

TÜRKONFED

**DOCUMENT OF CONDUCT ON
EQUALITY AT WORKPLACE**

This document has been prepared for TÜRKNFED by the Women's Self-Defense Academy with the support of the Women's Power in Entrepreneurship project carried out in cooperation with TÜRKNFED & Türkiye İş Bankası.

TÜRKNFED DOCUMENT OF CONDUCT ON EQUALITY AT WORKPLACE

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**women's
self-defense
academy**

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¹ Addressing what needs to be completed with to avoid and to prevent occurrence (CoC)

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As TÜR KONFED, we embrace the problems of the business world and society with a polyphonic, impartial and constructive point of view. We consider the principles of conduct regarding equality the workplace not only as a fundamental human right; but a requirement for a peaceful, highly prosperous and sustainable world.

In line with this consciousness and awareness we possess; as TÜR KONFED;

- We pay regard to the universal human rights and freedoms and accept international conventions that protect these rights.
- We champion gender equality.
- We oppose all kinds of discrimination and violence.
- We care about the Sustainable Development Goals.
- We adopt a communication which is non-violent and sensitive to gender equality.

With the TÜR KONFED Document of Code of Conduct on Equality at Workplace², which we have prepared within the framework of our principle of creating a peaceful, fair and healthy working life for everyone, we aim to:

- Raise awareness of the employees on discrimination and violence,
- Determine the rights and responsibilities of the organizations, employees and executives, and
- Prevent all kinds of discrimination and violence.

Discrimination is defined by Amnesty International as inability of an individual to enjoy his/her human and other legal rights equally with others because of an unfair discrimination in terms of policy, law or treatment. TÜR KONFED believes that the Code of Conduct on Equality at Workplace will raise awareness in the business world; we invite all organizations to share this sensitivity, saying **NO to all kinds of DISCRIMINATION and VIOLENCE**.

² This document is based on the relevant articles of the Constitution of the Republic of Türkiye, particularly Article 10, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, national legislation and TÜR KONFED internal basic principles and policies.

2. INTRODUCTION

Gender equality has a priority position in TÜRKONFED's corporate approach and among the elements that constitute the basis of its activities. With the "TÜRKONFED Document Code of Conduct on Equality at Work" prepared in line with this priority, TÜRKONFED has taken an important step towards meeting in particular the goal 5 (Gender Equality), 10 (Reducing Inequalities) and 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Organizations) among the Sustainable Development Goals³ developed by the United Nations.

This document consists of seven subheadings in total: "Executive Summary", "Introduction", "Purpose & Scope", "Definitions", "Rights and Responsibilities", "Practical Recommendations and Resolution of Conflicts" and "Theories Recommended for Examination". "Executive Summary" includes the manifesto of this document; the headings "Introduction" and "Purpose & Scope" include its main focus and basis. The concepts used in the document and their explanations are given under the heading "Definitions", and the basic elements required for an equalitarian, healthy and violence-free working life in the contexts of TÜRKONFED, employees and executives are given in the section "Rights and Responsibilities". Lastly, the role and importance of the Ethics Board within the framework of the acceptance and commitment that all sexual harassment and assault allegations will be evaluated and necessary action will be taken and the basic approaches prescribed as necessary to be adopted and implemented by everyone within the organization are emphasized under the headings "Practical Recommendations and Resolution of Conflicts" and "Theories for Recommended for Examination".

3. PURPOSE & SCOPE

TÜRKONFED, the largest non-governmental organization of Türkiye with its independent and voluntary structure, takes its strength and effectiveness from the federations and associations which business people are members of. There are about 50 thousand companies under the roof of TÜRKONFED through 30 federations, of which 26 are regional and 4 are sectoral, and 284 associations. With its Document of Code of Conduct on Equality at Workplace, it is committed to stand against all kinds of possible discrimination, harassment, sexual and/or physical violence and aggression that may occur under its corporate roof, and in this respect to take all necessary precautions and actions to prevent such acts. This document aims to ensure that TÜRKONFED employees become aware of the acts of discrimination and harassment.

³ For detailed information about sustainable development goals:
<https://www.tr.undp.org/content/turkey/tr/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>

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4. DEFINITIONS⁴

It is important in terms of the sensitivity to be shown that everyone who reads the TÜRKONFED Document of Code of Conduct on Equality at Workplace understands, comprehends and embraces the same thing. In order to facilitate this process, the main concepts cited in this document and their explanations are given under this heading.

Discrimination is defined by Amnesty International as inability of an individual to enjoy his/her human and other legal rights equally with others because of an unfair discrimination in terms of policy, law or treatment. If an individual is not accepted to certain positions, cannot benefit from certain services, or is not treated equally with the people in the same position just because he/she is from a certain group/gender/origin etc., this means that the individual is being discriminated. Discrimination grounded on prejudice and stereotypes covers all attitudes and behaviors that create hierarchy between groups, increase the hierarchy, or maintain the existing hierarchy. Rejecting, restricting and excluding an individual and/or any group are among the primary acts of discrimination.

⁴ In preparing these definitions, the sources of Glossary of Concepts of the Association for Combating Sexual Violence, Turkuaz Lab Audio Dictionary and Feminist Memory were used.

Violence is, according to the definition of the World Health Organization, as a result of application of physical force or power is applied to another individual in the form of a deliberate threat or reality, causing or the possibility of causing injury, death and psychological harm to the individual subjected to the same. Gender-based violence is commitment of violence by an individual based on the gender he/she attributes to himself/herself or assigned to him/her. It is based on traditional stereotypes, roles and norms that are rooted in gender inequality. It can occur in different forms, including physical, economic, psychological/emotional, digital and sexual violence. A possible situation of violence may involve multiple types of violence. Brief explanations of these types of violence are as follows:

- **Physical violence** covers all kinds of assaults aimed at disrupting the bodily integrity of an individual. Attitudes and behaviors that aim to force an individual to do something or prevent him/her from doing something; aggressive acts such as pushing, hitting, using a cutting tool, etc., are among the examples of this type of violence. In addition, physical violence is not necessarily applied directly to the individual. The perpetrator's breaking and hitting objects in order to show his/her force and intimidate is also an example of physical violence.
- **Economic violence** covers all kinds of attitudes and behaviors aimed at leaving an individual at an economically/materially disadvantageous state, preventing him/her from realizing his/her potential, and/or impairing his/her current potential (demotivating him/her). Application of mobbing, preventing his/her access to basic services such as education and health, and seizing/controlling his/her money are examples of this type of violence.
- **Psychological/Emotional violence** covers all attitudes and behaviors that aim to reduce an individual's self-esteem and increase his/her fear and anxiety on any subject by targeting his/her mental health and emotions. Degrading, slandering, defaming, ignoring, blocking the individual, criticizing him/her destructively, keeping him/her away from his/her social environment, oppressing him/her, insulting him, saying offensive words under the name of joke" and applying mobbing based on his/her marital status, appearance, speaking style, gender, personality traits and/or choices are among the examples of this type of violence.

- **Digital violence** covers all attitudes and behaviors aimed at restricting, controlling, disturbing or humiliating an individual through technological channels/tools. Installing tracking tools, constantly calling, sending messages and/or e-mails, and posting the individual's private information (such as phone number, address, family information) are among the examples of this type of violence.
- **Sexual violence** covers all attitudes and behaviors aimed at forcing an individual to engage in a sexual act at a place, in a way and at a time he or she does not want without his/her consent. Any situation involving sexual violence may be an attempted, threatened and/or actual act. In understanding sexual violence, it is important to know the distinction between the concepts of sexual harassment and sexual assault expressed in the Turkish Penal Code:
 - Sexual harassment is all disturbing sexual discourse, attitudes and behaviors committed without the consent of the individual and not involving physical contact.
 - Sexual assault is a situation where an individual who does not consent or whose consent is not accepted for any reason (being underage or having mental illness) is exposed to a physical behavior involving sexual elements by forcing such as the use of physical and/or psychological force, threat, scaring, oppression, intimidation, cheating and deception due to his/her gender.

Psychological domination, according to Gordon (1999), refers to sovereignty/power established by pressure, or by consent and not based on pressure. It involves methods of establishing control over another person such as ignoring, degrading, shaming, violating the personal boundaries and gaslighting.

Personal boundaries refers to the physical and mental boundaries that an individual develops to avoid the possibility of being manipulated and/or discriminated by someone else and protect himself/herself. All attitudes and behaviors that involve violence, domination and discrimination, in which the private space and personal boundaries are violated (such as speaking with expressions such as "honey/dear" without asking permission, establishing one-sided intimacy), weaken the individual's self-esteem and causes the impairment of his/her self-confidence. Personal boundaries might not always be crossed in a very obvious way. For example; an employee making jokes about another employee based on marital status in the work environment.

Gaslighting is a type of psychological violence that refers to the constant manipulation of an individual in order to make him/her doubt his/her own reality, perception and memory. The person who commits violence acts consciously in order to gain any pecuniary/nonpecuniary interest.

Employee covers all employees and consultants who provide services within the TÜRKONFED staff.

Workplace may be any building or land where the employees providing service within the TÜRKONFED staff work, and covers the organizational visits and trips held within the scope of the field studies carried out, and 3rd parties and all other locations with which/where they work as necessitated by their activities.

Workplace violence and harassment is a range of attitudes and behaviors which aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm and are deemed inappropriate. It can occur as a single incident or repeated threats.

Psychological violence (mobbing) at the workplace is unethical communication and behaviors applied implemented consciously and systematically by one or several employee(s) with the aim of discouraging. It can manifest itself in both psychological, economic and digital forms of violence.

Victim of Violence refers to the individual(s) who has/have been the subject of violence at any time in their life.

Victimizer of violence refers to the individual(s) who attempt, threaten with and/or commit any act of violence.

Victim blaming is, in any situation of violence, attributing the responsibility for the act to the individual who is exposed to violence, not to the individual who commits it.

By-stander refers to the individual(s) who, when witnessing any situation of violence, remain(s) as a mere spectator or do(es) not intervene.

Non-violent communication, according to Rosenberg, means healthy and safe communication where elements of observation, emotion, need and expectation paid regard to and major communication barriers are abstained from.⁵

⁵ Details of the Non-violent Communication Theory, one of the best communication theories to prevent possible conflicts or to manage the moment of conflict, and the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse Theory, which includes the main communication obstacles, are given in the section 5.

Use of a gender equality-sensitive language refers to use of an equalitarian, sensitive and inclusive language by the employees in the TÜRKONFED staff instead of sexist/discriminatory expressions used by others or themselves regardless of the context in their working lives (office, field visits, etc.). Examples and strategies concerning use of gender equality-sensitive language are detailed in section 5.

5. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TÜR KONFED

- The personnel and executives working within TÜR KONFED undertake and declare that they will exhibit an equalitarian attitude in all areas of business and relations maintained in every area between the personnel working within the organization or in the field and external stakeholders.
- They are aware of their duty and responsibility to create the dynamics and working environment within the institution from an egalitarian perspective and to carry out the necessary awareness efforts for this.
- Within its corporate structure of TÜR KONFED, they may not discriminate against different identities based on gender, sexual orientation, marital status, ethnic origin, age, religion, sect, language, socio-economic level, health status and disability.
- They may not engage in acts of physical or verbal abuse, harassment or bullying against any employee. They may not commit acts of mistreatment, threat or retaliation against any employee who reports a harassment or bullying incident within the organization.
- It assures that it will use utmost effort to prevent the occurrence of such acts and will not tolerate any form of verbal, physical, psychological, sexual or visual harassment or threat that cause the individuals not to feel safe.
- TÜR KONFED will conduct a fair investigation process by applying internal investigation mechanisms in case of employees who knowingly or maliciously make allegations of bullying, harassment or sexual harassment, or who provide false or deliberately misleading information.
- TÜR KONFED will apply the internal investigation mechanisms in case of employees who provide false or deliberately misleading information during any investigation or inspection it is conducting.
- TÜR KONFED supports gender equality and social justice in its relationships, studies and activities it carried out within or outside the organization.
- Ensuring that the representation of structuring, assignments, decision-making mechanisms and appointments within the institution is based on gender equality and competence is among the most important priorities.
- It puts in the forefront gender equality by showing respect and sensitivity to individuals' fundamental rights and human dignity in written and verbal forms of expression in business and relationships maintained inside or outside the organization. By using a language that does not discriminate based on gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, it adopts gender-related concepts and uses them without prejudice.

- When TÜRKONFED encounters practices that create gender inequality, it will initiate the necessary efforts to correct these practices.

B. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EMPLOYEES

- TÜRKONFED employees are aware of their responsibility to act within the framework of human honor and dignity by respecting the cultural and individual diversity within TÜRKONFED under any circumstances whatsoever.
- TÜRKONFED employees accept and undertake that they will not engage in any acts of involving discrimination, attack to an individual's personality, harassment or similar sexual assault, that they will not tolerate such acts, and that in this respect they will act in accordance with the principles and policies prescribed by the organization and national and international legislation.
- It will show maximum support to create and encourage a safe working environment for ensuring the transparency and necessary teamwork in the working environment.
- An Employee who himself/herself encounters or who sees another one encounters a discrimination, harassment, sexual or physical other assault in any way in the same or a different working environment within TÜRKONFED is responsible for immediately reporting this to the respective executive and/or organizational mechanisms within his/her department or field.
- Every TÜRKONFED employee should make sure that they fully understand the TÜRKONFED Document Code of Conduct on Equality at Workplace. It is also the duty and responsibility of the Employees to stop such actions that might occur at TÜRKONFED and to prevent them from recurring.

C. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXECUTIVES

- Executives have the responsibility of informing the employees about the Ethics Document and making sure that all employees fully understand it. They should be encouraging in regard to understanding of the requirements of this policy and its implementation in their teams. They are responsible for provision of training on the subject matter in any situation where this is necessary and that participation of the employees in this training.
- The executive is required to take appropriate steps immediately as soon as he/she is informed that a team member has been exposed to discriminatory, aggressive, intimidating behaviors or harassment acts.

6. PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS

- TÜRKONFED will adopt the principles contained in the Document of Conduct on Equality at Workplace in its efforts to prevent sexual harassment and assault. With this document, TÜRKONFED has accepted and undertaken to evaluate all allegations of sexual harassment and assault, and to take administrative measures in accordance with the relevant legislation where required by the proper running of the investigation and/or the protection of the complainant. When TÜRKONFED encounters discrimination, violence, sexual harassment and assault arising from gender inequality and against sexual orientation, it should apply to the Ethics Board, which is activated as a support mechanism internally or in the field, to which the complaints can be made, and which is in charge of conducting an effective and fast investigation, and pursue the process prescribed by this board.
- TÜRKONFED is determined to fight against practices where it believes that these ethical principles are not complied with, not only within the organization but in all areas of public and private life. In this context, it will act with the Ethics Board established within TÜRKONFED for the investigations it will conduct and the decisions it will take.
- The basic approaches, theories and strategies anticipated to be effective for everyone within the organization to adopt and implement in order to provide a peaceful and equalitarian working environment, particularly the Ethics Committee members and the executives, are as follows:
- **Rights-based approach:** According to the definition made by the United Nations, this approach is a conceptual framework grounded on international human rights standards in theory and aiming to support and protect these rights in practice. Taking into consideration the universality of rights in the event of a possible allegation of sexual harassment or assault is important for accountability.
- **Approach based on the Strengths of the Individual:** This approach argues that each individual has his/her own unique knowledge, experience, skills and coping strategies. Therefore, when communicating, it is important to focus on the individual's strengths instead of his/her weaknesses and contribute to his/her gaining strength in the areas he/she needs in order to ensure solution-orientedness, which is effective in conflict resolution.
- **Survivor-focused Approach:** This approach opposes victim blaming and focuses specifically on the empowerment of the individual who has experienced sexual violence (survivor). Adopting this approach in case of any allegation of sexual harassment and/or assault is an important step in providing a working environment sensitive to gender equality.

- **Use of Gender Equality-Sensitive Language:** In working life, we often encounter sexist and discriminatory language based on gender, profession, marital status and traditional teachings. There are some strategies that can be applied to prevent such discourses and increase the use of more an equalitarian and sensitive language:
 - You can extend language transformation at the workplace, both written and verbal.
 - 'Engineer/doctor/manager' instead of 'Female/Male engineer/doctor/manager'
 - 'Business person' instead of 'businessman'
 - 'Properly' instead of 'manly', 'manwise'
 - 'To set right' instead of 'to make a man'
 - 'Depending on the person' instead of 'depending on the man'
 - 'Reliable, true to his/her word' instead of 'a man of his word'
 - 'Woman' instead of 'lady'
 - Staying away from the terms of "women's/men's work"
 - You can stay away from sexist proverbs and idioms.
 - You can stay away from expressions that generalize, personalize and marginalize.
 - You can draw attention to discourses that normalize violence, discrimination and unhealthy communication and trigger victim blaming.
 - "That's his temperament."
 - "This is his management style."
 - "I am striving for you to make to become more successful. You wouldn't complain if you knew what kind of managers I work with. That's not the half of it!"
 - "He is not that kind of person"
 - "My employee wouldn't do that."
 - "These are all fabrication"
 - "He has psychological problems."
 - "He is very emotional/sensitive/feisty."
 - "He has family problems."
 - "You haven't reinvented anything by saying that."
 - "Seriously very creative (!)"
 - "Do you think your ideas/suggestions are very important?"
 - "Such things happen in every business."
 - "Who doesn't experience these?"
 - "Won't the same thing happen even if I move to a new place?"
 - "I think you're exaggerating a little."

7. APPENDIX: THEORIES RECOMMENDED FOR EXAMINATION

- **Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse Theory:** In this theory developed by Gottman, the importance of recognizing four basic communication obstacles and the antidote for each obstacle is emphasized for healthy communication. These obstacles and their antidotes are as follows:
 - Criticizing destructively (accusing): It refers to non-constructive criticism against the individual's personality. Its antidote is to make a "good start" by using 'I' language instead of 'you' language. For example:
 - Instead of saying "We are late for all our meetings because of you.", you can say "When you come to the venue late, I get very worried because we will be late for the meeting."
 - **Defensiveness:** It refers to the reaction of an individual to put the blame on the other individual in order to defend himself/herself when he/she perceives the statements of the other as an attack. Its antidote is "taking responsibility", which means understanding the other party's point of view and understanding and accepting his/her own place in the conflict; apologizing when necessary.
 - **Contempt/Degradation:** It refers to the state of mocking and contempt of the individual being communicated, the individual's needs and demands (such as nicknaming, imitating, eye rolling). It often involves body language and can make an individual feel worthless. Its antidote is "appreciation and respect", which covers focusing on the individual's strengths and expressing them, and mutually respecting the personal boundaries.
 - **Stonewalling:** It emerges when one party withdraws from communication, shuts down, stops responding, and ignores the event (e.g. avoiding discussion, keeping distance). Its antidote is "self-calming" that involves developing 'stop' points and/or covers distracting focus.
- **Non-violent Communication Theory:** This theory argues that, during any conflict, communication will be much healthier and safer if:
 - One of the parties puts aside his/her own world of perception and values and focuses on what is happening in the other person (observation),
 - The parties can to distinguish between emotions and thoughts and express them mutually (emotion),
 - They can reflect their current needs openly and clearly (need), and
 - They have realistic expectations and can explain these transparently. When an environment where these four elements are paid regard to, resolution of conflicts becomes easier as the individuals will tend to display a more willing, open and transparent attitude towards establishing a bond of trust and healthy communication.

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