

Eastern Green Party

Netiquette and code of practice for online meetings and conferences

In both in-person and online events, the Eastern Green Party (EGP) aims to provide a welcoming environment for useful and respectful exchange of ideas.

As on Social Media, online meetings can become an occasion for people to behave towards each other in ways that they would be ashamed to do if they were in the same room and face to face. We therefore take this opportunity to remind you of the basic standards of civility that are required for a political party such as ours to make progress, through forging a collaborative and supportive body of generous and well-meaning people.

Showing your name

We all like to see the real name of the people in the room with us, so that we know whom we are addressing and can respect people's expertise and sensitivities. If required, besides showing your real name, you may also be asked to add your local party name, or your position/role. Using the rename facility to add it to the written title is helpful to everyone. You may also wish to add your preferred pronouns. You may be asked to say your local party name before speaking.

Privacy and data protection

We have to take care not to reveal personal information about others without their permission, including sensitive issues about their reasons for absence, their state of health etc. We don't give out email addresses or phone numbers for other people in a meeting, unless they have specifically asked us to do so, or the information is already available in the public domain or in databases that everyone in the room/on the call have access to and a right to see.

We take care to ensure that those attending the call or meeting are all, without exception, entitled to be there and that if there are guests in the room everyone knows that they are there and that we are not a members-only meeting.

Showing or not showing your picture

There are many reasons why people may be unable to put on their picture, or to show the room that they are in. No one should feel pressured to have their picture on, but if you are in a social setting or breakout room, putting the picture on can help to provide a sense of togetherness and to enable people to make eye-contact.

Inclusivity:

We are an inclusive party and we value the insights brought to the table by members from all backgrounds, classes, and outlooks. We aim to encourage contributions from those who are under-represented, and those whose voices have been less often heard.

Respect for democratic decisions:

We respect democratic procedures and the results of elections or votes that were taken in accordance with the constitution by meetings that were quorate. Our interventions should acknowledge the existence of party policy, and the validity of the procedures by which it has been developed. Where we feel that there has been miscarriage of justice, we use appropriate channels to challenge the procedure, rather than attacking the individuals involved or reopening the question as if it had not been decided. If you suspect a fault in the procedures, it is best to raise it at the time of the vote, or to seek advice from the officers after the meeting if it is something from the past.

Listening:

We try not to speak over others or demand attention when others are making their point. We pay due attention to others, for as long as they are abiding by these guidelines, but we respect the right of the chair to mute the microphone if an individual is in breach of these guidelines, or to turn off the chat if contributors have strayed from the point or become abusive.

Safeguarding:

All participants should be aware of the policies on safeguarding, and should comply with them in any situations where vulnerable people are included.

Kindness, generosity and politeness:

The mode of discourse should be polite at all times. We try to avoid rudeness and insults, and any language intended to cause hurt. If a participant has indicated a preference for particular pronouns, or if you are speaking of another person in their absence, whose pronouns are known, those pronouns should be respected. Deliberate and/or repeated misgendering is impolite and offensive.

Keeping on point

It is inappropriate to raise controversial issues, or issues likely to trigger anxiety on the part of others, in meetings where that issue was far from the topic under discussion. If the relevance of your point to the subject of the talk is unclear or the intervention appears to be a deliberate attempt to divert, filibuster or disrupt the proceedings, the chair or facilitator may need to mute the conversation.

Respect for expertise

In many areas of our work, we aim to conform our beliefs and commitments to our best understanding of the scientific, economic, historical or biological evidence, assisted by input from experts, and adjusting our opinions accordingly. Criticism should comply with normal standards of academic freedom and should invoke appropriate forms of justification.

Pausing before intervening

If you are angry or irritated, hold back for a moment to consider whether you might regret the intervention, or you might cause hurt to someone else in the room (including people whose pictures you cannot see).

Honesty, truthfulness and humility

When speaking as an individual we do not claim to be speaking for a group or faction. If speaking for a group or faction, we do not claim to be a larger group than we are. If trying to gainsay others, we do not belittle their judgement or inflate our own importance. We are prepared to change our mind if the evidence shows that our assumptions about others are wrong, including our judgement of their character or motivation.

Being in the meeting not elsewhere

Multi-tasking is fine, but we should avoid, as far as possible, carrying on a parallel meeting or private chat with one or more other individuals (in or out of the meeting), on social media or in the meeting chat, and especially we should not do so in order to engage in ridicule or to make disparaging remarks about others in private, or to build up a faction and influence a vote.

Acting on the code of conduct

Behaviour such as bullying, harassment, gaslighting and verbal abuse is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. The host, chair or facilitator will act to terminate any such behaviour and may (for example) silence the individual concerned or remove them from the event, or take some other action.

Participants should notify the chair/host by a direct message in the chat if they wish to draw attention to bad behaviour on the part of another.