



1. Purpose

This Code of Conduct ('Code') ensures that all ESGO Congress participants can engage in a safe, respectful, inclusive, and scientifically rigorous environment. ESGO is committed to maintaining an environment free from harassment, discrimination, bullying, and retaliation. The Code applies to all participants and all congress-related activities, whether conducted in person, virtually, or in a hybrid format, including scientific sessions, exhibition areas, networking events, social functions, and digital platforms.

2. Scope

This Code applies to:

- Delegates, speakers, chairs, moderators.
- Industry partners, exhibitors, sponsors.
- Staff, contractors, volunteers.
- Media representatives.
- All individuals involved in the planning, organisation, delivery, or governance of the congress, including ESGO office staff, committee members, local organisers, and invited guests.

It covers:

- On-site venues, including congress facilities, hotels, hospitals, and other locations used for congress-related activities.
- Official social and networking events organised or endorsed by ESGO.
- Official online platforms, including the congress website, mobile app, livestreams, virtual meeting platforms, and social media channels.
- Congress-related communications and interactions occurring before, during, or after the congress in connection with the congress.

3. Core Principles

Participants are expected to uphold:

a. Professional Integrity

- Present and discuss scientific data accurately and transparently.
- Disclose conflicts of interest.
- Respect intellectual property and confidentiality.
- Maintain responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of all scientific and educational content presented or shared during the congress, including content prepared with the assistance of artificial intelligence (AI) tools.

b. Respect and Inclusion

- Treat all individuals with dignity and respect and foster an inclusive environment free from discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, health status, career stage, institutional affiliation, or professional seniority.

c. Patient-Centred Ethics

- Ensure all discussions and materials respect patient dignity, privacy, and consent.
- Avoid identifiable patient data unless explicitly permitted.
- Use clinical images, videos, case descriptions, and patient-related information only in accordance with applicable consent, privacy, and data protection requirements.

4. Expected Behaviour

Participants must:

- Engage respectfully in discussions, including when disagreeing.
- Follow instructions from event staff and venue personnel.
- Wear congress identification badges where required during the congress activities and official social events.
- Comply with local laws of the host country.
- Comply with venue policies and applicable local regulations regarding smoking, vaping, alcohol consumption, and the use of controlled substances.
- Attend and participate in congress activities in a professional manner and not while impaired by alcohol, illegal drugs, or other substances that may adversely affect behaviour, judgement, safety, or the experience of other participants.
- Follow health and safety guidance, including infection control measures where applicable.

- Respect the congress venue and shared facilities and make reasonable efforts to minimise waste and environmental impact during congress activities.
- Demonstrate a respectful, inclusive, and professional attitude, showing empathy and tolerance for differing views and respecting the rights, safety, and wellbeing of all participants, staff, volunteers, and venue personnel.
- Respect patient confidentiality, privacy, and applicable data protection requirements.
- Cooperate with ESGO representatives in the review and resolution of any reported concerns or incidents.
- Wear attire appropriate to a professional scientific and educational environment and refrain from displaying clothing, symbols, images, or messages that may reasonably be considered offensive, discriminatory, intimidating, or disruptive.

5. Unacceptable Behaviour

The following will not be tolerated:

a. Harassment and Discrimination

- Verbal, physical, or sexual harassment.
- Intimidation, bullying, or stalking.
- Offensive, discriminatory, or degrading comments, gestures, or behaviours.
- Displaying clothing, symbols, images, or messages that are discriminatory, hateful, threatening, or otherwise inconsistent with a respectful and inclusive scientific environment.
- Retaliation against individuals who report concerns in good faith.

b. Scientific Misconduct

- Fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism.
- Misrepresentation of data, authorship, qualifications, or credentials.
- Failure to disclose relevant conflicts of interest where required.

c. Disruptive Conduct

- Inappropriate interruption of sessions, speakers, or congress activities.
- Aggressive, threatening, or abusive behaviour.
- Attending or participating in congress activities while impaired by alcohol, illegal drugs, or other substances in a manner that compromises safety, professional conduct, or the experience of other participants.

d. Privacy Violations

- Recording or photographing, live streaming, or distributing congress content without authorisation where required.

- Sharing confidential, proprietary, or unpublished data without permission or consent.
- Unauthorised disclosure of personal or patient-related information.

6. Industry and Sponsorship Conduct

- All promotional activities must comply with applicable European regulations, including the EFPIA Code and MedTech Europe standards, where relevant.
- There must be a clear separation between scientific content and promotional or industry content.
- There must be no undue influence on scientific programming.
- All sponsorship arrangements and financial support must be transparent and appropriately disclosed.
- Industry representatives must respect the independence of scientific discussions and educational activities.

7. Digital Conduct

Participants must:

- Engage respectfully in the congress app and on social media.
- Avoid sharing misleading or out-of-context scientific information.
- Respect embargo policies for unpublished data.
- Respect copyright, intellectual property rights, and applicable permissions when sharing congress-related content.
- Clearly distinguish personal opinions from official ESGO positions when communicating publicly about congress-related matters.
- Refrain from posting abusive, discriminatory, defamatory, or harassing content on congress-related digital platforms.

8. Reporting Concerns

A confidential reporting mechanism is available via:

- The on-site help desk at the ESGO booth.
- A dedicated email address: congress@esgo.org.

Reports may be made by victims or witnesses and anonymously, where feasible.

All reports will be reviewed promptly and handled confidentially to the extent reasonably possible and consistent with a fair review process.

Retaliation against individuals who report concerns in good faith will not be tolerated.

9. Enforcement and Sanctions

The ESGO Congress Committee reserves the right to take appropriate and proportionate action in response to breaches of this Code of Conduct. Such action may include, but is not limited to:

- Verbal or written warning.
- Removal of an individual from a session, activity, or congress venue.
- Withdrawal, modification, or removal of congress content, including presentations, posters, abstracts, recordings, or other materials.
- Revocation of congress access without refund.
- Exclusion from future ESGO congresses or activities, where appropriate.
- Notification of the participant's employer, institution, sponsor, or affiliated organisation.
- Reporting to relevant professional, regulatory, or legal authorities, where required.
- Serious breaches, including threats, violence, harassment, or unlawful conduct, may be referred to local authorities.

All enforcement decisions will be made with due regard to the nature and severity of the incident, the safety and wellbeing of participants, and the need to ensure a fair and confidential review process.

10. Governance and Oversight

A Code of Conduct Review Committee ('Committee') has been appointed to oversee the implementation of this Code and the review of reported concerns or incidents.

The Committee consists of:

- The ESGO Congress Committee.
- ESGO executive leadership (including the ESGO CEO or designated representative).
- Legal, compliance, or governance advisors, as appropriate.

The Committee may seek additional expertise or advice where necessary and will handle all matters confidentially and in accordance with applicable laws and ESGO policies.

11. Compliance with Legal and Ethical Standards

This Code is intended to align with:

- Applicable data protection and privacy legislation, including the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), where relevant.
- Principles of equality, diversity, inclusion, and non-discrimination under applicable laws.
- Applicable professional, ethical, and regulatory standards.
- The local laws and regulations of the host country and congress venue.

12. Communication and Acknowledgment

- This Code of Conduct shall:
 - Be published on the congress website and made available through congress registration materials and official congress platforms.
 - Be communicated to all participants prior to the congress.
 - Be accepted as a condition of congress registration and participation.

13. Continuous Improvement

A post-congress review will assess reported incidents and participant feedback.

The Code will be reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure alignment with evolving legal, ethical and regulatory standards.