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Answer given by Mr Oettinger
on behalf of the European Commission
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The Commission has zero tolerance for any form of harassment. As regards the Commission staff, the 2004 revision of the Staff Regulations introduced an explicit legal base to fight against harassment in the EU institutions¹.

The Commission has also adopted a comprehensive anti-harassment policy which is laid down in the Decision C (2006) 1624/3 of 26 April 2006. This policy is based on two pillars: 1) prevention and 2) support and follow-up.

Pursuant to the Staff Regulations and its implementing Decision², staff members who feel victim of harassment may address the matter informally or initiate a formal procedure. A wide network of confidential counsellors assists alleged victims. The Commission Mediator is also available to all staff to help overcome any difficulty that may arise in the context of working relations. In case of a formal request for assistance³, the administration analyses the existence of a beginning of proof. In this case, it will undertake an administrative inquiry and verify whether the facts constitute harassment within the meaning of the Staff Regulations. Disciplinary measures may consequently follow.

The Commission plans to revise the 2006 Decision in the course of 2019, so as to take account of developments in case-law and experience gained in the management of the policy since 2006.

Commissioners are not subject to the Staff Regulations, but they are bound by the rules laid down in the Treaties⁴ and the Code of Conduct for Members of the Commission⁵. When entering in office, Members give a solemn undertaking that, both during and after their term of office, they will respect the obligations laid down in the Code of Conduct, and in particular their duty to behave with integrity and discretion.

¹ Article 12(a) of the Staff Regulations provides a definition of psychological and sexual harassment and prohibits any form of harassment.

² C (2006) 1624/3 of 26 April 2006, 'The Decision'.

³ Article 24 of the Staff Regulations.

⁴ Articles 17(3) of the Treaty on European Union and 245 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

⁵ Article 2(2) of the Code states that Members shall behave and perform their duties with complete independence, integrity, dignity, with loyalty and discretion, in compliance with the rules laid down in the Treaties and as spelled out in the Code of Conduct.