**Code of Conduct for Appreciative Cooperation**

At [name of company], we endeavour to ensure an inclusive working environment, one based on mutual respect and appreciation. We maintain that every team member has an unconditional right to be treated with respect, dignity and fairness – regardless of gender, ethnic background, ideology, disability, age or sexual orientation, and regardless of position, length of service with the company or other occupational factors.

It is our highest priority as a company to create a work climate in which our employees feel safe, comfortable and welcome. It is our intention that, in this environment, they be able to develop to their full potential and express their creativity. [name of company] therefore utterly condemns and expressly prohibits any form of discrimination, unfair disadvantage, degradation, insult, harassment or violence in the workplace. Every employee has the unconditional right to physical and mental integrity. Any employee who behaves in violation of this policy shall therefore be subject to disciplinary measures. These may lead to legal steps and to the immediate termination of the offending employee’s employment contract.

This policy applies to all directly employed staff of, and independent contractors to, [name of company], as well as to the company’s customers, partners and external service providers. The Code of Conduct applies both within [name of company] and whenever and wherever company employees participate in work-related activities, including events, social activities and business trips.

We wish to encourage anyone who has personally experienced any form of discrimination, unfair disadvantage, degradation, insult, harassment or violence in the workplace, or who is aware of colleagues experiencing such treatment, to report the relevant incident(s) in a timely manner. Violations of the policy may be reported either directly to the company management, to a trusted person within the company, to a complaints office or to the Human Resources department.

According to Germany’s [AGG](https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/agg/__2.html) (General Act on Equal Treatment), a person or group is subject to unfair **disadvantage** or **discrimination** whenthey are not granted equal opportunity, for example in hiring, occupational training and development, pay or promotion, on the basis of race or ethnic background, gender, religion or ideology, disability, age or sexual identity.

The [AGG](https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/agg/BJNR189710006.html#BJNR189710006BJNG000200000) defines as **harassment** any inappropriate and undesired behaviour intended to injure the dignity of the person concerned, or to create an intimidating, hostile, demeaning, humiliating or insulting environment. Harassment encompasses all words, gestures and actions expressed personally or by telephone, email or other means to the above-named ends. It may involve a one-time incident or a series of incidents.

Examples of harassment in the workplace include, but are not limited to:

* insulting comments, jokes or images that refer to personal characteristics
* the spreading of (malicious) rumours or untruths
* the use of obscene and/or insulting language
* the spreading of written or graphic material in which hostility towards a person or group can be recognised

**Sexual harassment** is a further form of harassment, consisting of any undesired behaviour of a sexual nature with the intention of injuring the dignity of the person concerned or creating an intimidating, hostile, demeaning, humiliating or insulting environment. This is likewise defined in the [AGG](https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/agg/BJNR189710006.html#BJNR189710006BJNG000200000). Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

* undesired sexual actions or advances, or requests to perform sexual actions made without the agreement of the person concerned
* undesired physical closeness or physical contact of a sexual nature
* implicit or explicit promises of rewards with the intent of obtaining consent to engage in sexual actions
* reprisal or the threat of reprisal following the rejection of a (sexual) advance
* undesired display or public posting of sexual/pornographic images
* inappropriate sexual jokes, sexually suggestive remarks/insinuations

According to Section 184 i of the StGB (German Criminal Code), sexual harassment is punishable by a prison term of up to two years or by a monetary penalty. Sexual assault, sexual coercion and rape are punishable according to Section 177 of the StGB by a prison term of from six months to five years.

**Violence** in the workplace consists of the use of physical force or the attempted use of physical force against one or more team members with the intention of causing physical injury by striking, shoving or other actions. This area further includes the verbal or written threat of physical violence via email, chat, etc.

At [name of company], we categorically reject all forms of violence in the workplace. We shall take all appropriate measures to protect our employees from such violence, including all legal means (in particular in accordance with the StGB and disciplinary measures).

Discrimination, unfair disadvantage, degradation, insult, harassment and violence in the workplace must not be understood as trivial offences or as playful situations. They must never be taken as a source of humour and in no case may they be viewed as appropriate means of team building. [name of company] takes every violation of this Code of Conduct very seriously and we pledge to investigate every incident of discrimination, unfair disadvantage, degradation, insult, harassment or violence in the workplace justly and in a timely manner. We accord the highest priority to maintaining the privacy of all persons affected and respecting this at all stages and levels. No disadvantage shall arise to any employee who brings forward a complaint under this policy. Furthermore, [name of company] strictly forbids retaliatory measures of any kind against employees who report violations.

Disciplinary measures shall be taken against employees who deliberately submit fraudulent complaints against colleagues.

By means of this Code of Conduct, we seek to create a working environment which allows everyone to feel comfortable at [name of company] and encourages them to stay with the company.