental condition or any other characteristics;
- behave **inclusively**, respecting the needs of each child, and also encourage others to behave in this way by their example and activities;
- **predict possible risks** for the child and plan preventive actions plan and organise work in such a way as to **minimise potential risks** enable **each child to openly express** his problems, opinions, suggestions and take them into account with respect and consideration;
- **enable children to participate** in decision-making processes about individual activities that relate to them in order to be co-creators of solutions for their needs;
- **encourage transparency and invite children to speak openly** about other employees, volunteers and external collaborators and encourage them to express their thoughts and concerns using age appropriate methodology;
- **acquaint children with their rights** and the way to act in case of violation of those rights, and also with their responsibility to respect the rights of others;
- **seek consultation and advice on potential doubts** or lack of competence for a specific area relevant to the protection of children and children's rights with other employees and experts of the organisation;
- **report to the person in the E#D responsible for Child protection policy** any suspicion of behaviour that may endanger the health and integrity of the child;
- **report to the competent institutions** any observed behaviour that may endanger the health and integrity of the child.

The EuroSoc#Digital gGmbH is obliged to:

- **check references for new employees, collaborators and partners, especially verification of clean criminal record inform employees, external collaborators and volunteers** about the principles, procedures and rules contained in this document;
- **organise yearly internal training** on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA);
- **encourage employees, external collaborators and volunteers for additional education**, where necessary, for the implementation of this policy or in general in the field of child protection.

3. Procedures and actions in child protection

With the goal of acting in the best interest of the child and protecting and promoting their rights, E#D defines procedures and actions in certain areas of activity to ensure direct compliance with the principles of child protection, to prevent any form of abuse, exploitation or non-respect of children's rights, and to appropriately act in cases where harm occurs to children or an individual child.

E#D also defines standards of conduct that describe the procedures by which we strive to ensure a safe environment for children. The process of reference checking employees, volunteers and external collaborators of the E#D includes obtaining an official confirmation that no criminal proceedings are being conducted against the person, as well as an Extract from the criminal (and in some cases, misdemeanour) records.

The EuroSoc#Digital gGmbH is obliged to:

- require all activity implementers **to meet the legal requirements** for working with children and young people
- **a screening procedure** for job candidates which includes reference checks and a self-declaration by the job candidate that they have never been subject to sanctions for crimes against children (disciplinary, administrative or criminal).
- **whenever possible, include a standard clause into the organisation's contracts and partnership agreements** requiring collaborators to adopt policies on child protection and to take measures to prevent and respond to any violations.
- **hold mandatory training** for all personnel and all volunteers on child protection and relevant procedures
- for all projects that include direct work with children, **choose partners carefully**, check their practices and ask for inspection of their documents that protect children's rights
- **cooperate with competent institutions** in case of suspicion of abuse or exploitation of children by employees, volunteers or external collaborators
- **cooperate with educational workers** and all other experts in promoting the well-being of children and young people
- **seek expert opinion** and approval from the competent ministry and agency for education for all key programs that are carried out directly with children,
- **request the written consent** of the parent or guardian, and/or the consent of the principal of the educational institution where applicable; as well as child's own consent, for participation, for all children who participate in programs, projects and activities,

- **request the consent of the child and the written consent of the parents or guardians** on a pre-prepared form, for taking and recording audio, photographic or video materials and publishing them on websites, social networks and other media for promotional and educational purposes.

Analysis and elimination of risks Before organising any activity that directly or indirectly involves children, the project team will analyse potential risks for endangering children's rights and exclude them in every possible way.

Doubts about violation of these rules and principles by employees, volunteers, external collaborators.

E#D will apply the measures prescribed by the Work Regulations to a person who has violated these standards in any way.

A person who has doubts that a violation of children's rights has happened will immediately inform the person responsible for monitoring the Child Protection Policy. E#D will, within its capacities, gather necessary information and will proceed according to the law and continue to cooperate with the institutions and the police.

Suspicion of abuse, exploitation and/or neglect of children

The E#D undertakes to provide every employee, external collaborator and volunteer with instructions and information on where and how to report any observed abuse and/or exploitation of a child. Personnel, beneficiaries and communities, including children are encouraged and supported to report any allegations against CPP, in a safe, confidential, transparent and accessible way.

In case of suspicion or knowledge of any form of violation of a child's rights, and especially of all forms of abuse, exploitation and/or neglect, every employee, external collaborator and volunteer has following obligations:

- **notify the project manager** and/or the competent person in the Forum (the head of children's rights protection) about the findings or suspicions
- **inform the responsible persons of the collaborating institution** within which the contact with the child happened
- in agreement with the competent person from E#D **inform the centre for social welfare, the police and/or the competent municipal attorney's office.**
Competent authorities are contacted for investigation procedures.

Appropriate corrective actions are taken in response to the allegations, should they occur.

Children are referred to available support services locally.

3.1. Example: Guidelines for organizing events including children and young people

CONFERENCE (SEMINAR, WORKSHOP) _____ is a joint event in which children, young people and adults participate, therefore it is important that the overall environment in which the event takes place is safe and respectful for all participants, especially for children and young people.

In this regard, we remind you of some important rules of behaviour and communication:

- Treat all participants, regardless of their age (especially children and young people), with respect and without discrimination.
- When communicating with other participants, strive to adhere to high standards of personal and professional behaviour.
- Protect your own health, safety and well-being, as well as the health, safety and well-being of other participants.
- Pay attention to potential situations of increased risk of peer violence and discrimination.
- Pay attention to your way of communication, the way you express yourself and the language (expressions) you use and how other participants (especially children and young people) may perceive it.
- Through your behaviour and communication, create conditions for all participants (especially children and young people) to feel safe and accepted so that they can participate actively.
- Encourage children and young people to express their opinions. Encourage and help them to say what they want and when they want to say it in the way they want.
- Be open to the opinions and experiences of other participants.
- Pay special attention to the confidentiality of information about children and young people participating in this event. For the entire duration of the event, pay attention not to share private and confidential information about children, young people and their families.
- During the conference, children and young people are not allowed access to alcohol and other addictive substances. We especially warn adult participants to refrain from consuming alcohol and other addictive substances in the presence of children and young people.

In the same way, we also warn against unacceptable behavior:

- Do not engage in any type of illegal behavior with children and young people (e.g. drinking alcohol, inappropriate touching and socializing, physical punishment).
- Do not use inappropriate jokes and swear words in communication with children and young people.
- Under no circumstances should you discriminate, humiliate, belittle or degrade children and young people, their opinions and experiences.
- If you notice illegal and undesirable behavior towards children and young people during the event, be sure to report them to the conference organizers.
- Do not photograph or record other conference participants, especially children and young people, without their permission.
- Do not ask children and young people for their contacts (mobile number, contact on social networks).
- Do not enter rooms where children and young people spend the night (unless you are an educator or specialist from the institution where the child comes from). If you believe that it is necessary due to the security situation to enter a room where children and young people are staying, you must do so with educators/experts who are known to the child/young person and who accompany them.
- Don't be alone with a child or young person you don't know in any circumstances that others might question.

In case of any transgressions, E#D will immediately ensure safety and protection of involved children and youth, evaluate the severity of actions and take adequate measures (ranging from preventive, consultative, as well as reporting when necessary).

Dear young participants, if at any time during your participation in the event you feel that your rights are not respected or your safety is threatened, you can contact _____ who is in charge of taking care of all your complaints, questions or concerns. You can reach her in emergency situations on the following mobile phone number: _____. You can definitely contact your educators: teachers, parents and other trusted adults.

4. Responsibility for monitoring

The EuroSoc#Digital gGmbH regularly monitors the implementation of the Child Protection Policy, and the responsibility is defined by the following levels:

- at the activity level, the implementing person (trainer, researcher) is responsible; at the project level, the project manager is responsible; at the level of E#D, the person responsible for supervising the implementation of the
- Child Protection Policy is the Head of the protection of children's rights - appointed by the Executive Board from among the employees.

The Head of the protection of children's rights monitors the implementation, collects information from project managers and presents it to the Executive Committee.

He/she carefully monitors the level and severity of potential violations and acts accordingly: taking preventive and educational measures, coaching and counselling, providing feedback, communicating consequences and taking appropriate measures when necessary.

This document is regularly harmonised with the conclusions of the evaluations, and the revised document is approved by the Executive Board. The approved revised document is published on the organisation's website, and all staff, collaborators and volunteers involved in working with children become familiar with it.

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