



Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union  
Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs

## **Anti-harassment Protocols and Gender Action Plans in National Parliaments, European Parliament and International Organisations**

In the following research paper, the internal Anti-harassment Protocols and Gender Action Plans applied in the EU's National Parliaments, the European Parliament and selected International Organisations are listed, following the structure of:

- 1) the Legislative Acts** (Rules of Procedure, Staff regulations and Code of Conducts)
- 2) Complaint mechanism**
- 3) Support Procedure**
- 4) Preventive measures** (awareness raising, information and training)
- 5) Data collection** (where available)

### **I. Why is it especially important in Parliaments/ political field?**

- reflection of the violence perpetrated against women in European countries in general
- political traditions and practices – drawn from cultures that are still largely patriarchal and male-dominated
- male dominance as the norm, women are underrepresented
  - gender stereotyping and gender hierarchy
  - denigrating women and displays of virility was their way of asserting political power
  - tough to become established as places are rare
  - notion that woman has made her way in politics by granting sexual favours is still deeply entrenched
  - political party loyalty required acts as a brake on disclosure and complaints -> culture of silence
- working conditions
  - work intensely for long periods and late hours
  - official journeys, dinners and receptions
  - alcohol as an additional risk factor
- parliamentarians' abuse of status
- environment that tolerates this kind of conduct
  - lack of arrangements in parliaments
  - differences in degrees in parliaments for complaints

- many bodies that deal with sexual harassment complaints have been initially set up to deal with financial misconduct - not really suited to deal with these cases - and are political
- female parliamentarians: both politically motivated violence and gender-based violence

## II. National Parliaments

### 1) Legislation

Table of content relies on the replies given by the parliaments to the request [“Policies and procedures for dealing with sexual harassment in the EU’s National Parliaments”](#) (Request 4170) asked by the European Parliament in 2019 via the European Center for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD)

QUESTION	Yes	No	Comments/Other (please explain)
<b>1. Rules of procedure, staff regulations and codes of conduct</b>			
Is sexual harassment explicitly forbidden in your parliament’s:			
- rules of procedure?	FIN	AU CR DEN FR IRE LUX PL SL SP SE	
- staff regulations?	AU CR FIN IRE LUX SL SE	DEN FR PL SP	
- code of conduct for members of parliament?	FIN	AU CR DEN FR LUX PL SL SP SE	
- code of conduct for parliamentary staff?	FIN SE	AU CR	

		DEN FR LUX PL SL SP	
<b>2. Complaints and investigation procedure</b>			
Does your parliament have a procedure or scheme for dealing with complaints of sexual harassment?	AU FIN FR GER IRE LUX SL SP SE	CR DEN PL	
If so, when was it introduced?			
Has it been revised? If so, when?	SE	CR DEN IRE SL SP	
Is the sexual harassment procedure separate from the procedures for dealing with other forms of harassment and bullying?		CR DEN FR IRE LUX SL SP SE	
Does it cover (both as potential harasser and victim):			
<i>Members of parliament</i>	AU FIN FR IRE SP	CR LUX SL SE	
<i>Assistants to members of parliament (if this applies in your parliament)</i>	AU FIN FR IRE SP	CR LUX SL SE	
<i>Staff hired directly by members of parliament or by political parties, (if this applies in your parliament)?</i>	AU FIN FR GER IRE SP	CR LUX SL SE	
<i>Parliamentary staff</i>	AU FIN FR	CR	

	IRE LUX SL SP SE		
<i>Trainees</i>	AU FIN FR IRE SL SP SE	CR LUX	
<i>Visitors</i>	FIN SP	AU CR IRE LUX SL SE	
<i>Incidents on parliament premises</i>	AU FIN FR IRE SL SP	CR LUX SE	
<i>Incidents off parliament premises</i>	AU FR IRE SP	CR FIN LUX SL SE	
Is there a separate procedure or body when the complaint is made against a member of parliament?	FR IRE	AU CR DEN FIN PL SL SP SE	
Do members of parliament sit on the body that hears and decides on the merits of complaints against members of parliament?	SP	AU CR DEN FIN FR IRE SL SP	
Does the parliament ensure gender balance in the composition of the body or bodies that hear and decide on the merits of complaints?	AU IRE	CR FIN FR LUX SL	

		SP	
Are details of sexual harassment claims and investigations kept private to maintain the anonymity of the claimant and alleged harasser?	AU FIN FR IRE LUX SE	CR SL	
<b>3. Support procedures</b>			
Are there confidential advisors available to help those affected by sexual harassment (i.e. as a first point of contact offering advice and support). If so, do they act as mediators?	AU CR FIN FR IRE SE	DEN LUX PL SL	
Are steps taken to protect victims and witnesses from any negative consequences (e.g. on their careers)?	AU FIN SE	CR FR IRE PL SL	
Are victims offered legal or financial help by the parliament?	AU LUX	CR FIN FR PL SL SE	
Are victims offered psychological help by the parliament?	AU DEN FIN FR SL SE	CR IRE LUX PL	
Does your parliament have measures to protect members of parliament or staff who are subject to online sexual harassment?	SE	AU CR FIN FR IRE LUX PL SL	
<b>4. Awareness raising</b>			
Is there training available on sexual harassment?	The answer to ECPRD request No. 4061 may still be relevant		
<i>For members of parliament</i>	AU FIN FR GER IRE	CR DEN LUX PL SL SE	
<i>For staff</i>	AU FIN	CR DEN	

	FR IRE PL SE	LUX SL	
If yes, is it mandatory?			
<i>For members of parliament</i>		FIN FR IRE SL SE	
<i>For staff</i>		FIN FR IRE PL SL	
Does your parliament have brochures or handbooks explaining its rules, code of conduct and accompanying policies and complaints and support processes (e.g. for members of parliament, staff employed directly by MPs or political parties and administrative staff)?	AU FIN GER IRE SE	CR DEN FR LUX PL SL	
<b>5. Data collection</b>			
Does your parliament collect statistical data on:			
- The number of sexual harassment cases filed?	AU CR	DEN FR PL SL SE	
- The number of sexual harassment cases confirmed?	AU CR	DEN FR LUX PL SL SE	
Does your parliament make these statistics public?		AU CR DEN FIN FR LUX SL	
Has your parliament conducted a survey into sexual harassment?	FIN IRE SE	AU CR DEN FR LUX PL SL	
If so, is it publically available?	IRE SE	AU	

		CR DEN FIN FR LUX SL	
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**Countries that have none of the above: BG, CZ, EE, GR, LV, LTU, PT, SK**

## **II. The European Parliament**

### **Legislative acts**

- [European Parliament resolution of 16 December 2021 on MeToo and harassment – the consequences for the EU institutions \(2021/2986\(RSP\)\)](#)
- Rule 10 “Standard of Conduct” refers to sexual harassment and the [Code of Appropriate Behaviour as Annex to Rules of Procedure](#)
- It mentions sexual harassment, but only calls for cooperation: “5. Where necessary, Members will cooperate promptly and fully with the procedures in place for managing situations of conflict or harassment (psychological or sexual), including responding promptly to any allegations of harassment. Members should take part in specialised training organised for them on preventing conflict and harassment in the workplace and on good office management.”
- Article 12a of [Staff Regulations of Officials of the European Union \(EUSR\) and Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union \(CEOS\)](#) defines sexual harassment and
- [European Parliament resolution of 10 March 2022 on the EU Gender Action Plan III \(2021/2003\(INI\)\)](#) EP welcomed the third **gender action plan**

### **OTHER IN THE EU:**

- [Heads of EU agencies](#) and Joint undertakings committed to zero tolerance towards sexual harassment 2018

## **III. OECD**

### **1. Legislative acts**

- [OECD Staff Rules](#) in which sexual harassment is defined, Annex XX ), p. 423
- [Code of Conduct of the OECD](#) refers to harassment in general and names behaviour in regards of gender in line with nationality, opinions or beliefs, culture, ethnicity and personal life
- Paragraph 31 on Tact and Courtesy does not name sexual harassment explicitly
- [DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance](#) adopted in 2019 is for members of the Development Assistance Committee, not for the OECD itself

### **2. Complaint mechanism**

- resolution procedures are defined, informal and formal channels
- [formal channel procedure, \(p. 426 Staff Regulation\)](#)
  - (1) report to the Secretary General

- (2) preliminary assessment by the Head of HRM
- (3) Investigation Procedure (Annex XXV) started by Secretary General, executed by a person appointed by the Head of HRM in consultation with the Executive Director, may also be several investigators, concluding report
- (4) Head of HRM in consultation with Executive Director decides to initiate a disciplinary action or not
- informal channel: open communication and cooperation, raising it directly with the accused person

### **3. Support procedure**

- confidentiality of the procedure, [p. 427 of Staff Rules](#)
- after the resolution of a report the situation shall be closely monitored, [p. 428 of Staff Rules](#)

### **4. Preventive measures**

- Secretary-General, Human Resource Management and Managers have responsibilities to prevent sexual harassment as, e.g. foster a positive climate, lead by good example etc. [p. 428f. of Staff Rules](#)

## **IV. The Council of Europe**

### **1. Legislative acts**

- [Rule No. 1292 of 3 September 2010 on the protection of human dignity at the Council of Europe](#) deals with sexual harassment and prohibits it
  - applies to everyone working for the CoE
- [New Staff Regulations](#) mention harassment
- According to the [Code of Conduct](#) for Members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe members shall refrain from harassment

### **2. Complaint mechanism**

- for staff of the CoE, including Secretariat employees, judges of the European Court of Human Rights, the Commissioner for Human Rights, members of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, members of Permanent Representations, experts, consultants, and employees of outside companies
- Procedure acc. to [Rule No. 1292 of 3 September 2010 on the protection of human dignity at the Council of Europe](#)
  - (1) complaint to the Commission against Harassment
  - (2) adversarial proceedings before the Commission
  - Members of Commission: Two of the Commission members - and their substitutes - shall be appointed by the Secretary General and the remaining two - and their substitutes - by the Staff Committee
  - (3) friendly settlement OR Commission's opinion on the facts of the case, with final conclusions, and recommendations is transmitted to the Secretary General
  - may also recommend disciplinary proceedings
  - (4) Secretary General orders measures, disciplinary measures according to [Art. 54 of Staff Regulations](#) can be written warning; reprimand: deferment of advancement to a higher step; relegation in step; downgrading; or removal from post

### **3. Support Procedure**



- Secretariat members who consider themselves victims of sexual or psychological harassment may also seek the assistance and advice within their Major Administrative Entity: the human resources correspondent; a member of the Organisation's medical service (doctor and nursing staff); within the Directorate of Human Resources of the Directorate General of Administration and Logistics: the social worker, the equality officer, the human resources advisors or the Director and or a member of the Staff Committee (c. Art. 5 of [Rule No. 1292 of 3 September 2010 on the protection of human dignity at the Council of Europe](#))

#### 4. Preventive measures

- according to [Rule No. 1292 of 3 September 2010 on the protection of human dignity at the Council of Europe](#)
- awareness raising of the Directorate of Human Resources
- responsibility of management

### V. The United Nations

#### 1. Legislative acts

- [Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations](#), Rule 1.2 (f) prohibits sexual harassment
- [Secretary-General's bulletin addressing discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority](#)
- Yearly report of the Secretary General: [Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse Report of the Secretary-General 2022](#)
- [Code of Conduct to Prevent Harassment, Including Sexual Harassment at UN System Events](#)
- [Resolution of the General Assembly](#) on Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN Personnel in the context of peacekeeping missions

#### 2. Complaint mechanisms

According to [Secretary-General's bulletin addressing discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority](#)

- report by any person and against any person, irrespective of whether such persons have any contractual status with the Organization
- Staff members who are alleged to have committed prohibited conduct may be subject to disciplinary or other administrative action
- Non-staff personnel who are alleged to have committed prohibited conduct may be subject to action in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract governing their services and of other applicable policies regarding non-staff personnel
- Procedure
  - (1) formal report
  - (2) preliminary assessment
  - (3) investigation
  - ((4) action)
  - **in case of UN events:** [Code of Conduct to Prevent Harassment, Including Sexual Harassment](#)
- report the matter to the organizer of the UN system event or relevant security authority
- affected person or person witnessing can report
- rules of the UN not applicable, organizer of the UN system event will be expected to take appropriate action in accordance with its applicable policies, regulations and rules.

### 3. Support Procedure

- according to Section 6 of [Secretary-General's bulletin addressing discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority](#)
- "Speak up" helpline: provide information on options for addressing possible prohibited conduct and the support available to affected individuals
- nomination of one or two "support persons"
- Psychosocial support for United Nations personnel
- possible interim measures in form of
  - Physical separation of the alleged offender and the affected individual;
  - Reassignment of either the alleged offender or the affected individual with the consent of the alleged offender or the affected individual;
  - Instituting flexible working arrangements for either the alleged offender or the affected individual;
  - Granting unplanned annual leave or suggesting to either the alleged offender or the affected individual to take annual leave;
  - Consideration of special leave for either the alleged offender or the affected individual;
  - Temporary changes in reporting lines;
  - Placement of the alleged offender on administrative leave in accordance
- Workplace restoration and aftercare, e.g. team interventions and coaching towards change

### 4. Preventive measures

- [mandatory trainings](#) with the titles "United to Respect: Preventing Sexual Harassment and Other Prohibited Conduct" and "Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN Personnel" both in form of online learning programmes
- [Guide for Managers United Nations Secretariat](#): Prevention of, and Response to, Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
- Agencies of the UN have their own brochures, e.g. [UNHCR](#)
- [e-learning course](#) for partners - publicly available

### 5. Data collection

- according to Section 7 of Office of [Secretary-General's bulletin addressing discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority](#)
- Human Resources will collect data and information for monitoring and analysis of formal reports of possible prohibited conduct
- Survey data is collected periodically by the Organization and analysed and shared through reports available to staff, management, the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services to inform them of outreach activities, interventions and updates to relevant policies, including the present bulletin, as needed