



# Product and Brand Guidelines

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# Table of Contents

|                                                                            |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Product and Brand Guidelines</b>                                        | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>Table of Contents</b>                                                   | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>1. Purpose and Area of Application</b>                                  | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>2. Definition of Illegal and Offensive Products, Content and Brands</b> | <b>4</b>  |
| 2.1 Discriminatory and hateful activities                                  | 4         |
| 2.1 a) Perpetuation of Stereotypes and Cultural Appropriation              | 5         |
| 2.2. Bullying                                                              | 5         |
| 2.3 Hateful Ideologies and Violent Extremism                               | 5         |
| 2.4 Glorifying violence and use of weapons                                 | 7         |
| 2.5 Adult content                                                          | 7         |
| 2.6 Objectification and exploitation                                       | 8         |
| 2.7 Self-injury and harmful behavior                                       | 8         |
| 2.8 Substance use                                                          | 9         |
| 2.9 Inappropriate language                                                 | 9         |
| 2.10 Infringement of intellectual property rights                          | 9         |
| 2.11 In addition to our Animal Welfare and Sustainable Sourcing Policies   | 10        |
| <b>3. Additional Guidance for Brands</b>                                   | <b>10</b> |
| 3.1 Additional content-specific guidelines:                                | 10        |
| 3.2 Additional brand-specific guidelines:                                  | 10        |
| <b>4. Internal Escalation Process</b>                                      | <b>11</b> |
| <b>5. Appendix</b>                                                         | <b>11</b> |
| 5.1 Important Contacts:                                                    | 11        |
| 5.2 Important Links:                                                       | 11        |

## 1. Purpose and Area of Application

The purpose of our Product<sup>1</sup> and Brand<sup>2</sup> Guidelines is to set clear standards of what is not permissible for the products made available to our customers and the brands we partner with.

The Product & Brand Guidelines (or PB Guidelines) are complementary to our Code of Conduct and other sustainability and ethical standards, which set the baseline for social, environmental and chemical compliance, and apply to all

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<sup>1</sup> *Product* refers to all goods made available to our customers on any Zalando platform.

<sup>2</sup> *Brand* refers to a Business Partner's conduct and principles including but not limited to: name, image, background history, and marketing practices.



Business Partners, including, but not limited to: suppliers, agents and trading companies (hereinafter “Business Partners”) of Zalando SE and all its subsidiaries (hereinafter “Zalando”). The PB Guidelines explain what Zalando considers offensive, illegal, or inappropriate for products, and brands to sell on the Zalando platform. They help Zalando employees and our Business Partners decide what is not allowed to be sold on our platform. This applies to everything sold or shown on Zalando's websites, including product names, descriptions, images, videos, and logos. It also applies when we choose brand partners. For example, if a brand's name, logo, or marketing violates these guidelines, that brand is not a good fit for Zalando. We also check a brand's history for any violations (e.g., discrimination, misconduct by leaders).

Please note that the guidance provided here is to support any team or employee buying, selecting and/ or working with displaying and purchasing products and brands to sell / offer on Zalando. While we recognise that style and clothing (i.e. our products) can change its meaning over time - particularly with changing social movements and global context - Zalando will continue to prohibit the sale of any product or brand which has *any* association with any of the outlined dimensions in section 2.

The PB Guidelines do not include an exhaustive list of use cases. Product producers, along with those choosing and selecting brand partners, are expected to make the required and necessary judgements when applying the PB Guidelines to ensure that products and brands displayed on Zalando meet our requirements and represent our values. Both employees of Zalando and of our Business Partners are required to familiarize themselves with the PB Guidelines in accordance with the [Zalando Platform Rules](#) (3.7 *Compliance with Zalando's Sustainability Requirements & Ethical Guidelines*) . In the case that a product or brand in question cannot be fully assessed by the PB Guidelines, please refer to our internal escalation process explained in Chapter 4.

In addition to ongoing compliance checks carried out during delivery and production, Zalando's Quality Assurance performs regular spot-checks on the product assortment to verify Business Partners' compliance with the PB Guidelines specified below.

Products and brands on Zalando may be flagged as being in violation of the PB Guidelines by various sources, including, but not limited to: buyers, customers, or campaigning groups. Products or brands that are considered to be in violation of the PB Guidelines will not be displayed on Zalando - if already live, the product violation will be removed. In case of a violation(s), remediation and corrective action plans will be designed (based on the severity) in collaboration with Business Partners to prevent additional violations. Further, Zalando reserves the right to suspend Business Partners from selling on the platform or terminate



the business relationship, if they violate the PB guidelines and the legal requirements for such termination under applicable law(s).

## 2. Definition of Illegal and Offensive Products, Content and Brands

Zalando has defined 11 dimensions that constitute offensive and illegal content. What can be deemed Illegal is clearly defined based on laws. What can be deemed offensive is based on our Code of Conduct and other sustainability and ethical standards, including these PB Guidelines (outlined below). In order for products to be sold and/or displayed on Zalando, the products may not contain, represent, condone or promote the following (please see sections 2.1 - 2.11 for detailed descriptions):

1. Discriminatory or hateful activities
  - a. Perpetuation of stereotypes and cultural appropriation
2. Bullying
3. Hateful Ideologies and Violent Extremism
4. Glorifying violence and use of weapons
5. Adult content
6. Objectification and exploitation
7. Self-injury and harmful behavior
8. Substance use
9. Inappropriate language
10. Intellectual property rights infringements
11. In addition to our Animal Welfare and Sustainable Sourcing Policies

In order to make the identification of offensive products and content as clear and unambiguous as possible, we have included detailed guidelines per dimension below:

### 2.1 Discriminatory and hateful activities

Zalando prohibits any discriminatory or hateful products or brands from being sold through Zalando platforms. We class discriminatory and hateful activities as those based on the below protected characteristics including (but not limited to);

- Ethnicity
- Race
- National origin,
- Gender (or gender identity),
- Religion,
- Disability
- Age
- Sexuality



Furthermore, we strongly prohibit any forms of hate speech such as the following:

- Hate-speech based on any of the above characteristics and / or referring to specific political views
- Denial of an individual's gender identity or sexual orientation, including deadnaming.
- Mocking or attacking the beliefs, sacred symbols, movements, or institutions of <sup>3</sup>the protected or vulnerable groups (whether perceived or self-identified) listed above.

## 2.1 a) Perpetuation of Stereotypes and Cultural Appropriation

In addition to the protected groups listed above,, any depiction, representation or language which reinforces stereotypes<sup>4</sup> pertaining to any of the protected characteristics in 2.1 are prohibited. This also applies to products and/or brands stemming from a dominant group that have appropriated elements of a protected group in an exploitative, disrespectful or stereotypical way.

Furthermore, any form of cultural appropriation in products or used generally by brands sold through Zalando platforms is also prohibited. This includes:

- Any form of taking cultural symbols and garments out of their original context to be repurposed for a brand's own context or meaning<sup>5</sup>
- The use of script or terminology (e.g. language, letters, symbols, etc.) of a different language or culture used by another producer/brand without the same heritage or connection.
- Any product or content marketed for a specific religious or cultural holiday/ festival that is not intrinsically linked to the celebration, for example a menorah cup.

Please note, if a product has been produced by a brand with a genuine connection to the culture or cultural elements in question, the product and/or brand is to be permitted<sup>6</sup>.

## 2.2. Bullying

Zalando prohibits any products or brands that promote bullying, harrassment or sexual harassment.

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<sup>3</sup> *Cultural appropriation* refers to the exploitative practice of taking a source of inspiration outside the context of its original culture without permission and/or respect for its symbolism. This includes anything which is not representative of the producer/brand's own heritage.

<sup>4</sup> *Stereotype* is defined as a generalized but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or community.

<sup>5</sup> (e.g. traditional dress produced by contemporary brands with no cultural connection, or a brand using a culture's symbols as "decoration" in any form (ornaments, flower pots, plates, etc.).

<sup>6</sup> Note that it is the responsibility of the Buyer/ product producer to clarify such connections prior to adding the product to our assortment



- Attacks on individuals, including public figures, such as negative physical descriptions or expressions of disgust.
- Mocking someone for their weight, size or body shape.
- Implying that a person should change something about a characteristic associated with their identity, in order to fit stereotypical definitions of beauty (e.g. lightening / darkening skin color, etc.).

## 2.3 Hateful Ideologies and Violent Extremism

Zalando prohibits any products or brands supporting expression, symbolism or representation of hateful ideologies and violent extremism in the products or brands sold through Zalando platforms. In addition to the items listed below, terminology and code should be cross-referenced against [this](#) “Fashion against Facism” database.

Prohibited content includes but is not limited to:

- Right-wing extremism, (Neo-)Nazism, White Supremacy, Antisemitism, Islamism, Misogynist ideologies, Anti-LGTBQ ideologies, global conspiracy ideologies (e.g. Great Replacement)
- Unconstitutional imagery and representation of organisations according to German Law: [Strafgesetzbuch-StGB](#) (Section 86a prohibits the "use of symbols of unconstitutional organizations. [List of banned organizations](#) <sup>7</sup>
- Anything Nazi-related, including those not covered by Strafgesetzbuch (Section 86a).
  - Any symbolism and imagery related to (Neo-)Nazism, Right-wing extremism and antisemitism including but not limited to any display of swastikas, triskeles, a black sun, two lightning bolts for the SS, the war flag of Germany during National Socialism (Reichskriegsflagge), certain hand gestures<sup>8</sup>, or symbols of the so called “New Right”, e.g. Identitarian Movement
  - Any products that hint at (Neo-)Nazi-related approaches, including combinations of colors, font, and/or use of specific words (e.g. Sieg, Auschwitz, Holocaust, etc.) or abbreviations (e.g. HKNKRZ)

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<sup>7</sup> [List of banned organizations](#): Sozialistische Reichspartei (1952) Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (1956) Freie Deutsche Jugend (West Germany), Volkssozialistische Bewegung Deutschlands/Partei der Arbeit (1982), Aktionsfront Nationaler Sozialisten/Nationale Aktivisten (1983), Deutsche Alternative (1992) (not to be confused with Alternative für Deutschland), Nationalistische Front (1992), Wiking-Jugend (1994), Freiheitliche Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (1995), Blood and Honour, Germany chapter (2000), Die Artgemeinschaft – Germanische Glaubens-Gemeinschaft wesensgemäßer Lebensgestaltung e.V." (2023) und Hammerskins Deutschland (2023), Combat 18 Deutschland (2020), Nordadler (2020), Sturm-/Wolfsbrigade 44 (2020)

<sup>8</sup> Specifically, business Partners are responsible to double check the meaning of all products and content displaying an individual showing a hand signal or simply the hands themselves against potential gang affiliation and implication. Any reference to gangs, especially the explicit writing of gang names (e.g. Crips, Bloods) is also prohibited.



- Right-wing extremist symbolism, including but not limited to: fascist regimes, Ku Klux Klan (KKK), Proud Boys or white power or pride (e.g. any reference to “white only”) Closely review the context of the following numbers or a combination of these:
  - 88 — “Heil Hitler”, stands for two times the eighth letter in the alphabet. If you count from the back of the alphabet 8 times, you get “SS”.
  - 14 — 14 words “We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children” where “our people” means the “Aryan race”.
  - 28 — Neonazi network Blood & Honor (stands for second and eighth letters of the alphabet)
- Hate-based conspiracy theories and misinformation, such as holocaust denial or the great replacement theory.
- Clothing, patterns and symbols worn or associated (currently or historically) with extremist and/or terrorist organisations and/or ideologies (even if these can be worn/represented in a non extremist capacity).
- Political or cultural icons connected to negative events throughout history (e.g. Adolf Hitler and the Holocaust, slave trade, colonialism, etc).

## 2.4 Glorifying violence and use of weapons

Zalando prohibits any products or brands that promote violence or weapons.

This includes:

- Anything showing violence such as hanging, fighting, punching, or cutting.
- Anything gang-related, like gang symbols or names.
- Any product showing weapons like guns, knives, bombs, atomic bomb mushrooms or chemical weapons, except on official flags or in popular culture references that don't promote violence (e.g t-shirt prints of Guns N' Roses, Banksy “Bomb Love” image).
- Military items like gas masks and bulletproof vests.
- Nooses
- Anything referencing wars or conflicts

Note: Military-style clothing with national flags is not allowed. Utility vests and camouflage patterns are allowed provided they do not promote weapons, violence or military activity.

Furthermore, the current world and political climate at any given time may influence the degree to which this dimension is imposed. For example, to be sensitive to current or coming wars and conflicts, camouflage print or military-looking products (e.g. items with lapels, badges, etc.) may be paused as they can be considered insensitive and/or offensive. At such times the Zalando



Product and Brand Escalation Committee will provide specific, additional guidance to Business Partners.

## 2.5 Adult content

Zalando prohibits any adult content in the products or brands sold through Zalando platforms. Underwear or swimwear products must be modeled by individuals who are clearly over the age of 18 years old, please refer to our [Kids Policy](#) for details on preventing the sexualization or exploitation of minors.

This includes:

- Nudity is never allowed, this includes implied nudity such as a female model covering her breasts with her hands.
- Depictions of sexual activity are never allowed. This includes sexual behaviors including cartoon or anime characters engaged in sexual activity, (e.g. erotic visuals, visuals from Kamasutra.
- Fetishized products and imagery not allowed (e.g. ball-gags)
- Blow-up dolls and/ or sex toys referencing sexual activity are not allowed.
- Sexual text descriptions are not allowed.

Zalando reserves the right to differentiate between pornography and other mature content. To provide further context, the products fulfilling the below criteria would be permitted:

- Artistic nudity is allowed, e.g. socks with drawings of breasts on them
- Transparent (or see-through/sheer) products that reveal female model's nipples or either genders genitalia must be retouched or covered with skin coloured items, to an opacity of 50-70%
- Harnesses and chokers are permissible when displayed as fashion accessories and not sexual objects (given the imagery meets the other requirements mentioned in these guidelines).

## 2.6 Objectification and exploitation

Zalando prohibits any objectification or exploitation in products or brands sold through Zalando platforms. This includes:

- Sexualization or sexual exploitation of minors. This applies to any individual appearing younger than 18 years old (please err on the side of safety), and applies specifically to any images which imply grooming, include sexual remarks, or include any sexualised imagery such as sucking a lollypop, eating a banana in a sexualised manner, posing in a way to accentuate private parts, etc..



- Sexual exploitation of anyone such as upskirt pictures, images taken without consent<sup>9</sup>.
- Any images or text that explicitly or implicitly depicts the lack of consent of an individual, for example jokes about rape or domestic violence. This includes any image hinting at any form of trafficking or exploitation in general.
- Any image where a line is placed over the eyes/face/facial features.

## 2.7 Self-injury and harmful behavior

Zalando prohibits any products or brands which promote or celebrate suicide, self-injury, disordered eating or harmful behavior in the products, content or brands sold through Zalando platforms. This includes:

- Instructions around self-injury/harm
- Sharing plans for suicide or self-harm
- Content promoting or celebrating eating disorders
- Graphic or implied imagery which may be triggering for some communities, for example someone slitting their wrists.
- Promotion of any self-injury or harmful behavior.

## 2.8 Substance use

We have specific guidelines concerning the depiction of alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs. Please note that the advertisement of alcohol is forbidden in most of our markets. Thus alcoholic drinks are not to be prominently used in advertising, nor can we promote ideas that alcoholic drinks “lift the mood” etc. While the guidance in this document is not to be used for promotional purposes, we nonetheless echo this standard for consistency.

We will not tolerate any of the following in the products or brands sold through Zalando platforms:

- Portrayal or references to illegal or pharmaceutical drugs, including but not limited to marijuana, cocaine, heroin, magic mushrooms. This includes consumption of these products
- Portrayal or references to tobacco products such as cigarettes, vapes, snus. This includes consumption of these products
- Depiction of underage people (under 18) drinking alcohol
- Any demonstrations or encouragement of overconsumption of alcohol such as downing a drink, saying you’re going to get hammered, etc.
- and e.g. phrases like “high on life” when accompanied by a depiction of someone/something consuming substances like alcohol, tobacco as vapes and snuss, and drugs.

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<sup>9</sup> This includes any image of a person where the pose is more sexual in nature and there is a bold line superimposed over the eyes (color of the line is irrelevant).



We do allow imagery of alcohol paraphernalia such as glasses, bar carts, cocktail making instruments.

Symbols of marijuana as a plant, including a picture of a marijuana leaf or symbols of mushrooms as a part of nature are permitted.

## 2.9 Inappropriate language

Zalando prohibits any inappropriate language in the products or brands sold through Zalando platforms. This includes:

- In addition to 2.1, use of language that is specifically offensive to minorities and women is strictly prohibited. This also includes words or terminology which are offensive in their native language but may be unknown in the local language (i.e a t-shirt with an offensive slogan written in Spanish should not be sold in the UK). Please see: [Block List](#) [Only available for Zalando internal employees].
- Swear words or words considered profanities or slurs, in any language, are never allowed.. Similarly we will not allow versions or symbols of swear words, slurs or profanities where the implication is clear
- Zalando holds the right to judge translation in other languages as inappropriate or offensive.

## 2.10 Infringement of intellectual property rights

Zalando prohibits any violation of intellectual property rights in the products, content or brands sold through Zalando platforms. These are considered legal violations and will be dealt with accordingly.

## 2.11 In addition to our Animal Welfare and Sustainable Sourcing Policies

Our [Sustainable Sourcing & Animal Welfare Policy](#) defines the minimum social, environmental and animal welfare standards that apply to the manufacture, sourcing and sale of products sold through Zalando, and include prohibited activities and materials. We will not tolerate any violations to these policies in the products or brands sold through Zalando platforms. Additionally, this includes:

- All images must be sensitive to animal welfare issues.
- Using live animals in photoshoots is not permitted.

## 3. Additional Guidance for Brands

The above listed dimensions apply to all products on Zalando (e.g. products sold on Zalando may not be discriminatory or hateful, politically extreme, etc.). However, in addition to these dimensions, there are additional guidelines that apply specifically to content created by brands and sold on Zalando.



### 3.1 Additional content-specific guidelines:

Content that violates these rules may not be displayed on Zalando:

- Models should look healthy and respect EU standards on minimum sizes (e.g. visibly underweight). See Zalando's [Model Booking Policy](#) for more information.
- Working with children: We focus on authentically displaying the items we have in our selection; no underwear, no beachwear; no shots of children dressed to look "older" than their age, no suggestive poses or provocative facial expressions. See the [Kids Policy](#) for more information.
- Adult garments must be shown only on models visibly over 18 years of age (with special attention to underwear and beachwear).
- Models may not be represented in derogatory or discriminatory postures, including postures that are objectifying, overtly sexualised or perpetuate negative stereotypes (e.g. women subservient to men).
- Images may not be overly retouched (specifically, darker skin tones may not be lightened). Local Laws on labelling retouched/edited images (e.g. France, Norway apply).

### 3.2 Additional brand-specific guidelines:

Brands that violate these rules may not be displayed on Zalando:

- Brand names, logos and products must not be offensive, discriminatory or exclusionary and must adhere to the values outlined in our [Code of Conduct and other sustainability and ethical standards](#) along with the guidance outlined here. However, brands with names, logos or products inherently tied to the brand founder's heritage, culture, lived experience, etc. (e.g. the brand [BrownSkin](#)) are to be permitted.
- Brands who have heavy representation or endorsement from celebrities and influencers, etc., which do not align with our values. This includes brands directly owned by celebrities and influencers, etc., which do not align with our values.
- Brands whose marketing and general imagery (e.g. model styling, campaign content, etc.) is consistently not in line with the guidance provided in this document.
- Brands with a history or background of instances that violate our current [Code of Conduct and other sustainability and ethical standards](#) (including the PB Guidelines) without proper reconciliation.

## 4. Internal Escalation Process



Cases that are not covered by the PB Guidelines or that fall into potential “gray areas” should be double checked against other cases and/or follow the escalation process as outlined in the Product & Brand Guidance Tool (internal Zalando document).

## 5. Appendix

### 5.1 Important Contacts:

- Diversity and Inclusion: [team-diversityinclusion@zalando.de](mailto:team-diversityinclusion@zalando.de)
- Trust and Safety: [trustandsafety@zalando.de](mailto:trustandsafety@zalando.de)
- Legal

### 5.2 Important Links:

- [Code of Conduct and other sustainability and ethical standards](#)
- [Zalando Platform Rules](#)
- [Sustainable Sourcing & Animal Welfare Policy](#) (Internal)
- [Strafgesetzbuch-StGB & List of Banned Organizations](#)
- [Kids Policy](#)
- [Model Booking Policy](#)
- [Block List](#) (Internal)
- [Community Guidelines](#)