

Societas Celto-Slavica:

Equality Policy

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Societas Celto-Slavica: Equality Policy

EQUALITY POLICY STATEMENT

The **Societas Celto-Slavica** (hereinafter Societas) builds international opportunities for exchange of ideas between academics, students, and language activists at its fora held biannually at various locations in the UK and further afield. Among its members, the Societas promotes values of shared respect to each other as humans. It is built upon the values of scientific collaboration and mutual esteem. Working successfully with equality and diversity is a part of its integral operation.

The Societas Equality Policy commits us to ensuring that there is no unjustified discrimination in the evaluation, acceptance and publication of the research outputs of the participants at the Societas fora and colloquia on the basis of age, disability, gender including transgender, HIV/AIDS status, marital status including civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, political opinion, race/ethnicity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, spent convictions, trade union activity or membership, work pattern, on the basis of having or not having dependants, or on any other grounds which are irrelevant to decision-making.

Our Equality Policy takes account of relevant legal and social standards. We try to avoid unjustified discrimination which we recognise is a barrier to equality, diversity, inclusion and human rights.

The Societas Celto-Slavica aims to:

- understand, value and work constructively with diversity to enable fair and full participation in our colloquia and activities;
- ensuring that there is no unjustified discrimination in our choice of individuals selected for the future participation at the Societas fora;
- treating individuals with whom we work openly, fairly, and respectfully;
- playing our part in removing barriers and redressing imbalances caused by inequality and unjustified discrimination.

All members are required to ensure their behaviour is consistent with this policy. We also require that members, partners and visitors be made aware of this policy and operate within it.

The **Societas Celto-Slavica** will revisit the Societas Celto-Slavica Equality Policy at least every three years to help ensure it reflects good practice and new legal and regulatory developments.



SOCIETAS CELTO-SLAVICA EQUALITY POLICY

I. FOREWORD

As the cultural academic learned association we deal with various individuals, communities, organisations and other bodies around the UK and further afield. In doing so we aim to develop and sustain partnerships and relationships based on mutual respect and understanding to maintain co-operation and reliance. Our Equality Policy, which is linked to our values, informs this and covers our dealings with members and staff at such organisations, as well as with and between our members and officers.

Equality is about treating people equitably, impartially and in an unbiased manner and creating conditions in human relationships that support and value diversity and promote dignity and inclusion. This involves trying to promote cultural sensitivity and inclusion, through a differentiated approach, where necessary and appropriate.

The Societas Equality Policy has the full support of the Societas Board, that includes its President, Joint President, and two Secretaries, and its members and branches in various states in the UK and further afield.

II. VALUING DIVERSITY

Diversity is a socially oriented and wholly inclusive concept concerned with creating a positive environment where practices benefitting the association and all those who participate in its activities exist and are constantly maintained. It takes account of the fact that people, whilst similar in many ways, differ from one another in various manner including (but not exclusively) their gender, age, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical ability, mental capacity, religion and belief, education, economic status, personality, communication style and approaches to work. Understanding, valuing and effectively managing these differences can result in greater participation that can lead to benefits and success at an individual, team, organisational and wider societal level.

III. GENERAL STATEMENTS

We reject unjustified discrimination and are committed to ensuring that policies and processes that promote equality are in place. We aim to remove barriers to amend imbalances and prejudices.

Our research activities, processes and decisions are designed to help ensure there is no unjustified discrimination on the grounds of age, disability or HIV/AIDS status, gender including transgender and intersex, marital status including civil partnership, political opinion, race/ethnicity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, spent convictions, socio-economic background, trade union activity or membership, on the basis of having or not having dependants, work pattern, or on any other irrelevant grounds.



We are committed to promoting equality, good relations and inclusion aligned to the UK and EU legislation, including Equality Act 2010, Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the Welsh Language Act 1993, and the four major EU equal treatment directives implementing the principle of equal treatment irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, race or ethnic origin (European Racial Equality Directive; Framework Directive on Employment; Gender Directive Civil Law; Gender Guideline Employment Law), as well as relevant legislation aligned to the geographical regions in which we operate.

As part of this approach, we aim to undertake equality screening and impact assessments of policies and functions which impact on our current and potential members. These assessments conducted via equality monitoring forms (normally, but not exclusively, distributed via email to members of the Society, see Appendix A) and informal conversations are a means of supporting inclusion and ensuring that we carefully consider the different needs of particular groups.

We aim to make reasonable adjustments to our operational arrangements, policies and practices that enable disabled people to participate in our projects, colloquia and/or other activities.

We are committed to treating members fairly and with dignity and respect and to maintain high equality related standards for their benefit as part of earning their respect and confidence.

IV. LEGISLATION

As the learned association registered in the UK, Societas Celto-Slavica abides by the key UK law which is the Equality Act 2010.

Legislation outside the UK also addresses unjustified discrimination, especially the four major EU equal treatment directives implementing the principle of equal treatment irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, race or ethnic origin (European Racial Equality Directive; Framework Directive on Employment; Gender Directive Civil Law; Gender Guideline Employment Law).

V. UNJUSTIFIED DISCRIMINATION

Unjustified discrimination is a barrier to equality, inclusion and human rights and is unacceptable in the Societas Celto-Slavica colloquia on all the grounds identified within this Policy.

VI. DISCRIMINATION AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT 1998

Equality, valuing diversity and inclusion are part of a human rights framework. The Human Rights Act 1998 incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights 1952 into UK domestic law. Many countries in which we host our colloquia subscribe to this Convention which refers in Article 14 specifically to the prohibition of discrimination on grounds such as gender, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.

VII. DISCRIMINATION – MOTIVES AND STEREOTYPES

Discrimination does not necessarily occur as a result of a conscious decision. There are subtle and unconscious ways of unjustifiably discriminating. These can arise from making general assumptions about the capabilities, characteristics and interests of a particular group and from applying requirements, conditions or criteria without considering whether they advantage or disadvantage particular groups. We therefore need to take care to avoid all forms of unjustified discrimination and requirements, conditions or criteria. We should be alert to micro-inequities which are cumulative, sometimes subtle behaviours that result in discrimination, exclusion, demotivation and unconscious bias.

Stereotypes have the potential to lead to unjustified discrimination and so should be carefully examined and if necessary, challenged. Stereotypical and potentially offensive language and terminology should be avoided.

VIII. PRIMARY GROUNDS

The Societas Celto-Slavica does not have separate policies to cover different areas of diversity. It has a primary but not exclusive focus on seven grounds which are referred to in brief below:

1. AGE

We believe it is positive to have representation of different generations and ages and to encourage the contributions of adults of different ages, across the range of our proceedings. We encourage members, partners and visitors to ensure that there is no unjustified age discrimination in Society-related activities and to promote generational and age diversity as appropriate and practicable.

2. DISABILITY

We are committed to addressing unjustified discrimination against disabled people and to promoting the inclusion of disabled people in public life. We recognise that disabled people, including those with specific learning differences and mental health issues, are disabled not necessarily through their own individual impairments or relative ability, but through common social attitudes and physical and attitudinal barriers which result in marginalisation and lack of access to full human rights. We aspire to address this by consciously identifying and removing such barriers, making reasonable adjustments and promoting the social model of disability.

3. GENDER

We are committed to tackling gender discrimination. Our focus is on promoting equality and eradicating unjustified discrimination in relation to women who worldwide frequently experience social and economic disadvantage, negative attitudes, alienation, abuse and violence. We also seek to address disadvantage experienced by men seeking ways to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by or excluded.

We recognise that people are subjected to discrimination based on their gender reassignment, or perceived gender reassignment, or because they are transgender, intersex



or hold another gender identity. Consistent with the respect we have for everyone's right to live in their preferred gender identity, we aim to accustom our members to the challenges faced by transgender and intersex people.

4. RACE/ETHNICITY AND CULTURE

We recognise that racial discrimination is a complex phenomenon which can be based on grounds of race, nationality, religion, culture and/or colour and other physical markers linked to ethnic belonging.

Our work is enriched by the different ethnic/racial, cultural groups and communities we engage with. However, conflict based on differences, including asylum seeker and refugee status, continues to exist and undermines inclusion. We try to maintain that no unjustified discrimination on grounds of race/ethnicity occurs and to promote positive and equitable relations between different ethnic groups.

5. RELIGION AND BELIEF

We value and respect the religions/beliefs and cultural diversity of the members of the Societas, including those of no religion or belief. We try to ensure that needs and preferences are met.

6. SEXUAL ORIENTATION

All members have the right to be themselves at the operations of the Societas without having to be fearful about sharing aspects of who they are. We are committed to tackling unjustified discrimination and harassment against lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual people and respect the right of individuals to be open, or otherwise, about their sexual orientation.

Everyone working with or for the Societas should feel confident that negative messages or stereotypes on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation will not be tolerated.

7. HIV AND AIDS

Given the climate of fear that exists around HIV and AIDS worldwide and its global prevalence, we recognise the unique nature of this illness. We will not discriminate against members, participants or visitors who are Human Immunodeficiency Virus positive (HIV+).

IX. BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Bullying and harassment are about misuse of power and should not be a part of our working environment or operational practices and our Equality Policy requires each member of the Societas to guard against all harassment and support a dignifying work environment. Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious and/or insulting behaviour, or an abuse or misuse of power, that undermines, humiliates, or injures the recipient.

Harassment, in general, is unwanted conduct affecting someone's dignity. It can be related to age, disability, ethnicity/race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or any personal characteristic of the individual. It may involve persistent incidents or an isolated one. The



crucial aspect is that the actions or comments are deemed to be demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient and create a hostile environment.

X. COMPLAINTS

It is hoped that matters relating to complaints can be handled informally, at least in the first instance, and indeed can be resolved informally. Members of the Societas who have a complaint may wish to contact the Secretary of the Societas who shall handle such complaints in confidence, fairly and in the unbiased manner.

Any member who feels that the treatment they have received is not in keeping with our Equality Policy has a right to register a complaint and an appropriate section of the Equality Monitoring Form (see Appendix A) permits them to do so.

Members and participants to the Societas colloquia must not be intimidated, discriminated against or treated differently for raising a concern, complaining or assisting in an investigation. If this happens it could amount to victimisation which is unlawful within the terms of the relevant legislation and goes against this policy.

XI. RESPONSIBILITIES

As an organisation representing and promoting the best research and cultural practices that exist in the UK and EU academia, it is particularly important that we reflect its values and adhere to legislation and behavioural standards as outlined above and to our core values.

Putting this policy into practice is the responsibility of every individual member of the Societas. All members, regardless of the length of their participation in the Societas proceedings, are responsible for playing their full part in adhering to the policy.

This means becoming familiar with the policy and its requirements and carrying them out, as well as critically examining attitudes to ensure that discrimination is not allowed to affect judgement. The law and the existence of an Equality Policy cannot by themselves prevent unjustified discrimination.

It is crucial that everyone takes personal responsibility to help ensure that the colloquia environment, consistent with cultural relations, respects the dignity of everyone and in broad terms, values the differences that exist between people and cultures. In addition, we should be attuned to and seek to build on what we share and have in common consistent with our aims for maintaining the cultural diversity and inclusion of the Societas members.

All members will be supported to be aware of the forms which unjustified discrimination can take, to guard against them and to avoid any action that might influence others to discriminate unfairly.

There is a requirement to ensure that clients and suppliers to the operations of the Societas are aware of this policy and their obligations to work and operate within its parameters as appropriate. The Equality/Equal Opportunity or other similar policy of contractors, where



these exist, must be reviewed before entering into an agreement with them, and if necessary a related discussion undertaken. Any member who unjustifiably discriminates or induces others to do so will be subject to an exclusion from any subsequent proceedings of the Societas.

The Societas Celto-Slavica opposes to any conduct or activity by any individuals which is contrary to its Equality Policy, or which is likely to bring it into disrepute in relation to diversity issues.

Nothing in the Societas Equality Policy is intended to interfere with the legitimate freedom of artistic or intellectual expression, investigation or discussion. It is understood that there can often be a fine line between what is acceptable and unacceptable and each case will be considered on the individual circumstances.

XII. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation help us assess the effectiveness of our Equality Policy and to this end we have a number of mechanisms in place. For example, we undertake extensive monitoring of the equality issues at our colloquia by distributing the Equality Monitoring Form (see Appendix A) and we are increasingly extending this outside the biennial fora in order to help capture data on the equality profile of all Societas members.

XIII. COMMUNICATION

A copy of the Equality Policy is made accessible to all members via the web. All members and officers of the Societas, including newly elected ones must be made aware of the Societas Equality Policy and their individual and wider organisational responsibilities for achieving equality objectives. In addition, the policy, in keeping with our mainstreaming endeavours, must be referred to as appropriate.

XIV. REVIEW

We commit ourselves to undertaking a formal review of the policy at least once every three years and to communicate the changes organisation-wide. Responsibility for this lies with the Secretary of the Societas.

Maxim Fomin
Secretary, Societas Celto-Slavica
Equality and Diversity Officer

Approved November 2016 by Societas Celto-Slavica Board

Formal review due: November 2019

To obtain further copies of this policy, or if you have any questions or comments about it, please contact Dr Maxim Fomin, Secretary, Equality and Diversity Officer, Societas Celto-Slavica.



Appendix A

Societas Celto-Slavica: Equality Monitoring Form

Societas Celto-Slavica wants to meet the aims and commitments set out in its equality policy. This includes not discriminating under the Equality Legislation, and building an accurate picture of the make-up of the membership in encouraging equality and diversity. The Association needs your help and co-operation to enable it to do this, but filling in this form is voluntary.

The information you provide will stay confidential, and be stored securely and limited to only Equality and Diversity Officer, Societas Celto-Slavica.

Please return the completed form in the envelope marked 'Strictly confidential' to **Equality and Diversity Officer, Societas Celto-Slavica**

Gender Man Woman Non-binary Prefer not to say

If you prefer to use your own term, please specify here

Are you married or in a civil partnership? Yes No Prefer not to say

Age 16-24 25-29 30-34 35-39 40-44 45-49 50-54 55-59 60-64 65+ Prefer not to say

What is your ethnicity?

Ethnic origin is not about nationality, place of birth or citizenship. It is about the group to which you perceive you belong. Please tick the appropriate box

White

English Welsh Scottish Northern Irish Irish
British Gypsy or Irish Traveller Prefer not to say

Any other white background, please write in:

Mixed/multiple ethnic groups

White and Black Caribbean White and Black African White and Asian Prefer not to say Any other mixed background, please write in:

Asian/Asian British

Indian Pakistani Bangladeshi Chinese Prefer not to say

Any other Asian background, please write in:

Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British

African Caribbean Prefer not to say



Any other Black/African/Caribbean background, please write in:

Other ethnic group

Arab Prefer not to say Any other ethnic group, please write in:

Do you consider yourself to have a disability or health condition?

Yes No Prefer not to say

What is your sexual orientation?

Heterosexual Gay woman/lesbian Gay man Bisexual
Prefer not to say

If you prefer to use your own term, please specify here

What is your religion or belief?

No religion or belief Buddhist Christian Hindu Jewish
Muslim Sikh Prefer not to say If other religion or belief, please write in:

In your view, is it true that the proceedings of the Societas Celto-Slavica colloquium have been conducted in a fair, unbiased and wholly inclusive manner in relation to the issues of gender, civil partnership, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and religion?

Yes No Prefer not to say

Please share your concerns:

All the data on this form will be treated in a strictly confidential manner.