

Solidar and Solidar Foundation

# CODE OF CONDUCT

---

*Type of document:* Constituent Documents  
*Decided by:* The General Assembly 2021-06-30  
*Responsible for the document:* The Board of Directors  
*Latest update:*  
*Latest review:*

---

Solidar and Solidar Foundation, hereinafter SOLIDAR, and our member organisations represent progressive civil society in Europe and beyond and have a long and proud history of international solidarity cooperation. This work has given us a sound reputation within the European community, in many individual countries of the world and among past and present partners. We are considered to be a reliable, effective, democratic and transparent European network and partner.

The code of conduct reflects the fundamental values of the European progressive movement and provides guidance on how to act as a representative of SOLIDAR. The purpose of the code of conduct is to maintain the good reputation of our movement, to ensure that all those who represent the organisation in different ways demonstrate a high level of professionalism in their work and to make accountability possible.

A number of other steering documents express the basic vision and objectives of SOLIDAR and should be seen as an integral part of this code of conduct. These include SOLIDAR 's by-laws, operational strategy, and internal rules.

The code of conduct covers all individuals and organisations that in any form enter into agreements with SOLIDAR. This means that in all cases, you must behave and act in accordance with the code of conduct and be alert and act to reduce the risk of violations.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Solidarity, equality, and participation are fundamental values of SOLIDAR and a prerequisite to achieve social justice and sustainable development.

Our work is based on relationships. These relationships between different actors: staff, member organisations, partner organisations and other international organisations, networks and institutions are essential for our work and should be characterised by mutual respect and sensitivity. Those covered by the code of conduct are expected to set an example in this respect and to be constructive and respectful in any conflict situations. There is a duty to act professional and to do everything in your power to ensure that the relations within your area of responsibility are the best they can be.

The financial, material, and human resources of SOLIDAR shall be managed responsibly. Acting responsibly refers to three main aspects (without any individual order): guaranteeing cost-efficiency, respecting the rights of every individual, and giving due consideration to the climate and the environment.

# RULES OF CONDUCT

## Conflict of interest

When decisions are taken that are not in the best interest of the organisation or its operations, a conflict of interest might be the reason. A conflict of interest arises irrespective of something happening or not, as long as there is a risk that it is perceived to exist. The existence of family ties, friendly relationships, or financial relationships between persons in our activities may affect the perception of SOLIDAR's credibility, impartiality, and independence. The existence of a conflict of interest is particularly sensitive in relation to those who are in any way involved in our project activities. This applies to the management of financial resources, contracting, procurement, travel, assignment of missions and participation in activities. Those covered by the code of conduct shall report possible conflicts of interest to SOLIDAR's coordinators, Secretary General or Board. It is important to be particularly careful and abundantly clear if there is any uncertainty.

## Improper use of position of power

The activities of SOLIDAR are characterised by power relationships. This applies both in Europe as well as in other countries. A position of power must never be used improperly for someone's own benefit or at the expense of others. An economic, or other close relationship with a person who is, or may be perceived to be, dependent on you is inappropriate and shall be avoided, as through such a relationship you risk exposing the other party to negative consequences, both in the current relationship and in the future. Should such a relationship arise, the programme coordinator or the Secretary General of SOLIDAR shall be informed as soon as possible. In addition, a position of power must not be used to give other people advantages they would not normally have enjoyed. Conduct and relations shall be carried out in such a way that there can never be a perception that different services or benefits are expected or required.

## Corruption

SOLIDAR defines corruption as an abuse of trust or power which results in undue profit, often financial, for a person, an organisation, or a political party. Corruption includes bribery, embezzlement, and fraud, as well as conflict of interest, nepotism, and cronyism. What is perceived as corrupt behaviour is partly subjective and culturally determined and it is therefore important to have a dialogue on these issues with everyone involved in the activity. Corruption goes hand in hand with a lack of transparency and participation. SOLIDAR, our member organisations and our partners all have an important role to play in the anti-corruption work. Those covered by the code of conduct shall therefore act proactively and react to suspected irregularities in the projects or organisation with which they are working. If such are found, contact your immediate manager or the Secretary General of SOLIDAR.

To protect those covered by the code of conduct from suspicions of impropriety, gifts, remuneration, services, or other financial benefits with more than a purely symbolic value should not be accepted. Consult with your immediate manager in case of uncertainty.

## Security

Security concerns the work environment, safety, health and well-being of employees and partners, as well as the sustainability of the activities. SOLIDAR has the organisational security responsibilities for its employees and is responsible for discussing security aspects and measures with member

organisations and partner organisations. But safety and risk awareness are also a responsibility of the individual employee.

Security must be considered when planning accommodation and travel and must also be considered outside of working hours. Those covered by the code of conduct should do their utmost not to expose themselves or others to risk when travelling for work. It is important to be aware of, and avoid, risk behaviours that could lead to yourself, your colleagues or partners facing situations of conflict or reprisals by authorities, threats, violence, blackmail, or other dangers. Information shall be handled with care. This applies to all communications and information, especially digital. Carelessness could directly endanger colleagues, partners, and yourself.

## Information and data management

For SOLIDAR information and data management forms an essential part of our organisation, the tools we have at our disposal, and the way we strive for impact. Adherence to GDPR is key to be able to guarantee the integrity of our staff, members, and partners.

The dissemination of information through various channels is a central part of SOLIDAR's operations. Those covered by the code of conduct are expected to follow some key principles in relation to the media and the public. If you express yourself in the name of SOLIDAR or could be viewed as a representative of SOLIDAR, the views you express shall be in line with SOLIDAR's values and positions on a specific policy or process. Public platforms, such as social media, where applicable, shall not be used to reveal sensitive information or otherwise used in such a way as to put SOLIDAR's reputation at risk.

Disclosure of sensitive information, including personal information related to human resources, risks seriously compromising the security of staff, partners and activists, compromising SOLIDAR 's effectiveness, and reducing our credibility. Discretion is therefore expected, and sensitive information must not be disseminated. Information that has not been made public and that is known to you because of your position may not be used for private benefit. It is understood that this does not affect the exchange of information among colleagues and to carry out programmes.

## Alcohol and drugs

A restrictive approach to alcohol shall be observed in all operations in Belgium and in other countries. Alcohol consumption is only permitted in exceptional cases, such as public dinners and similar events. On these occasions, it is important that alcohol consumption is moderate. An 'alcohol relationship' must not be developed within the framework of SOLIDAR 's activities. Meetings and decisions must not be moved to the pub or similar establishments. When on trips on behalf of SOLIDAR, you should also restrict your alcohol consumption during your leisure time since you are a representative of SOLIDAR throughout your stay. Alcohol consumption is strictly forbidden when travelling by car and, as a passenger, you should always react if you suspect that the driver is under the influence of alcohol. All forms of involvement with and consumption of substances classified as illegal narcotics are prohibited both during working hours and leisure time. Exceptions are made if the substances relate to prescription medicine for personal use.

## Discrimination and harassment

SOLIDAR condemns all forms of harassment, bullying, discrimination, or any similar occurrences and will never tolerate such actions. No single person or group, regardless of gender, gender identity, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, social status, political opinion, or functional variation may be discriminated against. Within the framework of international solidarity, this commitment is also important as a proactive approach and cooperation should promote the participation of all people on equal terms and must not make participation more difficult or impossible for anyone.

## Sexual harassment, abuse, and sexual exploitation

No individual shall in any way be subjected to sexual harassment, whether in physical or mental form. Sexual harassment is a behaviour in working life of sexual nature that violates a job seeker or worker. It can involve touching, groping, jokes, suggestions, glances, and images that are sexually evocative and devaluing. It is the victim who decides whether the behaviour is unwelcome. All forms of sexual abuse and exploitation are prohibited, as are all forms of sexual contact between adults and children. It is unacceptable to exploit the vulnerability of a person or group.

## Purchase of sexual services and use of pornographic material

During work hours or when on a mission for the organisation, all transactions, money, employment, goods, or services, in exchange for sexual acts or other forms of degrading behaviour and exploitation are prohibited. These activities are strictly prohibited where deemed illegal also during leisure time. The purchase of sexual services here does not only refer to the purchase of sexual services in the traditional sense, it also includes what is sometimes called "private assistance", that is, payment of bills, rents, clothing, school fees, and so on in exchange for sexual services. Visits to brothels, porn or strip clubs and similar establishments should be avoided and is prohibited when on a mission. Furthermore, pornographic material must not be consumed using the technical equipment provided by SOLIDAR, where applicable. Finally, any involvement with child pornography material is strictly prohibited.

## Organised crime

Activities linked to organised crime exist in many parts of society. These may include, for example, purchasing cheap capital goods in markets, exchanging money, choosing accommodation, visiting restaurants, and booking hotels and conference facilities. It is important to be aware of the existence of organised crime to do your utmost to avoid indirectly supporting it.

## WHEN THE CODE OF CONDUCT IS INSUFFICIENT

In situations that are perceived as grey areas and are not described in the code of conduct, you should ask yourself: Is it legal, fair, and ethical? Are you sure that SOLIDAR, as an organisation, would not be damaged if the situation became known to the outside world? Would you accept the situation if you were a partner of SOLIDAR, a colleague, a representative of a donor organisation or other interested party? If there is still uncertainty, contact your immediate manager to discuss the issue further.

## VIOLATIONS OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Violations of the code of conduct or any suspicion of such shall be reported to SOLIDAR's employees, Secretary General, or members of the board, who are required to investigate the matter and act

accordingly. Given that information regarding violations may be very sensitive, it shall always be handled with care, both by the person providing the information and by the person receiving it.

It might not always be clear what is to be regarded as an infringement or not. If this is the case, those covered by the code of conduct are encouraged to consult SOLIDAR's employees, management, or relevant members of the board for advice. An active and open dialogue is essential.

The code of conduct is an integral part of all the agreements signed by SOLIDAR. This means that SOLIDAR can take contractual action in the unlikely event of a breach. Violations may result in disciplinary sanctions, the most extreme effect of which is dismissal or the end to a contract. The employee suspected of an infringement shall be informed in writing of the accusation and be given ten days to respond before any disciplinary action is taken.

National legislation shall be complied with by those covered by the code of conduct resident in Europe or in other countries if it does not conflict directly with international conventions. If an infringement of the code of conduct concerns a suspicion of a crime, the person concerned may also be reported to the police in Belgium or elsewhere.

## **OWNERSHIP AND FOLLOW-UP**

The content of this policy is reviewed and adopted annually by the Board of SOLIDAR. The Secretary General is responsible for ensuring that the policy and related documents are known and complied with in the organisation and that follow-up of compliance with the policy is conducted annually.