

EXTERNAL COMMUNITY SPEAKER POLICY



1. INTRODUCTION

The European Network on Statelessness (ENS) is a registered Charity in the UK (Registered Charity Number 1158414).

ENS is a civil society alliance of over 170 organisations and individual experts in 41 countries and is committed to ending statelessness and ensuring that everyone living in Europe without a nationality can access the rights they are entitled to under international law.

ENS' London-based Secretariat coordinates the activities of a range of members from large international NGOs to grassroots and community organisations, legal advice agencies, 'thinktanks', stateless activists, and prominent international law experts.

Who are Community Speakers?

ENS works with a range of people affected by statelessness including both stateless changemakers and representatives of communities affected by statelessness (e.g. Roma community advocates). This is a diverse group where individuals prefer different by-lines to describe their experience or expertise. In the following document we use the term 'community speaker' as a catch-all term to describe both stateless changemakers and community representatives.

This External Speaker Policy is intended to set basic standards and expectations for external organisations working with ENS who request recommendations for speakers with experience of statelessness or representing communities affected by statelessness. These standards and expectations have been co-designed with stateless community representatives, based on their recommendations and outlined needs.

2. AIM

ENS wants to increase the presence of stateless community members in advocacy spaces and spaces of influence and does not want to act as a gatekeeper keeping communities away from influential spaces.

At the same time, where possible, we want to encourage other organisations to be guided by best practice when working with community speakers, including to ensure a trauma-sensitive, respectful approach including not requiring people to 'tell their stories'. When connecting new organisations with community speakers, ENS also wants to avoid our contacts feeling pressured to 'tell their stories' because ENS connected them.

3. PROCESS

ENS liaison with community speaker

Prior to sending the speaker's details to an external contact, ENS will check with the speaker if they are interested in the event and consent to their contact details being shared.

If so, ENS will:

- pass on their details after the above policy is outlined to the external organisation
- offer support to the speaker in preparing for the event (e.g., editing, speech practice etc.)
- check-in with them after the event

4. STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS:

When working with community speakers, we are guided by the following standards and expectations and seek to promote these as good practice to other organisations:

1. Expert by experience

The speakers we recommend are all community speakers. Many work as advocates within affected communities and all are experts on the impact of statelessness in practice. We do not ask people to disclose their current residence or nationality status or publicise this. This means our proposed speakers can include, for example, people who used to be stateless and acquired a nationality, or people who have never been stateless themselves, but who work closely within their communities with community members who are. We recommend framing their expertise as a 'representative of a community affected by statelessness', 'expert by experience', or any other framing that the speaker themselves requests.

2. Audience: before, during and after event

Prior to an event, we provide community speakers with a thorough explanation of who their audience will be and who is participating in the event. If the event will be recorded, we also explain who will have access to the recording after the event. Where photos are used for event promotion, these are agreed with speakers in advance.

3. By-lines

When introducing and promoting speakers we use the by-lines they provide (e.g., Executive Director, Stateless activist, Student, Campaigner, Changemaker, Activist, Individual member, etc.) rather than introducing them as 'a stateless person'. We ask speakers to confirm their preferred by-line in advance.

4. 'Telling a story'

We don't ask or expect people to share personal experiences (though they may wish to do so) because this is personal. We find this approach gives speakers the freedom to choose what they want to talk about and enhances the breadth of what is covered beyond what we had imagined.

5. Remuneration

When connecting organisations with community speakers, we stress the importance of offering remuneration. Community speakers often rely on speaking opportunities as a source of income or for donations to support their work in the community. In the case where other speakers are being paid for their time, our position is that community speakers should also be paid accordingly and in line with other speakers. Regardless of budget, we recommend transparency with speakers from initial contact about whether this engagement will be remunerated or not.

6. Speaker selection

Where possible we try to propose more than one speaker. We encourage the organiser to speak to each individual speaker so that you can make a decision about who fits with your programme.

