



STUDY ASSOCIATION COGNAC

Social Safety Statement

Established on June 6th, 2022.

The contents of this document have been constituted by the
XXXI Board of CognAC.

*Trigger warnings - mention of sexual harassment,
discrimination, and violence.*

1 General

As a study association, CognAC would like to create a safe environment for all of our members. This includes stating clearly what kind of behaviour is not tolerated at our activities and within our association.

If you experience or witness any of the below mentioned behaviours you can contact the board of CognAC, immediately in person or after the fact at secretary@svcognac.nl. You can also contact (if applicable) the committee organising the activity. In addition, or if you are not comfortable informing the board or organisers in person, you can turn towards the following [resources](#).

In any situation, if you feel that you are being mistreated or treated unkindly or you see this happening to someone else please do not be afraid to notify someone! Even if you are not 100% sure someone is acting inappropriately intentionally towards you or someone else, do not hesitate to approach the board or organising party.

- CognAC does not tolerate **excessive alcohol usage or forced drinking** at our activities. This is also specified in our Alcohol Regulations. If you see someone else being forced to drink any amount of alcohol that they do not appear comfortable with. We want to stress that the use of alcohol should remain fun for all parties and we do not want anyone to go over their limits.
- CognAC does not tolerate **drug use of any kind** at our activities. This includes soft and hard drugs, but excludes alcohol, caffeine, nicotine and prescribed medication.
- CognAC does not tolerate **bullying** at activities or in (online) CognAC spaces. Jokes or comments that may not appear harmful to the person saying them may still harm those who they were said to.
- CognAC does not tolerate **any kind of discrimination** at our activities. Discrimination entails the unjust or harmful treatment of a group of people with a set characteristic. Factors used to discriminate can be: race, socio-economic background, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, skin colour, disability, life-style, etc. This also includes micro-aggressions, which is a term used for hostile, ignorant or stigmatising behaviours or sayings used against marginalised groups.
- CognAC does not tolerate **any kind of inappropriate sexual behaviour** at our activities. Overstepping someone's boundaries (e.g. physical touch) is not always intentional, however you always reserve the right to notify organisers if you are uncomfortable. Remember that consent should always be given explicitly and can always be revoked.
- CognAC does not tolerate **violent behaviour** of any kind at our activities. This includes any behaviour that threatens or harms an individual, physically or mentally. Violent behaviour can also be destroying someone else's property.
- CognAC does not tolerate **misuse of power** against its members or be-

nefactors. This can mean that someone is behaving inappropriately under the guise of it being necessary for the committee/board.

2 In the moment

The opening of this document highlights the stance of CognAC on inappropriate behaviour and gives initial guidance on how to report such situations. Beyond this, we would like to give information on how to deal with inappropriate situations, should you find yourself in them or witness them.

First and foremost, if you are in such a situation it is not your fault. It is also advised to talk about it if something happens to you, because this may help prevent something similar from occurring in the future. Following these guidelines can help you ease the situation/deal with the behaviour at the time you find yourself in it.

Depending on the degree of undesirability you can immediately try to communicate with the people involved. Do first assess the possible danger for you and others before confronting someone. For example, if someone is being unreasonable because they are very drunk, talking to them will probably not help the situation. It is then best to remove this person/have this person removed and deal with the consequences later. If this is unfeasible or you are afraid to enter into dialogue try to remove yourself from the situation and seek help from those you trust! These people can (but not necessarily must) be the board or organising committee.

Do not be afraid to speak up if you are uncomfortable/notice someone being uncomfortable! Try to remain calm and do not take up an aggressive stance or the situation may escalate. You can consider using “I” statements and asking questions. Examples of what you can say:

- “I feel uncomfortable when you do/say [X], could you stop?”
- “I think you’re making others uncomfortable when you do/say [X], could you stop?”
- “I feel uncomfortable talking about [X] with you/right now. Can we change the topic?”
- “I don’t think everyone feels comfortable talking about [X] with you/right now. Can we change the topic?”
- “I don’t think the term ‘[X]’ is appropriate, could you use ‘[Y]’ instead?”
- “I don’t think what you’re saying is appropriate.”

3 Reporting

If any inappropriate behaviour has happened to you or you have witnessed it, you should report it. Ideally this could be done as soon as possible, but if this is not possible or you feel uncomfortable due to something that happened long ago, you can always still report it. This can be done by approaching a board or committee member.

You might not get an immediate response, but it will never take longer than a week before you hear back from whomever you contacted. If the response is not instantaneous, this is not because your report was ignored! Most likely the contacted people are discussing how to deal with the situation or getting advice from e.g. university resources. We will ask you how you would like to proceed with the situation. Possible outcomes and/or consequences are defined in the statutes of CognAC, which can be found on our website. We will consider each case separately, so possible outcomes can include but are not limited to:

- Talking with a university confidential contact person.
- Mediating a conversation with you and the person(s) who you reported.
- Suspending the person who was reported from the association.
- Reporting the behaviour to the police.

4 Closing remarks

This document outlines and explains CognAC's way of creating a safe environment for all who attend our activities and offers guidance on how to deal with and behave in situations concerning inappropriate behaviours. If you seek more information on university resources for people experiencing any of these behaviours you can check this [blogpost](#) on the SV CognAC website.