



## Vulnerable Persons Protection Policy

01.03.2022

The aim of this policy is to ensure the safeguarding of vulnerable individuals, including children, involved in the activities of European Alternatives (EA).

### 1. Our Activities

EA works to promote **democracy, equality and culture beyond the nation-state** and **imagine, demand and enact alternatives** for a viable future for Europe.

#### We are doing this by:

- **Articulating** a radical, long-term vision of democratic, just and culturally-open politics, society and culture beyond the nation-state for Europe and for the world.
- **Experimenting** with forms of action that contribute to transformative change in political institutions, society, the economy and imagination.
- **Building** the capacity, mutual-awareness and connection of members, activists and organisations working in line with our values.
- **Advancing and defending** human, fundamental, civic, democratic and social rights across borders.

In practice, this means:

- We encourage and coordinate collaboration between activists and NGOs beyond borders. To this end, we often organise meetings and encounters which can include travel and residential stays. We work with artists, activists, and encourage citizen participation and engagement. Most of the time, we work in partnership with organisations and individuals who share our objectives and goals to develop events.
- We coordinate and propose cultural and artistic events for the general public, during which we welcome people of all ages and backgrounds.
- We conduct research, campaign and communicate on matters that are related to our core interests and values.

## 2. Our Values

**Our values guide how we work to pursue our mission:**

**Transnational and local:** we believe local and regional initiatives benefit from going beyond national boundaries and interests.

**Transdisciplinary:** we believe alternatives are generated at the intersection of disciplines and are enriched by diverse expertise and perspectives.

**Creative and experimental:** we believe in the power of the arts and culture to unlock imaginaries and in the necessity of acting and learning through experimentation

**Open, inclusive and feminist:** we believe in a culturally open society and in diversity as a precondition for sustainable alternatives to emerge.

**Empowering and participatory:** we provide the space for citizens to network, and ensure our activities and events give space for co-creation and participation.

**Anti-Eurocentric:** we believe that involving other parts of the world in our reflections and activities is necessary to facilitate the emergence of new alternatives.

## 3. Why We Have a Safeguarding Policy

In the course of its programmes and public activities, EA's employees and volunteers come into contact with people who are potentially vulnerable or at risk. EA recognises its duty to identify and protect such people in the course of its actions and to have a 'Do Not Harm' policy. For EA, this means interrogating our actions ahead of time for potential causes of harm, and ensuring mitigation measures are put in place for any identified risks. At the same time, EA refuses to victimise people on the basis of their having one or several of these characteristics and absolutely wants to avoid developing a paternalistic approach: it does so by first considering each person in her/his richness and power and recognising their knowledge as well as providing safer and empowering environment of work.

Although, outside of public events and workshops, EA is not usually in direct contact with vulnerable people, we take a do no harm approach. We consider the responsibility of EA to limit the harm it may inadvertently cause as a result of its organisational activities.

The definition of vulnerability according to Oxford Languages Dictionary is as follows: *"the quality or state of being exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed, either physically or emotionally."*

Everyone may be subject to being vulnerable at times. However, EA recognises that some people are more likely to be vulnerable because of their current situation or their belonging to certain discriminated-against groups. People can additionally experience

several layers of vulnerabilities when several characteristics intersect, increasing their vulnerability

The following are common causes of discrimination and factors which increase the risk of vulnerability:

- Children or older adults (65+)
- People suffering from physical or mental disability or sickness, whether temporarily or permanently. This includes pregnant women.
- People who belong to, or are perceived to belong to, certain groups, including as related to race (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour - BiPoC, indigenous people), religion or gender or sexual orientation.
- People experiencing legal issues, especially related to their residential status in their country of residence.
- People who are especially politically engaged may be more vulnerable to targeting in their countries of birth or residence. The lack of boundaries between the personal and political in activism can additionally cause vulnerability to burnout.
- People living in poverty or situations of financial precariousness.

EA recognises the need to ensure the wellbeing and safety of all vulnerable individuals involved in or touched by its activities as one of its core priorities. It is the responsibility of EA to make sure its staff, operations, and programmes do not expose children or vulnerable adults to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns or incidents can be reported to the appropriate authorities.

EA is committed to ensuring the safety and protection of all people involved in its activities, and takes special measures to protect the most vulnerable, paying special attention to concerns of intersectional and overlapping vulnerabilities. This goes hand in hand with EA's commitment to empowering of people at risk of exclusion, marginalisation or discrimination and to fighting all forms of discrimination.

EA holds the following standards and beliefs in conducting its activities:

- The welfare of any child, young person or vulnerable adult involved in EA is of paramount importance.
- All children and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, social class, culture, disability, gender, language, ethnic origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- The rights, wishes and feelings of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and their families, should be respected and listened to.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Zero tolerance towards harm.

This policy details the measures that EA takes to ensure the protection of children and vulnerable persons. It details its zero-tolerance approach towards harm and do not harm approach. It identifies risks and provides mitigation measures, defines the code of conduct for staff/volunteers, and presents its commitment to report violations to the relevant authorities

This policy provides guidance on appropriate standards, on staff recruitment and training, on professional boundaries, on governance oversight and on procedures for reporting concerns and incidents.

This policy applies to anyone representing, working or volunteering for EA, including senior staff, trustees, board members, volunteers, interns, researchers and students.

## **4. Our Commitments**

### **a. Adopting the Policy**

The safeguarding policy is adopted by means of vote by the [Transnational Board of Trustees of EA](#), which is the governance body of the organisation. This policy was initially adopted by the staff and board of EA in January 2021, and was updated in March 2022.

### **b. Dissemination of the Policy**

This policy is available online on our website and is shared with our partners. Reference to it is made in all communications with partners, including within formal contract agreements. The policy is submitted to employees, collaborators and volunteers at the start of any collaboration. This policy is shared with all members of staff and volunteers and trainings are delivered to the people working or volunteering with EA, who may be in contact with vulnerable individuals. Staff, Volunteers and Partners are involved in ad-hoc assessments of risks during the preparation phase of activities.

### **c. Identified Risks and preventive action**

As a general approach to Safeguarding, EA ensures, as mentioned in action plan, that all staff, collaborators, volunteers and partners of EA are aware of its safeguarding policies and practices by presenting it to them when they start work with EA and by involving them in risk assessment at the beginning of each new project/activity.

#### **Safe Recruitment & Professional Boundaries:**

All persons working for, collaborating with, representing, studying with or volunteering with EA are made aware of this vulnerable people protection policy as part of their induction. They are asked to adhere to this safeguarding policy by providing a signed version of a Code of Conduct.

Those staff members, collaborators and volunteers who will be in direct contact with minors as part of our activities will be required to provide background checks and references from previous employers or others.

EA staff and board members should disclose any relationship with a vulnerable adult participant in our activities moving beyond a purely professional relationship in a timely manner to the protection officer.

Staff and volunteers of EA should not share hotel rooms with minors or vulnerable persons, nor find themselves in situations in which they are alone with a vulnerable person in private and secluded spaces, except in exceptional cases related to ensuring the safety or wellbeing of the persons concerned. In the case of minors, this should only ever occur with the express permission of parents or guardians.

Contractors such as babysitters working with EA at its activities for the purposes of providing childcare for the children of adult participants will be required to provide appropriate background check information, in line with national regulations in the country of implementation.

All volunteers, interns, or staff members who will be in direct contact with minors or vulnerable persons will be required to undergo a specific training related to the project, based on this policy document. EA delivers one training session to all staff, collaborators, volunteers and partners of EA who are likely to be in contact with children and vulnerable people before the start of the action.

**Working with Partners:** Most projects and activity EA leads, is realised in collaboration with partners (listed on the website for each project). Partners may not be acquainted with safeguarding policies and practices. EA collaborates with volunteers during events and freelancers for actions such as communication and press. They may not be aware safeguarding policies and practices prior to their collaboration with EA. Preventive and mitigation measures described below apply to partners and collaborators, including reference to the present policy and events protocols in contractual relationships with partners and collaborators.

## **Identified Risks and Mitigation Measures in Specific Activities and Events:**

EA organises public events, such as conferences, workshops, artistic performances and international travel for workshops and trainings, which may lead to specific risks for vulnerable people. Preventive actions spreading across all actions by EA include awareness raising, training, protocols and respect of predefined good practices (described below), evaluation and assessments.

- **During public events:** there is increased risk of verbal abuse and attacks, sexual and physical abuse due potentially since there is exposure in one place to a large number of people who are not previously known by the organisation (free and open attendance to events), there are issues linked to accessibility (to space and to discussions) that may increase the state and feeling of vulnerability. EA also organises activities, such as trainings, workshops, public events specifically with some groups that are more at risk of being vulnerable (migrants, Black, Indigenous and People of Colour - BIPoC persons, (platform) workers, feminists and LGBTQI+ activists) and does create occasions that may increase vulnerability (travel, discussions on difficult topics). A specific risk assessment is be realised ahead of each specific occasion as set up in the [events protocol](#).
- **During international travel:** there is increased risk of sexual and physical abuse due to change of location, use of public transports, stay overnight in hotels. There are multiple issues linked to accessibility (mostly physical but also legal, due to legal papers such as visas for instance) that may increase the state and feeling of vulnerability and/or wellness. Travel may also increase the feeling of vulnerability due to being in an unknown place.
- **Communication, Use of Images and Data Protection:** The use of image of vulnerable individuals online or sharing their location may, in some instances, create situations of risks. For this reason, EA is strictly respecting [its privacy policy](#) and collecting prior consent before using any visual material showing individuals. Photographs and videos of minors are only being published by EA with the express permission of parents and/or guardians. Photographs and videos of vulnerable adults will only be published by EA with their express permission, and following an internal evaluation of any potential risk to the person themselves, their community, or to EA, its reputation and staff, of publishing such photographs and/or videos. EA checks with individuals involved in its work, whether staff, volunteers, service providers or others, that they agree EA posting information on social media about their collaboration. As far as possible, EA verifies the content of social media posts with individuals referred to ahead of publication. EA commits to amending, deleting or correcting information posted on social media, based on justified requests from collaborators.
- Specific risks and mitigation policies are associated to **research activities and artists' residencies** in remote areas as mentioned in table 1 below.

**Table 1 below presents identified specific occasions of risks and mitigation measures associated**

Type of activity	Potential vulnerable groups involved	Partnership yes/no	Risks	Level of risk	Mitigation measures
<b>Public events (conference, workshops, artistic and cultural events) in rented or lent premises</b>	Migrants, People of Disadvantaged Socio-economic backgrounds, BiPOC, women, children accompanied with their parents, young adults, people under 18, Activists, Artists	yes	Verbal abuse of vulnerable individuals, potentially Physical Abuse on the side of the events in premises by member of staff or public attendee	Moderated risk as these are public events, taking place in public	<p>Beforehand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training of staff and volunteers</li> <li>Sharing Vulnerable People Policy with partners</li> <li>Ad hoc risk assessment with concerned individuals</li> </ul> <p>On site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Placards on Safer Space Approach by EA (referring to Vulnerable Persons Protection Policy) hung in meetnig room including email contact safe@euroalter.com</li> <li>Introductory talk about safer space and pointing out at referent people standing in the room</li> <li>Flyers made available with details on safer space policy and details</li> </ul> <p>After:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immediate Action in case of harm report or suspicion</li> <li>After: evaluation and assesment of risks, and mitigation measures implementation</li> </ul>
<b>Travel and stay-at workshops and training (which involve travel and hotel stays)</b>	Migrants, People of Disadvantaged Socio-economic backgrounds, BiPOC, women, children accompanied with their parents, young adults, Accompanied people under 18, Activists, Artists	yes	Risk associated with travel: property lost or stolen, potential for sexual and verbal abuse	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under 18 are accompanied by responsible adult</li> <li>Ad hoc risk assessment with concerned individuals and staff responsible</li> <li>No share of rooms between adults and under 18, except if responsible family members</li> <li>Where shared rooms between adult participants are envisaged as part of group travel, this must be based on the prior consent of the persons involved, with separate beds, and the possibility for changing room or moving to a single room on request.</li> <li>Safe Travel Info Sheet provided to travellers with all information regarding contact points in case of issue</li> <li>Detailed travel sheets provided to avoid travel issues</li> <li>Attention to schedules and transparent information on programme of event and activities (events protocol)</li> <li>Immediate Action in case of harm report or suspicion</li> <li>After: evaluation and assesment of risks, and mitigation measures implementation</li> </ul>
<b>Research activities (interviews, polls)</b>	Migrants, People of Disadvantaged Socio-economic backgrounds, BiPOC, women, children accompanied with their parents, young adults, people under 18, Activists, Artists	yes	Risk associated with data management and research ethics: i.e. risk of personal information being available to other purposes than research, rish associated with photo and video content	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ad hoc risk assessment with staff responsible</li> <li>Data protection policy and practice of the organisation includes anonymisation and protection of data in safe places accessible to main researcher only</li> <li>For video and photo: consent forms are being collected</li> <li>Researchers trained and informed on vulnerable people policy and Ethics policy document of the organisation</li> <li>After: evaluation and assesment of risks, and mitigation measures implementation</li> </ul>
<b>Communication (social media posts, videos, etc)</b>	Migrants, People of Disadvantaged Socio-economic backgrounds, BiPOC, women, children accompanied with their parents, young adults, people under 18, Activists, Artists	yes	Risk associated with public mention of vulnerable individuals on social media (online and physical attacks of activists for instance) Risk associated with data management (share of sensitive data) Rish associated with photo and video content	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data protection policy and practice of the organisation includes anonymisation and protection of data in safe places accessible to main researcher only</li> <li>For video and photo: consent forms are being collected</li> <li>Communication staff trained and informed on vulnerable people policy</li> <li>Consultation with people mentioned in organisation communication prior to public release of the communication</li> <li>Immediate Action in case of requests regarding social media and other public posts</li> <li>After: evaluation and assesment of risks, and mitigation measures implementation</li> </ul>
<b>Long term artist residencies in remote areas</b>	Artists	yes	Health (physical and mental) hazards and risks Increased risks of sexual assaults due to increased vulnerability for not being in a known place	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate travel policy purchased</li> <li>Support team and contact details provided onsite</li> <li>Sound check of people's ability to deal with the situation before departure and full transparency on potential issue during induction sessions online and in person</li> <li>Ad hoc risk assessment with concerned individuals</li> <li>Safe Travel Info Sheet provided to travellers with all information regarding contact points in case of issue</li> <li>Immediate Action in case of harm report or suspicion</li> <li>After: evaluation and assesment of risks, and mitigation measures implementation</li> </ul>

## Management of incidents / complaints

**Zero Tolerance:** Zero tolerance policy applies to all forms of discrimination and abuse. EA maintains a zero tolerance policy for the sexual abuse of children or vulnerable adults by EA staff, volunteers, contractors, subcontractors and participants in their care. Anyone found guilty of such offence will be subject to immediate dismissal and prosecution within the law of the relevant jurisdiction.

Children and vulnerable persons shall be provided an adequate, safe and protective environment to disclose any claims related to abuse and discrimination. All claims shall be treated seriously, adequately and without delay. EA is committed to report violations to relevant authorities as soon as possible and to support individuals with the reporting process.

**Internal Incident Reporting:** A formal incident reporting procedure to immediately report any concerns regarding safeguarding issues is in place.

EA is committed to dealing with all serious concerns and allegations regarding the safety of individuals involved with its activities. It is also committed to reporting violations to police as soon as possible and to supporting individuals in this process. The safeguarding focal point is responsible for managing any incident reports, proceeding with internal investigations and procedures and reporting to relevant authorities if/when necessary. This person may be assisted by another member of staff or another individual for language reasons if needed.

Governance and staff member responsible: For 2022, EA's Safeguarding Focal Point is Ségolène Pruvot: s.pruvot@euroalter.com, the Trustees Focal Point is Marcia Baratto (marciabt@gmail.com). This information shall be public and easily accessible.

To allow reporting: At each occasion in which EA is meeting public and potential vulnerable people, several reference people are pointed out so as to be easily identifiable, either in supporting documents and/or verbally in person and/or with a recognisable item, such as a ribbon. An email address is provided to participants of EA activities – i.e. safe@euroalter.com - to which they can/should report any concerns related to safety and wellbeing. This email address is mentioned on our website and on supporting documents distributed or hung at events to explain about Safe Space and Safeguarding Policy of EA.

Swiftness of Action: Any serious reports will be dealt with swiftly and adequately, immediately in cases where the risk is ongoing and within 5 days for incidents where the risk no longer exists.

Confidentiality: Allegations of abuse will be handled with utmost confidentiality and on a need-to-know basis. Information will be shared exclusively with the safeguarding focal point, parents/guardians in the case of minors, and with public authorities where necessary.



## d. Implementation of the policy

The safeguarding focal point is also responsible for the policy's implementation. All team members have signed a Code of Conduct to commit to respect and follow it.

EA commits to respecting the Safeguarding Action Plan (Available upon request), which is to be updated when relevant.

### Further References:

EA acknowledges the following documents as references for this safeguarding policy. This is a non-exhaustive list.

- Keeping Children Safe, The International Child Safeguarding Standards: <https://www.keepingchildrensafe.global/accountability/>
- UN Convention on Rights of the Child: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>
- Combating Discrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: Council of Europe Standards: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/sogi/council-of-europe-standards>
- Draft Recommendations on Addressing Hate Speech: <https://rm.coe.int/background-for-adi-msi-dis-june-2020/16809f6b6d>
- Digital Ethics Compass: <https://ddc.dk/tools/toolkit-the-digital-ethics-compass/>
- Compilation of European Commission against Racism and Intolerance's General Policy Recommendations - Council of Europe  
<http://rm.coe.int/compilation-of-ecri-s-general-policy-recommendations-march-2018/16808b7945>
- Creating Safe Spaces, Women Win Guides: <https://guides.womenwin.org/srhr/programme-design/safe-spaces/creating-safe-space>
- Countering Hate Speech and Far Right Radicalism in CEE, Training Series: <https://euroalter.com/project/countering-hate-speech-and-far-right-radicalism-in-cee-training-series/>