



## Report of the European Ombudsman on dignity at work in the EU institutions and agencies: SI/2/2018/AMF

Report - 17/12/2018

**Case SI/2/2018/AMF - Opened on 24/04/2018 - Decision on 17/12/2018 - Institutions concerned** European Parliament | European Commission | Court of Justice of the European Union | European Court of Auditors | European Data Protection Supervisor | European Central Bank | European Investment Bank | European Economic and Social Committee | European Committee of the Regions | European Agency for Safety and Health at Work | European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) | European Union Aviation Safety Agency | European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training | European Chemicals Agency | European Environment Agency | European Food Safety Authority | European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions | European Medicines Agency | European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction | European Union Intellectual Property Office | European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training | European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation | European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation | European Council | European External Action Service |

This report identifies best practices across the EU civil service in preventing and dealing with harassment. It results from the Ombudsman's exchanges with 26 EU institutions and agencies.

Best Practices

### Preventing harassment

**Awareness raising** - Raising awareness about an organisation's anti-harassment policy and practices helps prevent harassment. This can include displaying posters and organising information sessions with staff members.

**Staff training** - Compulsory and regular anti-harassment training for staff members, including during their induction training can help reinforce a positive culture and keep people informed about new developments. Managers should receive specialised training.

**Risk assessment** - EU bodies should help to mitigate adverse working conditions that increase the risk of harassment, such as stress, heavy workload, workplace conflict, a lack of clear roles and poor managerial practices. Regular assessment of psychosocial risks at work is a key measure.



**Online harassment** - EU bodies should address online harassment/cyberbullying and provide staff members with adequate guidelines on how to interact on social media and what to do if things start to go wrong.

**Gender balance** - Gender balance in management positions can go a long way towards cultivating a culture of mutual respect.

**Clear policy** - An anti-harassment policy should demonstrate a commitment that harassment will not be tolerated. It should explain what constitutes harassment and set out a procedure that includes both formal and informal actions. The policy should be clear and precise, so that staff members are aware of the procedures and how to use them. It should be monitored regularly and improved, where necessary.

## Dealing with harassment

**Informal procedure** - All EU bodies should have both formal and informal procedures for dealing with alleged harassment. Informal procedures usually involve **confidential counsellors** or external mediators, which can help find effective solutions at an early stage. In-house confidential counsellors should have a clearly-defined and supported role, receive regular training and represent as diverse backgrounds as possible. Cooperation between confidential counsellors in different EU bodies should be encouraged. All concerned persons should be explicitly encouraged to turn to a confidential counsellor for guidance and support.

**Formal complaints** - EU bodies should adapt their internal policies so as to allow personnel working on-site but not covered by the Staff Regulations to make a formal complaint. This includes trainees and external contractors. Acts allegedly committed by individuals from all categories of personnel, including members of institutions, seconded national experts, trainees or external contractors should be covered.

**Effective procedures** - Formal investigations should be thorough and swift. If harassment is found to have occurred, effective measures, including disciplinary measures, should be taken against the harasser.

**Independent investigators** - For investigations to be effective, investigators need not only to be impartial and fair, but also *perceived* as such by all parties concerned. Where an EU body does not have the resources to assign a specialised team to investigate harassment allegations, they should consider using external investigators. Where appropriate, EU institutions and agencies should make use of and help develop the 'pool of independent investigators' set up in the context of the EU Agencies Network.

**High-ranking personnel** - Individuals are particularly vulnerable to harassment where there is a power imbalance between the parties involved. This can be mitigated through more demanding rules for high-ranking personnel, who are not covered by the Staff Regulations, such as commissioners, judges, members of the Court of Auditors, members of the



Economic and Social Committee and so on. These could include aggravated disciplinary measures, such as compulsory retirement or removal of pension rights. High-ranking personnel should be informed of all anti-harassment rules and policies at the beginning of their mandates in a comprehensive manner and at regular intervals.

**Rehabilitation measures** - EU bodies must put in place mechanisms to support and help victims of harassment. Where appropriate, victims or perpetrators of harassment should be moved internally. Victims should receive counselling, and employers should ensure that their career progression is not impaired.

Background

*" Mutual respect for the dignity of others at all levels within the workplace is one of the key characteristics of successful organisations. "*

European social partners' Framework Agreement on

Harassment and Violence at Work [1]

**1.** Harassment constitutes a serious attack on a person's dignity and can damage the victim's psychological and physical health. Victims of workplace harassment often feel insecure at work, are absent more frequently and may even become unable to work. In addition to the distress it causes victims, workplace harassment can affect other colleagues and the quality of the workplace itself [2] .

**2.** Research shows that harassment is more widespread than commonly believed, and significantly underreported. According to the UK's Trade Unions Congress, almost two in three young women have experienced sexual harassment at work yet only one in five reported the incident [3] .

**3.** The EU civil service generally has high standards in this area, but it is not immune to workplace harassment. The European Ombudsman decided to open this strategic initiative to identify and share best practices across the EU civil service.

**4.** The Ombudsman contacted 26 EU institutions [4] and agencies [5] , asking them to provide her with a copy of their anti-harassment policies and any related guidelines or implementing provisions. The Ombudsman also asked the institutions and agencies to inform her about the number of reported cases of harassment and their outcomes.

Best practices identified

**5.** This initiative has allowed the Ombudsman to identify a series of best practices that she strongly encourages all EU institutions, agencies and bodies to adopt. These practices can be divided into two categories: i) what to do to avoid harassment taking place, ii) what to do when things go wrong.

## **What to do to avoid harassment taking place**



## Awareness raising

**6.** Research shows that, when employees perceive that their employer deals effectively with conflicts, less harassment takes place [6]. For an anti-harassment policy to work, staff therefore need to know about it and to see it as an effective tool.

**7.** Every staff member has to contribute to creating a culture of dignity and mutual respect. All staff members should know what constitutes harassment and how they can prevent and combat it. Victims must be empowered to identify a situation of harassment and to report it. Their co-workers who witness it must also be able and willing to identify harassment and to take decisive action to deal with it.

**8.** Apart from publishing anti-harassment policies on the internal website of the institution, best practices in this area include distributing brochures on harassment to staff; displaying posters on the institution's premises (which should include the name and contact details of confidential counsellors, see below); and organising information sessions for staff members.

## Training

**9.** Most of the EU institutions and agencies consulted offer anti-harassment training to their staff members. This training should be compulsory for all staff members, including seconded national experts, trainees, and employees of external contractors. It should be organised regularly to keep people informed and to deal with new developments, such as online harassment.

**10.** Anti-harassment training should be an essential part of the induction training for all newcomers (a practice that many institutions and agencies have already put in place).

**11.** It is also good practice to organise separate and compulsory anti-harassment training for managers, emphasising their role in preventing harassment and dealing with it as a first point of contact if it occurs.

## Risk assessment- Psychosocial risk management

**12.** Adverse working conditions that risk increasing the likelihood of harassment include a high work load, heavy psychological and/or physical job demands, workplace conflicts, a lack of clear roles and poor managerial practices [7]. Employers need to be particularly vigilant where these conditions are present.

**13.** According to the European Framework Directive on Safety and Health at Work [8] employers have a " *duty to ensure the safety and health of workers in every aspect related to work*". The Commission's Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work [9] mentions



the need for employers to promote well-being and prevent mental health problems. Therefore, psychosocial risk management (including the risk of sexual and psychological harassment) is the responsibility of the employer.

**14.** A regular assessment by the EU institutions and agencies of psychosocial risks at work is therefore a key measure in the fight against harassment. Such an assessment would help underpin other targeted harassment prevention activities. An identified best practice in this area comes from national legislation [10], which recognises harassment as a risk to employees' health and requires every organisation with more than 50 employees to carry out an analysis of psychosocial risks.

## Cyberbullying-Online harassment

**15.** An increasing number of individuals experience harassment online. Cyberbullying can involve hate speech and abusive online messages, ranging from mild insults to death threats. People working in the EU institutions are not immune and may face online harassment from pressure groups, political activists or disaffected members of the public. In their anti-harassment training programme, EU institutions and agencies should cover online harassment and provide adequate guidelines for their staff on how to interact on social media and what to do if things start to go wrong.

## The importance of gender balance in management positions

**16.** Ensuring gender balance in management positions can go a long way towards cultivating a culture of mutual respect. "De facto equality" in public decision making bodies has been defined by the Council of Europe as a "*minimum 40% representation of each gender*" [11]. The Ombudsman encourages the institutions to be ambitious in this respect.

## Need for a clear and effective anti-harassment policy

**17.** An institution's anti-harassment policy should demonstrate its commitment to fighting harassment and send a clear message that harassment will not be tolerated. The policy should explain what constitutes harassment and set out a procedure that includes both formal and informal actions. The policy should be written in clear and precise language so that staff are aware of the procedures in place and how to use them.

## Evaluation and monitoring of policies

**18.** The effectiveness of anti-harassment policies should be subject to regular monitoring and improvement. Some of the institutions and agencies consulted regularly evaluate their anti-harassment policies. The evaluation is done either by their own mediation services or by



their network of confidential counsellors.

**19.** The Ombudsman notes that some of the anti-harassment policies of the institutions and agencies were written over a decade ago. She encourages those institutions that have not reviewed their anti-harassment policies in the past five years to do so, taking account of the findings of this strategic initiative.

## What to do when things go wrong

### The importance of the informal procedure and the role of confidential counsellors

**20.** Most of the institutions and agencies consulted have anti-harassment policies which include both a formal and an informal procedure for dealing with alleged harassment. The informal procedure usually involves consulting confidential counsellors or external mediators. The Ombudsman welcomes the fact that the informal procedure is open to every person working in the EU institutions and agencies that were consulted [12]. It should be made clear that the procedures cover any instance that may amount to a breach of the policy on dignity at work even though the instance may not necessarily constitute harassment.

**21.** Early intervention is key. Staff members should be encouraged to raise harassment issues as early as possible by turning to a confidential counsellor. Where possible, confidential counsellors should be staff members of different grades, of different genders, and having knowledge of different languages. The important role of confidential counsellors should be acknowledged and supported by the organisation, in particular by considering the time needed to carry out this role properly.

**22.** Confidential counsellors should receive specialised and regular training to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills and keep them up to date.

**23.** The role of confidential counsellors should be to help staff members to define, understand and assess the situation. Confidential counsellors should inform staff members about the procedures they can use and provide guidance in an impartial and objective manner. Institutions and agencies should ensure that confidential counsellors can speak to everyone involved in a harassment conflict, including the victim, the alleged harasser and potential witnesses. All concerned persons should be explicitly encouraged to turn to a confidential counsellor for guidance and support.

**24.** The Ombudsman encourages the inter-institutional cooperation among confidential counsellors that has already been put in place by some institutions, which organise joint trainings and the exchange of best practises. Cooperation among confidential counsellors may prove especially useful in cases where harassment takes place in an inter-institutional context [13].



**25.** The “inter-agency network of confidential counsellors” [14] , set up by a group of EU agencies, is also useful for exchanging best practices and promoting cooperation among smaller institutions and agencies. This is particularly important as interpersonal relations in these smaller bodies may be a deterrent for staff wishing to contact a confidential counsellor and where it may prove challenging to achieve the above mentioned balance of gender, grades and languages in the composition of the group of counsellors.

## Anti-harassment procedures should be available to everyone

**26.** Unlike the informal procedure which tends to be open to all categories of staff, in a number of institutions and agencies consulted the formal procedure (through which staff can report acts of harassment and request a formal investigation) is limited to the “request for assistance” mechanism foreseen in article 24 of the Staff Regulations [15] . As the Staff Regulations apply only to certain categories of staff [16] , this means in practice that trainees and the staff of external contractors do not have recourse to the formal procedure.

**27.** Some institutions and agencies allow personnel working on-site but not covered by the Staff Regulations to make a formal complaint. The Ombudsman strongly encourages all institutions and agencies to do the same. Acts allegedly committed by individuals from all categories of personnel, including members of institutions, seconded national experts, trainees or employees of external contractors should be covered.

## The formal procedure

**28.** Formal investigations of instances of harassment should be carried out thoroughly and without undue delays. Most of the institutions and agencies have already established clear deadlines for investigations.

**29.** If it is proven that harassment has occurred, effective measures, including disciplinary measures, should be taken by management against the harasser.

## The need for independent investigators

**30.** For investigations to be effective, investigators need not only to be impartial and fair, but also *perceived* as such by everyone concerned in the investigation [17] .

**31.** Some EU institutions and agencies do not have the necessary resources to appoint a specialised internal team in charge of carrying out administrative investigations. In practice, this means that the staff members appointed as internal investigators are often assigned this task in addition to their usual workload, which may prove difficult to manage. Under these circumstances, institutions and agencies should consider reaching out to external



investigators [18] .

**32.** Finding investigators who are perceived to be impartial and fair can be particularly challenging in small institutions and agencies where most staff members know each other. The Ombudsman therefore supports the initiative that led to the setting up of a “pool of independent investigators” in the context of the EU Agencies Network [19] . This enables agencies to identify and appoint independent investigators when needed. The Ombudsman encourages the EU agencies, with the support of the Commission where appropriate, to continue developing this project to make it more accessible. For some agencies this would involve, first of all, adapting their anti-harassment policies to be able to make use of the pool.

**33.** A call for expressions of interest could be launched to which both external experts and qualified former EU staff members could apply. Clear guidelines for how the pool should be governed could be adopted. The list of investigators should be kept up to date and they should be provided with regular training. Coming up with ways to develop the pool of independent investigators would be one appropriate follow up action to the recent ‘Joint EU Agencies’ declaration on harassment” [20] .

## Harassment complaints against high-ranking Members of institutions who are not covered by the Staff Regulations

**34.** Individuals are particularly vulnerable to harassment in situations where there is a significant power imbalance between the parties involved. There is therefore arguably a need for consideration to be given to more demanding rules for high ranking personnel, such as commissioners, judges, members of the European Court of Auditors, Members of the European Economic and Social Committee and so on. Best practices identified among the EU institutions include aggravated disciplinary measures such as compulsory retirement or being denied the right to a pension when a high-ranking Member of the institution has committed harassment [21] . If such sanctions were to be agreed, it would be important to make sure that the high ranking personnel were comprehensively informed of all matters relating to harassment policies at the beginning of their mandates and at regular intervals throughout the mandate so that ignorance could not be claimed in the event of a harassment complaint against them. Such a practice also acts as a protection for the personnel themselves.

**35.** According to the European Parliament, “ *politicians [should] be held to the highest standards of conduct and act as responsible role models in preventing and combating sexual harassment in parliaments and beyond* ” [22] . The debate about sexual harassment in EU political life took centre stage when Parliament discussed the problem in October 2017 [23] . Parliament strongly condemned all forms of sexual violence and physical or psychological harassment and deplored the fact that these acts are widely tolerated [24] . Parliament also noted that cases of sexual harassment and bullying are significantly underreported, especially in the case of parliamentary assistants [25] , who can be dismissed at very short notice by the Member of the European Parliament (MEP) that employs them. This places assistants, in particular, in a vulnerable position.





**36.** In its reply to the Ombudsman, Parliament reported two formal complaints of alleged **sexual** harassment in the past years. These were submitted to Parliament's committee on harassment and its prevention in the workplace, which deals with complaints against Parliament staff members, but not MEPs [26] .

**37.** Parliament informed the Ombudsman that in March 2018, it adopted a roadmap that led to new rules for dealing with harassment complaints against MEPs [27] . These entered into force in September 2018, with the result that trainees can now file harassment complaints against MEPs. Parliament has also introduced more serious financial consequences in the event an MEP is found guilty of harassment [28] . Parliament further plans to adopt a new **Code of Appropriate Behaviour for Members** establishing that "*Members should take part in specialised training organised for them on preventing conflict and harassment in the workplace*". This measure would be in line with a Parliament Resolution [29] , adopted in September 2018, on measures to prevent and combat harassment in the EU. That Resolution noted that "*training on sexual and psychological harassment should be compulsory for all staff and members of [...] the European Parliament*". Parliament also called for "*a task force of independent experts to examine the situation of sexual harassment and abuse in Parliament.*"

## Rehabilitation measures

**38.** Psychological and sexual harassment have very serious consequences for the victim's health and wellbeing [30] . Psychological and physical effects include anxiety, low self-esteem, depression, insomnia, and irritability [31] . For the institutions, harassment that goes unaddressed can result in a very serious loss of legitimacy, trust and credibility, low productivity, high rates of staff turnover and absenteeism [32] .

**39.** As already set out, employers have a "*duty to ensure the safety and health of workers in every aspect related to work*" [33] . EU institutions and agencies, as public employers, must put in place mechanisms intended to support and help victims of harassment. Where necessary and appropriate, victims or perpetrators of harassment might be moved internally, after the harassment situation has been addressed. Victims should also receive counselling and their employers should closely monitor the situation to ensure that their career progression is not damaged [34] .

Final remarks

All **personnel working in EU institutions and agencies, regardless of their status, should be protected against any attempt to undermine their dignity at work, notably via harassment. This protection should extend to acts committed by all categories of personnel, including members of institutions, seconded national experts, trainees, and staff of external contractors.**

**The Ombudsman will take into account the best practices identified in this initiative when examining individual complaints submitted to her on how the administration of the EU institutions and agencies has handled harassment issues.**



## **N.B. Same report has been addressed to the following institutions and agencies:**

- the European Parliament
- the Council
- the European External Action Service
- the European Economic and Social Committee
- the Committee of the Regions
- the European Data Protection Supervisor
- the Court of Justice of the European Union
- the Court of Auditors
- the European Chemicals Agency
- the European Food Safety Authority
- the European Environment Agency
- the European Aviation Safety Agency
- the European Medicines Agency
- the European Central Bank
- the European Investment Bank,
- the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
- Europol
- the European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit
- the European Border and Coast Guard Agency
- the European Institute for Gender Equality



- the European Police College
- the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
- the European Intellectual Property Office
- the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work
- the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction

[1] Available at:

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52007DC0686&from=EN>

This is an autonomous agreement negotiated by the European social partners, following a consultation by the European Commission. It was signed in 2007 by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC/CES), the Confederation of European Business (BUSINESSEUROPE), the European Association of Craft Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (UEAPME) as well as the European Centre of Enterprises with Public Participation and of Enterprises of General Economic Interest (CEEP).

[2] See Eurofound's report on "*Violence and harassment in European workplaces: Extent, impacts and policies*", available at:

<https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2015/violence-and-harassment-in-european-workplaces>

[3] See study "Still Just a bit of banter? sexual harassment in the workplace in 2016":

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/SexualHarassmentreport2016.pdf>

[4] European Parliament, Council of the European Union, European Commission, Court of Justice of the European Union, European Central Bank, Court of Auditors, European External Action Service, European Economic and Social Committee, European Committee of the Regions, European Investment Bank, European Data Protection Supervisor.

[5] The Ombudsman consulted a range of large and small EU agencies: European Chemicals Agency, European Food Safety Authority, , European Aviation Safety Agency, European Environment Agency, European Medicines Agency, Europol, Eurojust, European Border and Coast Guard Agency, European Institute for Gender Equality, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training, European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, European Union Intellectual Property Office and European Agency for Safety and Health at Work.

[6] See Study by the EP's Policy Department for Citizens Rights and Constitutional Affairs: "Bullying and sexual harassment at the workplace, in public spaces and in political life in the



EU”

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/604949/IPOL\\_STU\(2018\)604949\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/604949/IPOL_STU(2018)604949_EN.pdf)

[7] Eurofound’s report on “ *Violence and harassment in European workplaces: Extent, impacts and policies*”, see footnote 2.

[8] Council Directive 89/391/EEC, available at

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:01989L0391-20081211>

[9] COM(2014) 332 final, available at

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=151&langId=en>

[10] Belgian Royal Decree of 10 April 2014 on the Prevention of All Psychosocial Risks at Work. See:

[http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/cgi/article\\_body.pl?language=fr&pub\\_date=2014-04-28&numac=201420](http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/cgi/article_body.pl?language=fr&pub_date=2014-04-28&numac=201420)

[11] See Council of Europe’s Recommendation on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making. Available at:

[https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result\\_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805e0848](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805e0848)

[12] Meaning EU officials, contractual agents, temporary agents, seconded national experts, trainees and contractors.

[13] In this sense, the anti-harassment policies of the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions foresee that, when alleged harassment occurs in an inter-institutional context, a confidential counsellor or a panel of confidential counsellors can be explicitly appointed for that purpose.

[14] Set up by the European Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT Systems in the area of freedom, security and justice, European Banking Authority, European Medicines Agency, European Union Agency for Network and Information Security, European Institute of Innovation and Technology, and the Electronic Components and Systems for European Leadership Joint Undertaking.

[15] **Regulation No 31 (EEC), 11 (EAEC), laying down the Staff Regulations of Officials and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community** , (Staff Regulations and CEOS) available here:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1433861011292&uri=CELEX:01962R0031-20140701>

Article 24 of the Staff Regulations states that: “ *The Union shall assist any official, in particular in proceedings against any person perpetrating threats, insulting or defamatory acts or utterances, or any attack to person or property to which he or a member of his family is subjected by reason of his position or duties.[...]*”



[16] The Staff Regulations and CEOS apply only to EU officials, contractual agents and temporary agents. Seconded National Experts can also file requests for assistance under the rules that apply to them.

[17] Study by the EP's Policy Department for Citizens Rights and Constitutional Affairs: "Bullying and sexual harassment at the workplace, in public spaces and in political life in the EU" (see footnote 6).

[18] This is something that has recently been put in place by the UK Parliament under its newly adopted Independent Complaints and Grievance Policy Programme that establishes an Independent Investigation Service. See:

<https://www.parliament.uk/documents/news/2018/1%20ICGP%20Delivery%20Report.pdf>

[19] <https://euagencies.eu/> The EU Agencies network brings together all decentralised EU Agencies and Joint Undertakings.

[20]

<https://eige.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/eu-agencies-take-stand-against-harassment>

*"Together, we the Heads of EU agencies and Joint undertakings commit to zero tolerance towards sexual harassment and we cannot and will not accept harassment of any form in our agencies. We take it upon ourselves to communicate to our staff that harassment in the workplace is never acceptable. We have committed ourselves in accordance with existing laws and particularly the staff regulation, to promote diversity at work and provide our staff with a trusted place in which to work."*

[21] See Article 5.2 of the Court of Auditor's anti-harassment policy: "*If the alleged perpetrator is a Member the Court must invoke article 4 of its rules of procedure*" (which involves compulsory retirement and deprivation of the right to a pension or other benefits in its stead).

[22] Resolution (2018/2055(INI) on Measures to prevent and combat mobbing and sexual harassment at the workplace, in public spaces, and in political life in the EU. Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P8-TA-2018-0331>

[23] See:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20171023STO86603/sexual-harassment-mep>

[24] Resolution 2017/2897(RSP) on combating sexual harassment and abuse in the EU  
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2017-0417+0+DOC+XML>

[25] MEPs choose and recruit their accredited parliamentary assistants on the basis of a relationship of mutual trust; political affinity may also be a factor. Accredited Assistants, based in Brussels (or Luxembourg/Strasbourg) are managed directly by Parliament's administration, under the same employment conditions as temporary EU staff (see Staff Regulations and CEOS)



[26] This contrasts with the stories shared in a blog set up by a group of parliamentary assistants for the purpose of denouncing sexual harassment in the workplace. See <https://metooep.com/>

[27] Decision of 2 July 2018 on the functioning of the advisory committee dealing with harassment complaints concerning members of the European Parliament and its procedures for dealing with complaints.

[28] See Decision of the Bureau of the European Parliament of 11 June and 2 July 2018 amending the Implementing Measures for the Statute for Members of the European Parliament, available at:

[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018D0717\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018D0717(01)&from=EN)

“The following article is inserted. Article 34a:

*Financial consequences of a proven case of harassment of an accredited parliamentary assistant.*

*If, following an internal harassment procedure in which both parties have been heard, the President establishes that a Member is guilty of the psychological or sexual harassment of an accredited parliamentary assistant, all the Member's financial obligations under that accredited assistant's contract, in particular the assistant's pay, shall, by way of derogation from Article 33, be deducted by Parliament from its defrayal of the parliamentary assistance expenses of that Member and the Member shall not be entitled to the provision of any further services by that assistant.”*

[29] Resolution (2018/2055(INI) on Measures to prevent and combat mobbing and sexual harassment at the workplace, in public spaces, and in political life in the EU. See footnote 22

[30] Eurofound's report on “ *Violence and harassment in European workplaces: Extent, impacts and policies*”, See footnote 2.

[31] Study by the EP's Policy Department for Citizens Rights and Constitutional Affairs: “Bullying and sexual harassment at the workplace, in public spaces and in political life in the EU” (see footnote 6).

[32] EU-OSHA (2014) Calculating the costs of work related stress and psychosocial risks. European Agency for Safety and Health at Work.

[https://osha.europa.eu/en/tools-and-publications/publications/literature\\_reviews/calculating-the-cost-of-and](https://osha.europa.eu/en/tools-and-publications/publications/literature_reviews/calculating-the-cost-of-and) and <https://osha.europa.eu/.../infographics/EU-OSHA-infographic-Sexual-Harassment.pdf>

[33] European Framework Directive on Safety and Health at Work, see footnote 8.

[34] In this context, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction explicitly foresees in its anti-harassment policy that it “ *will protect victims from further stigmatisation and retaliation, and, if necessary, may **facilitate professional support and help,***



psychological and sometimes medical treatment [...] or even a rehabilitation programme”.