

#electionswithouthate

Instructions for candidates

What is hate speech and harassment?

Hate speech is defined as forms of expression that spread, incite, promote or justify ethnic hatred, xenophobia, antisemitism or other forms of hate. Hate speech can also mean slandering, offending or threatening which is targeted at the victim on the basis of their identity, gender or other characteristics (such as sexual orientation or a disability).

Harassment is defined as systematic and continuous inappropriate or threatening behaviour. All violence and threats of violence should be condemned and are wrong.

It has been shown that hate speech and harassment targeted at political figures increases ahead of elections.

Taking part in political activity is a fundamental right of every citizen, and everyone has the right to campaign safely and without harassment both in public spaces and on social media.

It is important to think about safety beforehand and prepare for situations where one might encounter hate speech and harassment.

In an emergency, always call the emergency number 112.

What to do if you encounter hate speech and harassment:

→ In a public space

When campaigning in public spaces or online, a security plan should be drafted that includes at least the persons responsible for safety and instructions on what to do if cases of harassment occur. Take into account that harassers may also join online events. Agree in advance on who will act as a

contact person in cases of harassment or as the person responsible for safety.

Factors you need to consider are:

Should the police be notified about the event? Is there cause to book security for the event?

Will the event be attended by, for example, ministers or Members of Parliament?

Are harassers expected to come to the event?

Always campaign together with other people, also when you are doing things such as putting flyers into letter boxes or handing them out to passers-by at public transport stations. Always maintain a line of sight with your fellow candidate or campaign team member.

If you encounter inappropriate speech or behaviour, ask the person to stop and tell them their speech or behaviour is unacceptable. If you notice that your fellow candidate is in a difficult situation, intervene in the situation and support them.

You do not need to engage in conversation with everyone. If you feel uncomfortable or threatened, you can end the conversation and ask the person to leave. If needed, ask security, your campaign team member or your fellow candidate for help.

If the person who is harassing you is clearly threatening, it is a good idea to call the police before approaching the person yourself. In threatening situations, you should always call 112 directly. Concrete and/or physical threats should be reported to the police even if there is no emergency.

→ Online/on social media

Start using two-factor authentication, always use a different password for each service and turn off location and location identification on your phone.

Think carefully about who you allow to update your social media channels and what information you share about yourself on social media. You can create a separate Politician page on Facebook if you want to keep your political and personal posts separate. You can hide your personal Facebook profile in Facebook's search settings. Many social media platforms also let you limit who can send you friend or contact requests.

Find out about the privacy and security settings of the social media platforms you use. Update your devices regularly.

As with face-to-face campaigning, remember that you do not need to engage in conversation with everyone.

If you receive or notice inappropriate messages, save the messages and screenshot them for the purpose of potentially filing a police report. You can also ask someone you trust to do this for you. You do not need to tolerate harassment or read hate speech targeted at you.

Report the message to the service's administrator and block the account.

Women's Line provides specialised services for those who have experienced online hate or digital violence. On the website, you can find comprehensive and up-to-date information on security instructions as well as a useful list of links for those who have experienced digital violence. You can find the instructions at naistenlinja.fi > Digitaalinen väkivalta > Nämä suojaudut (in Finnish).

How to file a police report

You can file a police report with any police department, regardless of where the crime took place. You can also file a police report online at <https://poliisi.fi/en/report-a-crime>.

File a police report as soon as possible after the crime took place. When filing a police report, provide a description that is as detailed as possible about what happened and who the suspects, victims and potential eyewitnesses are. Also record the date and time and the technology that was misused. In addition, write down the impact the act had on you (e.g. anxiety or insomnia) or ask for a medical

certificate to support the potential criminal procedure.

Keep all potential evidence, such as messages and the contact details of eyewitnesses, even if you do not want to file a police report right away. You may change your mind and it may be difficult to gather evidence later on.

You can tip off the police online at <https://poliisi.fi/en/net-tip>. You can use the form to pass on non-urgent information to the police about suspicious activity or materials you have seen online.

You are not alone! Where to get help and support:

Hate speech is violence, and it is a good idea to talk about your experiences of violence with someone you trust. You do not have to deal with the issue alone. You can ask for help and support from people such as your party's contact persons or contact a support service for those who have experienced violence.

Below, you can find information about services you can contact.

Services

Women's Line / www.naistenlinja.fi / 0800 02400
(Mon-Fri 4 p.m.–8 p.m.)

Nollalinja / nollalinja.fi / 080 005 005 (open 24/7)

Victim Support Finland www.riku.fi

Someturva / www.someturva.fi

MIELI Mental Health Finland's crisis helpline
www.mieli.fi / 0925250111 (open 24/7)
www.nytkis.org/vaalitilmanvihaa

More information
www.nytkis.org/vaalitilmanvihaa

