

Statement on the allegations of discrimination on a supply vessel

As the coordinating institution for the MOSAiC expedition, we feel compelled to clarify the skewed portrayal, in two recently published articles, concerning our occupational safety and responses to discrimination, and to address the corresponding accusations that have been levelled at our staff and expedition partners in this regard.

Women and men participate in our polar expeditions as equals, and are equally supported in their work by the ship's crews and aircraft crews that we employ. Sexual harassment, misconduct and discrimination, in any way, shape or form and regardless of when and where, are not tolerated by us or anyone acting on our behalf. When conflicts arise, they are promptly investigated in keeping with our Code of Conduct, and responded to accordingly. This includes engaging in confidential talks with the parties involved, ensuring the protection of the party who filed the complaint, and presuming the innocence of the accused party unless or until their guilt is established.

The two articles on [E&E News](#) and the [CBC](#) scandalise and sexualise gender-neutral regulations that are perfectly commonplace on commercial and research vessels, and which apply to all expedition participants, regardless of their sex. We work and conduct research under extreme conditions, which make clear rules, especially with regard to occupational safety, essential. By establishing and enforcing these rules, we ensure not only the safety of all participants, but also the success of the expedition as a whole, since e.g. absences due to sickness resulting from inappropriate clothing can have serious consequences. Accordingly, we expressly require all participants to embrace and abide by these rules. These regulations, which e.g. prohibit wearing sports clothing or work clothing in certain social contexts, are intended to ensure both adherence to standards of hygiene and occupational safety in areas like the mess halls, ship's bridge and other public areas, and mutually respectful conduct. They are conveyed to all participants at the beginning of every expedition. We promote open and constructive communication on all of our expeditions, so that any conflicts or misunderstandings can promptly be resolved on board. We expect the same kind of behaviour from every participant who signs our Code of Conduct.

All MOSAiC participants were briefed before the expedition about the special safety requirements for working in the Arctic. They were informed on rules regarding clothing for working outside or inside both verbally and in writing (e.g. in the MOSAiC handbook). We request that all expedition participants familiarise themselves with these rules, and that they obey them in the interest of team safety. We were sorry to learn that individual participants felt uncomfortable during and disappointed by the expedition, and we thoroughly revised our procedures to address any gaps in the communication. The feedback we received from other participants confirmed that the rules were generally understood, and the teamwork appreciated, but also revealed that a few first-time participants apparently paid insufficient attention to the written and verbal communication, and in some cases failed to comply with the rules.

We support an open and critical media culture with regard to our expeditions, but maintaining said culture also means that guests on board should familiarise themselves with our safety standards and adhere to the rules. Further, we will not accept any slandering of

our staff and working standards, or more generally, any distorted portrayal of what actually took place on board.

Clarifications on the CBC Article “Women on Arctic research mission told not to wear tight fitting clothing” by Bradlyn Oakes and John Last

Female expedition staff and passengers on board a support ship for the Polarstern were told not to wear tight fitting clothing following an incident of sexual harassment.

---> Communications on the dress code, including e.g. regulations on wearing sports clothing or work clothing in areas like the bridge and mess halls, took place at the beginning of the expedition and independently of the incident. The dress code applied to all expedition participants, regardless of their sex, and everyone on board was informed of it. Such regulations, which e.g. prohibit wearing sports clothing or work clothing in public areas, are intended to ensure both adherence to standards of hygiene and occupational safety in areas like the mess halls, ship’s bridge and other public areas, and mutually respectful conduct. In addition, dress codes may reflect specific regulations issued by a given ship’s owner and commanding officers, e.g. the requirement that all participants wear appropriate (and suitably warm) clothing in the ship’s external areas, so as to avoid their catching contagious colds. The dress code was clearly communicated on the Akademik Fedorov at the beginning of the expedition. Following violations on the part of individual persons on board the Akademik Fedorov, in the course of the expedition it was repeatedly explained to all participants.

The Alfred-Wegener-Institut, which backed the expedition, said a clothing policy had always been in place, but could not provide CBC with a copy.

---> Unlike the Expedition Code of Conduct, no written hand-out detailing the dress code was distributed by the AWI. Like on many other research vessels, the dress code was instead communicated directly on board, in the form of presentations and posters. The briefings conducted by the Russian officers in this regard were verbal. In the event of repeated violations, certain rules were emphasised once again by the Cruise Leader during the daily General Meetings at the request of the Captain. These rules concerned not just the dress code, but various other aspects like separating refuse, keeping the cabins clean, properly securing cargo, entering areas of the ship that were reserved for the crew, etc.

"In fact, as Harvey later confirmed with the Alfred-Wegener-Institut and the mission's chief scientist, Thomas Krumpfen, there had been allegations of sexual harassment aboard the Akademik Fedorov days before the policy was discussed."

---> That’s not true: communications regarding the dress code took place independently of the incident. All participants were informed of the dress code from the outset. Following repeated violations, the dress code was discussed and explained again. This step was taken particularly after the ship’s officers pointed out the need to do so. Neither the ship’s

commanding officers nor the Cruise Leaders mentioned or established different rules for different sexes. Further, there is no connection between the incident and the repeated admonitions to adhere to the dress code.

"Several female participants reported they'd been harassed by a group of men on the ship, including technical contractors, Harvey reported. They told Krumpfen, which resulted in some members of the crew being prohibited from contact with several women on board."

---> No, that's not accurate. On the Akademik Fedorov, one female participant informed the Cruise Leaders that she had felt harassed by another person on board. In response, the two individuals involved, together with the Captain, Group Leaders and Cruise Leaders, jointly discussed the incident. This was followed by an address to the entire crew, disciplinary measures for the harassing party, an official apology to the participant by the Captain, and a follow-up discussion to ensure that all necessary measures had been taken. In addition, the two parties involved received new cabin assignments, to ensure that they would no longer have cabins close to one another.

The written Expedition Code of Conduct, which all participants signed in advance, expressly states that, if they witness inappropriate conduct, they should either directly intervene or inform the Captain or Cruise Leader. With regard to the incident, the harassed participant acted in accordance with the Expedition Code of Conduct. No further incidents concerning the Code were reported.

"Even today, the division of labour on board polar research vessels usually breaks down in highly gendered ways, with women "tasked with domestic duties" and excluded from field work, she said. Harvey documented instances of this at the MOSAiC School, the expedition's training program for polar scientists, in her reporting for E&E."

---> This statement absolutely contradicts the team spirit that is actively practised on our expeditions. All participants help one another with all logistical and scientific duties; without this attitude of mutual support, conducting research in the polar regions would be impossible. Women were consistently and fully involved in all expedition-related activities on board the Akademik Fedorov. The only exception: in one specific case, the Cruise Leaders deemed that occupational safety regulations concerning the maximum weights participants could safely lift were in violation of corresponding German and Russian regulations. Hence, help was organized to support the work planned.

"Harvey said the incident shows why more women must be in leadership in the polar sciences."

---> During the MOSAiC expedition, women held 59 percent of the leading research positions on board the Polarstern. The AWI director who supported the realization of the mission is an experienced female polar researcher. Witnesses on board including female researchers clarified that the perception of the author of the blog was not shared by many.