

Awareness Concept

“Peoples’ Forum for Climate Justice and Financial Regulation”

Introduction

The forum wants to create a collective space for discussion, networking and alternatives. In this awareness concept you will find texts meant to enable you and others to engage with topics around awareness, discrimination and interaction during the forum. **We would also like to inform you about our work as an awareness team during the days of the forum.** The topic is complex, and although we try to include as many aspects as possible, not all of them can be presented in full. We are therefore happy to receive criticism and feedback! Please feel free to [contact us](#) in case anything is unclear (regarding language or content).

Our understanding of awareness

The term "awareness" comes from the phrase "to be aware" and means (in a broader sense) "to be aware, to be informed, to be sensitized to certain problems". We live in a society that is characterized by unequal power relations. People are advantaged (privileged) and disadvantaged (discriminated) on the basis of certain characteristics - whether exercised intentionally or unconsciously. No human being is free of prejudice and discrimination when interacting with others. Therefore, conscious reflection on this must be done by each individual (Critical Self-Reflection).

Awareness is a concept that opposes all forms of discrimination, violence and violation of boundaries. Any behavior that is harmful or violates boundaries, such as sexist, racist, homophobic, queerphobic, transphobic, ableist, classist, antisemitic or similar assaults, will not be tolerated during the forum.

This means for awareness as a political practice that it must not only focus on interpersonal relationships, but also on social structures that promote or enforce discrimination and violence. Accordingly, the goal of awareness is to uncover and unlearn internalized ways of thinking and acting that have a discriminatory effect or violate boundaries and perpetuate power structures, while at the same time showing solidarity with those affected.

Safer space^[1]

We consider ourselves to be a safer space. For a long time the term "safe spaces" was used - which means that a space is safe, especially from discrimination and violence. But even in safe spaces there was and is discrimination, prejudice, stereotypes and violence. The term "safer space" is meant to express that the space is safer than the everyday world, but not a completely safe space. So in safer spaces, care is taken that no to little discrimination and violence happens and there are mechanisms (such as the awareness team) to deal with discrimination if it happens.

How can I contribute to awareness?

To us as part of the forum, awareness as an approach to critical (self-)reflection and support for those affected means that we all bear responsibility and question our own ways of thinking. Below you will find a few sections

on relevant topics around discrimination and dominance, which are far from complete but can provide a good place to start.

✓ **Privileges and hierarchies**

Our contemporary world and all areas of society are significantly shaped by unequal power relations. These operate constantly and everywhere at institutional (e.g., laws, labor market), interpersonal (e.g., exclusion, sexual harassment) and ideological levels (e.g., norms, values, culture). There are people whose particular privileges place them in a more powerful position relative to less privileged people. Examples of privileged positioning may include: white, male, heterosexual, rich, knowledge of the national languages, "Western" citizenships, academic education.

While having privilege does not necessarily mean actively engaging in discriminatory behavior, it can contribute to putting others at a disadvantage. Often, we are only partially aware of our privileges, which makes it difficult to interact with one another in a way that is sensitive to discrimination. That means, reflect on your socialization and your own positioning in society - especially in the areas where you have privileges, in order to be able to act in a more mindful and capable way in discriminatory situations through this awareness!

✓ **Reflect on the way you speak**

In order to create a comfortable and safe discussion setting, we encourage you to reflect the way you speak in group discussions: Dominant speaking behaviors can make other participants feel uncomfortable or exclude certain perspectives from the discussion. These include:

- long, self-congratulatory monologues
- (repeatedly) interrupting others
- interjecting comments
- discriminatory language, and
- dominant communication patterns that do not directly verbally attack others, but still ensure one's own (privileged) position in a discussion. For example, this can include the (sometimes unconscious) taking of space by cis men who lecture others (especially women, lesbians, inter, non-binary, and trans people, but also otherwise marginalized people), ignore their criticism, and consider contributions from them less important.

Support us in creating and realizing good interactions with each other!

✓ **No means no: setting and respecting boundaries**

Be attentive, anticipate and respect other people's boundaries. This applies especially in situations where you have difficulty assessing the needs of the other person. If you are unsure about another person's boundaries, ask. Don't insist on justifications or reasons, but instead accept the needs of those around you as they are presented. You know your body best. Don't let other people tell you how to feel.

Photos, audio, videos

In principle, the Forum is considered a public meeting and is meant to be accompanied by our own and external press. Participants will have the opportunity to go into an area of the venue where no photos or

videos will be taken. At the beginning of each session, explicit reference will be made to that particular location. As individuals, you have the right to object to being recorded at any time.

If recordings are taken in closed event spaces, all people who will be captured on it must be informed in advance. If there is a livestream of an event, it is important to inform everyone about this at the beginning of the event.

Awareness rooms as well as other explicit spaces to retreat should not be photographed/filmed at all. This also includes restrooms and sanitation areas.

Awareness during the forum - how do we implement it?

1. Awareness Team

Members of our awareness team are always present during the official times of the forum. You will recognize them by colorful ribbons. If critical situations arise (e.g., violations of boundaries, assaults, discriminatory behavior) or you feel uncomfortable, get support! The Awareness Team is there for you in these cases as a confidential support structure oriented towards those affected. Your needs will be taken seriously and what you tell us will not be shared with others unless you want it to be.

We would like to point out that we as an awareness team are not personally affected by and have experience and knowledge regarding all forms of discrimination. We are also not responsible for problematic speech behavior, political negotiation processes, facilitation or psychotherapeutic interventions. The awareness team is not to be understood as a control authority or as an expert body.

2. Awareness posters

There will be posters in every room of the forum, pointing out and reminding you of the most important points of the awareness concept. There you will also find the awareness phone number and email.

3. Awareness email and phone number

Phone number: 0041 77 979 47 50

E-mail: contact@endfossil.finance

The awareness team will be available via phone or in person at the following times:

Thursday (9:30-21:00)

Friday (9:30-21:00)

Saturday (9:30-21:00)

Sunday (10:00-16:00)

4. Awareness room (safer space)

This is a safer space and a space to retreat for all. The room is supervised as needed.

5. Website

The awareness concept is available on the forum website. If you do not have a device on which you can view the concept, we will gladly hand out a printed version.

Our concept is based on the concepts of the Systemchange Camp Hamburg (2022) <https://www.ende-gelaende.org/awarenesskonzept-2022/> and the Power to the People Conference (2023) <https://www.powertothepeople.at/en/awareness/>.

[1] Source (German): <https://queer-lexikon.net/2022/12/08/kummerkastenantwort-3-115-was-ist-der-unterschied-zwischen-safe-spaces-und-safer-spaces/>