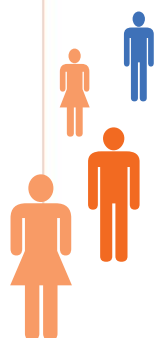


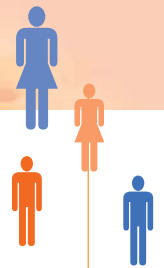


Dignity at Work



EIB - 12/03 - EN





Policy on Dignity at Work

The EIB aims to provide a positive working environment which will enable and encourage staff to work together in a culture of support and co-operation towards the goals of the Bank. The EIB recognises that people cannot contribute their best when under the fear of harassment or bullying.

*The Dignity at Work policy has the full support and whole-hearted commitment of the Management Committee and of senior management. Any form of harassment or bullying in the EIB is unwelcome and unacceptable. **The EIB does not want and will not tolerate harassment or bullying.***

The Dignity at Work policy does not replace but is complementary to the EIB Code of Conduct. While the Code of Conduct sets out the rules applicable to professional ethics, the Dignity at Work policy covers specifically issues of harassment and bullying.



Bullying and harassment – what is it?

Both harassment and bullying may take many forms. The behaviour may be physical or verbal and will often occur over a period of time although serious one-off incidents may take place. It is irrelevant whether the behaviour is intentional or not. The key feature is that harassment and bullying is unwelcome and unacceptable behaviour that demeans the self-respect and confidence of the recipient.

Harassment may be related to nationality, race, sex, disability, age, family status, sexual orientation, or any characteristic that makes one person stand out from others. Harassment can be any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct that occurs with the effect of violating the dignity of a person, such as: unwelcome physical contact; offensive language, jokes, gossip; exclusion by colleagues; gibes in reference to nationality, gender or personal appearance, etc.

Examples of bullying might include: verbal or physical threats and intimidation, repeated sarcasm, public or private humiliation, regular setting of obviously unattainable targets and deadlines, monitoring work unnecessarily and intrusively, reducing someone's effectiveness by withholding necessary information, etc.

In general, an occasional raised voice or argument would not constitute harassment or bullying in itself, nor, for example, would fair and constructive criticism of a staff member's work performance, being assessed in the annual appraisal by a manager as an under-performer, or being refused a career advancement.

Many alleged cases are misunderstandings or personal conflicts and they do not all qualify as genuine harassment. To avoid misunderstanding and unnecessary upset, particularly in a multi-cultural environment such as the EIB, it is important for everyone to be aware of the issues and bear in mind that words and actions may be upsetting or offensive to others.



The aim of the policy

The aim of the Dignity at Work policy is twofold:

- to raise awareness and understanding of the issues and to help prevent harassment and bullying in the first place
- to provide a structure and procedures for dealing with alleged cases



Responsibilities

Particularly in a multi-cultural environment such as the EIB, everyone needs to be very aware of their responsibility in fostering an environment of dignity at work, where harassment and bullying are known to be unacceptable and not tolerated. All managers and supervisors have a key role to play in preventing, recognising and tackling bullying and harassment. Managers have a particularly influential role to play in supporting the policy by being a role model for their staff and encouraging a positive working environment.

The roles and responsibilities of all parties are available in full on Intranet/HR



What should people do when confronted with bullying or harassment?

Individuals who feel they are the target of bullying or harassment must be able to get help and support from people who have been specially selected and trained to deal with these situations. Witnesses and anyone concerned about these issues must also have access to advice.

EIB policy provides for two types of procedures – one an *informal*, close-to-the problem, procedure where matters can hopefully be put right with a minimum of fuss and embarrassment and another more *formal* procedure where individuals can officially present a com-

plaint. The procedures provide avenues for staff to raise a complaint with assurances that their complaint will be treated seriously and in strict confidence.



The informal procedure

- The person should first try to resolve the problem, if possible, by telling the offending party clearly that the behaviour is unwelcome and asking for it to stop
- If help is needed, the person should approach the confidential counsellor of their choice for assistance and advice as soon as possible.
- If, after a reasonable time, the situation is still not satisfactorily resolved, the person may decide not to pursue matters further or they may take a decision to make a formal complaint through the investigation procedure

The full informal procedure, along with a list of internal confidential counsellors, is available on Intranet/HR



The investigation procedure

The investigation procedure provides for the following:

- the staff member requests the initiation of the investigation procedure
- the establishment of an investigation panel of three independent persons
- a series of hearings where both parties and any witnesses are heard separately by the panel, plus any other individuals the panel members wish to hear
- the result of the panel hearing and deliberations would be a recommendation to the President who takes the decision on what action is to be taken

The full investigation procedure is available on Intranet/HR



Confidentiality and reprisal-free reporting of complaints

All staff reporting a complaint, taking part in investigations, or being in any way connected to a case of harassment must be guaranteed full confidentiality and must not suffer intimidation, retaliation or victimisation. No one should suffer negative consequences as a result of bringing forward a complaint or expressing concern about a situation. Any suspected action of reprisal will be thoroughly investigated and carry the risk for the perpetrator of serious disciplinary action.

Staff should however be aware that making a complaint is very serious. Staff making false or malicious complaints would face disciplinary action.



Scope

The policy on Dignity at work, as the Code of Conduct, applies to the members of staff of the European Investment Bank, and is to be read in conjunction with the Code of Conduct and the Staff Regulations. It also applies, by extension and insofar as their corresponding contract so provides, to third parties whose services are provided within the premises of the EIB.

