

**CODE OF  
CONDUCT  
IN PUBLIC  
SERVICES**

**ON PREVENTING  
AND COMBATING  
HARASSMENT  
AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights  
Equality Body

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# **Code of Conduct on Preventing and Combating Harassment and Sexual Harassment in Public Services**

**Commissioner for Administration  
and the Protection of Human Rights Cyprus  
Equality Body**

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“Harassment and sexual harassment run counter to the principle of equal treatment for men and women and constitute discrimination on grounds of gender...

These forms of discrimination are not only observed in the workplace but also in the context of access to employment, vocational training and professional development.

They should therefore be banned and subject to effective and proportionate dissuasive sanctions.”

### **Directive 2006/54 / EC**

“Sexual harassment means unwanted sexual or other gender-based behavior that violates the dignity of women and men in employment.”

### **European Commission Code of Practice**

“A working woman is likely to have faced such an experience in the workplace- a man treats her not as a worker or co-worker but as his potential lover. He can regularly praise her beauty, massage her shoulder, put his hand around her waist, invite her for lunch or dinner to talk [...]. It may feel good for a while, but in the end, it will most likely make the woman feel uncomfortable. Some people will choose to tolerate this behavior in order to survive but others may feel more and more depressed and eventually collapse. Others may struggle without success, may retaliate and be forced to resign or be fired. This is exactly what sexual harassment is all about.”

### **Guide to Preventing Sexual Harassment at Work - International Labour Organization**

## 1 – Introduction

Sexual harassment, a social phenomenon and a form of sexual violence that offends the dignity of victims, has long been an invisible situation in the workplace. It was maintained by the prevailing authoritarian social relations, the dominant perceptions of the role of the two genders, the social tolerance and the silence of the victims. Gradually, the concept of sexual harassment was finalized, the causes and consequences were highlighted, however, the most crucial part was, mainly the recognition of sexual harassment as discrimination on the grounds of gender, which hinders the application of gender equality, inter alia, in the field of employment and occupation.

The European Union (EU) has taken innovative legislative initiatives to promote the fundamental principle of European law for equality between men and women, which presupposes the fight against sexual harassment. It introduced provisions prohibiting gender discrimination in employment, occupation, vocational guidance, vocational training and professional development, and in particular harassment and sexual harassment.

At the same time, the EU emphasized the importance of encouraging employers and those responsible for vocational training to take measures to combat all forms of discrimination based on gender, and in particular preventive measures against harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace and in access to employment, vocational training and professional development.

The recent European Parliament resolution<sup>1</sup> on combating sexual harassment and abuse in the EU emphasizes the need for Member States, employers' organizations and trade unions to urgently raise awareness of sexual harassment and to support and encourage women to report such incidents immediately. Special legal procedures must also be followed to deal with incidents of sexual harassment in the workplace.

The resolution also emphasizes that unequal distribution of power between men and women, gender stereotypes and sexism are the root causes of all forms of violence

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<sup>1</sup> European Parliament resolution of 26 October 2017 on combating sexual harassment and abuse in the EU (2017/2897 (RSP)).

against women and have led to male domination and discrimination against women, as well as in hindering the full progress of women.

The **Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Training Law** has harmonized the relevant EU Directives to our national legislation (**Law 205 (I) / 2002**). Any act of sexual harassment, harassment or other direct or indirect unfavorable treatment as a result of rejection of sexual harassment or harassment or as a result of a complaint of harassment or sexual harassment, which falls under the provisions of Law 205 (I) / 2002, constitutes a criminal offense (article 30).

This Code - "**Code of Conduct on Preventing and Combating Harassment and Sexual Harassment in Public Services**" - is a necessary measure under the Law 205 (I) / 2002 and the Public Service Law and Regulations regarding both disciplinary offenses and at the same time for public servants, as well as for each competent authority in the joint / collective efforts to eliminate harassment and sexual harassment at work in the public service and the successful implementation of the equal treatment principle.

## **2 - Legal Basis**

**The Code of Conduct on Preventing and Combating Harassment and Sexual Harassment in Public Services** is implemented pursuant to Article 12 (paragraph 4) of the Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Training Law, which harmonized the Directives 76/207 / EEC, 97/80 / EC and 2006/54 / EC.

According to the above-mentioned provision, it is the obligation of every employer<sup>2</sup>, including the Public Service of the Republic of Cyprus, to take immediately, all appropriate measures to prevent any act, whether single or repeated, which constitutes harassment or sexual harassment or direct or indirect adverse treatment as a result of rejection, in any way, of harassment or sexual harassment or as a result of a complaint of harassment or sexual harassment (**victimization**), in relation to:

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<sup>2</sup> The term "employer" in accordance with the interpretative provisions of Article 2 of the Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Training Law, includes the "Government of the Republic", which includes, in accordance with the same provisions, the Public Service.

- Access to employment or work position, permanent or temporary, part-time or indefinite time, full-time, continuous or not continuous time and at all levels of the professional hierarchy;
- Defining and enforcing working terms and conditions, the criteria for placement or tenure, transfer or relocation, secondment or promotion;
- The terms and conditions of dismissal from any working post;
- Access to all forms and levels of vocational guidance, vocational education and training or apprenticeship, vocational retraining, training for change of profession or work and the terms and conditions of their provision.

Such an appropriate measure and with immediate implementation, in accordance with the same provision, is considered to be taken **when a code of practice is introduced to prevent acts of harassment or sexual harassment and adequate, practical measures are taken to implement what is set out in the Code.**

### **3 - Scope of the Code**

The Code of Practice aims to prevent and deal with harassment and sexual harassment. It concerns **all employees in the public service**, including permanent civil servants, part-time and indefinite employees, hourly paid time employees and employees with contracts.

The Code:

- **Informs** public service employees of the terms and definition of "harassment" and "sexual harassment":
  - the applicable legislation and the protection afforded to persons who become subject to harassment or sexual harassment
  - the rights of persons who may be subjected to harassment or sexual harassment
  - the action to be taken by a person when they consider themselves to be a victim of harassment or sexual harassment.

- **Promotes** the education and training of employees on the importance of: (a) the principle of equal treatment between men and women, (b) the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of gender or sexual orientation, and (c) the prevention, treatment and combat of harassment or sexual harassment.
- **Encourages** employees to participate in and contribute to the prevention and treatment of harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace and to the development of a friendly working environment for all employees, regardless of gender or sexual orientation.
- **Encourages** each competent authority to adopt and implement a prevention policy to tackle harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace and monitoring mechanism to control / evaluate its performance for the purpose of its adjustment / improvement.
- **Promotes** the cooperation between each competent authority and its employees to maintain a healthy and safe working environment with special and stable characteristics of mutual respect, courtesy, honesty, understanding and mutual support.
- **Aims** to provide immediate protection to any employee who considers that he or she is being harassed or sexually harassed or has suffered harassment or sexual harassment, as well as possible retaliation vindictive actions against his / her due to refusal or filed a complaint of harassment or sexual harassment.



- **Defines** the obligations of each competent authority whenever it suspects an incident of harassment or sexual harassment or becomes aware of such an incident or receives a relevant complaint.
- **Instructs** each competent authority of the ways to correctly and promptly address complaints of harassment or sexual harassment and for the protection of victims, as well as other parties involved in the investigation of any complaint.

#### 4 - Useful terms and concepts

**"Harassment"** is any unwanted by the recipient conduct related to his/her gender with the purpose or effect of violating his/her dignity, and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.

**"Sexual harassment"** is any unwanted by the recipient conduct of a sexual nature with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating a degrading, intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive environment in the workplace and is expressed in words or actions<sup>3</sup>.

Components of the terms "harassment" and "sexual harassment" are:

- Unwanted behavior.
- Gender-based behavior and sexual behavior respectively.
- Such behavior, which can reasonably be considered, under the circumstances, as offensive, intimidating and humiliating by the recipient and which creates a hostile working environment.

**"Unwanted Behavior"** is any behavior that is unpleasant and offensive to a woman or a man. It does not matter if such behavior is isolated or repetitive. It also does not matter how the perpetrator perceives his / her behavior towards the recipient, nor does

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<sup>3</sup> The mentioned meanings of the terms "Harassment" and "Sexual Harassment" are contained in Article 2 of the Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Training Law (interpretative provisions).

the recipient of the behavior need to inform the perpetrator that his / her behavior is undesirable.

**The intention of the perpetrator (man or woman), whatever it is, is completely indifferent.**

**It can constitute as harassment or sexual harassment even an individual behavior.**

Different people may react differently to a particular behavior. However, this is not a defense for the perpetrator of the behavior or a mitigation for the competent authority.

**It is important that one of the recipients of the behavior reasonably perceives it as unpleasant or offensive or intimidating or humiliating or hostile to the individual.**

"**Behavior of a sexual nature**", which may be considered unpleasant, offensive, intimidating or humiliating or hostile by the recipient may be:

- **Verbal behavior**, unnecessary intimacy, sexual comments, jokes and offensive comments about gender or sexual orientation, discussion on sexual topics, description of sex life in front of other people, unwanted suggestions, hints and tips, indiscreet questions about personal or sexual life, sexual innuendos, insults, invitations for dating or sexual intercourse, confession, love affairs, compliments, flirting.
- **Non-verbal behavior**, unwanted touches on clothes, hair or other parts of the body, stings, caresses, kisses, whistles, unnecessary approach / very close body distance which is not accidental, sexual movements, gestures in a sexual way.
- **Visual behavior**, persistent or lustful looks, sly meanings, monitoring personal life, attempting to channel sexual material such as images, magazines, videos.
- **Other forms of behavior**, written love letters or letters with love and sexual content, related phone calls, messages and emails, fax, photo viewing, posting pictures, posters or sexually explicit movies.

**"Competent Authority"**<sup>4</sup>, for the purposes of this Code and **applicable to all employees in the public service regardless of their employment status** means:

"(a) The President of the Republic for the civil servant, who exercises the powers and responsibilities of the Head of Department for the staff of the Presidency, but also for the staff of the Presidency, for whom he usually acts through that official;

(b) for the officials of the House of Representatives, for whom he usually acts through the Director General of the House of Representatives;

(c) the President of the Supreme Court and the Chief Justice in this, but for them it usually acts through the Chief Prosecutor;

(d) the Council of Ministers for the Treasury of the Republic, the Directors General of the Ministries, the Director General of the Planning Bureau and the Secretary of the Council of Ministers and for the employees of the Secretariat, but for these officials he usually acts through the Secretary of the Council of Ministers;

(e) the head of Independent Office or Service for the staff of such Office or Service;

(f) the Minister who usually acts through the Director General of the Ministry for the employees of his Ministry and each Department that is part of it and

(g) the Minister of Finance, acting normally through (i) the Accountant General of the Republic for the staff of the General Accounting Office, and (ii) the Director-General of the Planning Bureau for the staff of that Office. "

## **5 - Harassment and sexual harassment constitute prohibited discrimination on grounds of gender**

Harassment and sexual harassment, as well as any less favorable treatment based on the rejection of harassment or sexual harassment or submission to such behavior, constitute discrimination on grounds of gender<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Interpretive Provisions (article 2) of the Law on Public Service

<sup>5</sup> Article 2 of the Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Training Law (interpretative provisions).

*"These forms of discrimination are not only observed in the workplace, but also in the context of access to employment, vocational training and professional development. They should therefore be prohibited and subject to effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions"<sup>6</sup>.*

**Gender discrimination in the workplace, employment and vocational training is prohibited.**

Both harassment and sexual harassment are **prohibited**. It is **prohibited**, in particular, any act of an employee, single or repeated, which constitutes:

- Harassment
- Sexual harassment
- Direct or indirect adverse treatment due to repulsion of harassment or sexual harassment or due to the filing of a complaint of harassment or sexual harassment.

Any such act constitutes a **criminal offense**<sup>7</sup>, if it is subject to the provisions of the Law, the recipient (male or female) of the harassment and sexual harassment can report it to the Police.

**Harassment, sexual harassment and direct or indirect adverse treatment, as a result of rejection of harassment or sexual harassment or due to a complaint, are prohibited in relation to<sup>8</sup>:**

- Access to employment or work position, permanent or temporary, part-time or indefinite time, full-time, continuous or not continuous time and at all levels of the professional hierarchy;
- Defining and enforcing working terms and conditions, the criteria for placement or tenure, transfer or relocation, secondment or promotion;
- The terms and conditions of dismissal from any work;
- Access to all forms and levels of vocational guidance, vocational education and training or apprenticeship, vocational training and retraining, training for change of profession or work and the terms and conditions of their provision.

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<sup>6</sup> Excerpt from the preamble of Directive 2006/54 / EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of the EU.

<sup>7</sup> Article 30 of the Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Training Law.

<sup>8</sup> Article 12 of Law 205 (I) / 2002 in conjunction with articles 7, 8 and 9.

### **Harassment and sexual harassment are prohibited in the context of:**

- Vocational education, training, internships, training
- Access to work or employment in the public service or in a promotional position
- Movement, secondment, transfer.

The prohibition of harassment and sexual harassment in the public service workplace is **absolute** as well as in the context of activities outside the workplace and working hours, which are related to work in the public service, such as e.g. in professional seminars and trips, in social / cultural / professional events or leisure meetings of public service employees.

Public servants have a "**right to equal treatment**" regardless of their gender and sexual orientation, in relation to<sup>9</sup>:

- Access to vocational education and training, their terms and conditions;
- Terms and conditions in relation to the performance of their duties, including their promotion;
- The terms and conditions of dismissal;
- Membership and participation in employees' organizations.

### **It is prohibited to carry out harassment or sexual harassment by:**

- The competent authority<sup>10</sup>
- The Head of Service
- Equal rank to the victim's colleague or
- Any other public service employee.

## **6 - Instructions to the employees for preventing and combating harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace**

### **A. Guidelines for the Prevention of Harassment and Sexual Harassment**

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<sup>9</sup> Subsection (1) of article 5 in conjunction with article 3 of L.205 (I) / 2002.

<sup>10</sup> As defined in the chapter "Useful terms and concepts".

- Seek comprehensive and objective information on harassment and sexual harassment legislation and protection mechanisms;
- Participate in actions and programs that combat the causes of gender discrimination, of stereotypes and of prejudices that maintain and perpetuate harassment and sexual harassment;
- Avoid discussions, comments, hints, gestures, expressions that target or refer to one or the other gender or the sexual orientation or gender identity of any of your colleagues;
- Correct your behavior once you realize that it is disturbing or offensive to a colleague and do not hesitate to apologize;
- Define your own boundaries to your coworkers when you have signs of behavior that bothers or offends you;
- Cooperate with the Officers designated as an Equality Committee, where applicable, or Equality Officers in the relevant Ministry / Department / Service (including their district offices) or Independent Authority, for the improvement of the working environment and the implementation of the code.

## **B. Guidelines for combating harassment and sexual harassment**

**Recipients of harassment or sexual harassment seek to ignore or conceal it.**

**Avoid this defensive, tolerant, harmful and deadlock practice and:**

- Do not ignore or underestimate the unpleasant feelings it causes you;
- Trust your instincts regarding the behavior of the person harassing you;
- Do not feel uncomfortable, shy or ashamed or blame yourself for the behavior of the perpetrator (male or female).
- Do not choose isolation from your colleagues.
- Do not justify the behavior of the perpetrator (male or female).

**Take responsibility for doing the right thing:**

- Define your boundaries to the perpetrator (male or female)
- Reject or confront calmly and decisively the offender's behavior

- If the person, despite your best efforts, continues to harass or sexual harass you, inform one trusted colleague and also talk to your family
- Keep a diary of harassment or sexual harassment incidents
- Inform the competent authority<sup>11</sup>
- Submit a written complaint or complaint to the competent authority stating specific and objectively details on what has happened, when and where
- Consult the Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights, as an Equality Body, or the Gender Equality Committee in Employment and Vocational Training, or the Inspectors of the Labour Department of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance.

## **7 - Duties and responsibilities of the competent authority**

### **A. Ensuring a decent working environment**

Each competent authority:

- Recognizes that harassment and sexual harassment are **forms of gender-based violence and constitute prohibited discrimination on grounds of gender in the workplace.**
- It has a **legal responsibility** to ensure a **safe, decent**<sup>12</sup>, healthy and friendly working environment. Also, it has the responsibility to prevent and combat harassment and sexual harassment.

#### **More specifically, each competent authority:**

- Protects public service employees from any act that constitutes discrimination based on gender and in particular from any conduct that constitutes harassment or sexual harassment, as well as from any act that is directly or indirectly unfavorable treatment, due to the repulsion of harassment or sexual harassment or due to the submission of a relevant complaint / testimony.

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<sup>11</sup> See footnote no. 9

<sup>12</sup> Decent work as defined by the International Labour Organization.

- Has an obligation to the employee who has suffered harassment or sexual harassment and / or direct or indirect adverse treatment due to the rejection of such behavior or the submission of a relevant complaint, as soon as the specific behavior or its consequences become known, to take all appropriate measures for its cessation and non-recurrence as well as for the removal of its consequences.

**Otherwise, the competent authority shall be in co-responsible with the person who committed the prohibited referred acts.**

## **B. Measures of the competent authority for the prevention of harassment and sexual harassment**

- Each competent authority **shall disclose the Code, in writing or otherwise**, to its staff and ensure that harassment or sexual harassment in the working environment is not acceptable, taking action in any case of non-compliant employees.

- **Ensuring a working environment**, accessible, safe and friendly, where employees' relationships will be distinguished by their mutual respect, courtesy, honesty, understanding, trust, cooperation and support.

- **Education and training programs for employees**, regardless of their position in the public service, regarding prohibited discrimination, the importance of combating and eliminating such practices, as well as the stereotypes that maintain and perpetuate discrimination, gender-based violence, harassment, inequality at work, the relevant legislative provisions and the benefits of their observance / implementation.

- **Establishment of an "Equality Committee"**, where possible, in each Ministry / Department / Service and Independent Authority in which at least three employees of both genders will participate, one of whom is a hierarchically superior employee, for submitting suggestions to each competent authority for measures that may be deemed necessary for the improvement, the organization of the programs in question, the monitoring of the implementation of the Code, the evaluation of their effectiveness and the qualitative upgrade of the working environment and the relations between the employees.

- If it is not possible to set up an "Equality Committee", one or more **Equality Officers** are appointed for the same purpose.



- **Adoption of internal regulations** regarding the composition, tenure and operation of each Equality Committee.

- **Facilitation of the functioning of the Equality Committee** by each competent authority and **provision of specialized education / training** of the members of each Equality Committee immediately after its establishment and whenever its composition is renewed.

- **Inspection of the workplace** by the relevant Equality Committee to regularly confirm that it is at a decent level and relevant regular oral or written information of each competent authority or the Head of the Independent Authority, as the case may be, for the findings / assessments.

- **Encourage employees** to cooperate with the relevant Equality Committee, to contribute to its activities and to express their views on programs and on measures to prevent and combat harassment and sexual harassment and their efficiency in relation to the working environment.

## **C. Measures of the competent authority to combat harassment and sexual harassment**

### **Basic Rule**

**Ensure confidentiality** by any competent authority whenever it becomes aware of an incident of harassment or sexual harassment or receives an oral or written complaint / testimony of harassment or sexual harassment.

If in any way each competent authority is informed of an incident of harassment or sexual harassment, it encourages the employee to report it before the incident escalates, provides support to the employee and provides all the necessary assistance under the circumstances to cope with the consequences that may have already been suffered or exist.

**The employee's sexual orientation or gender identity does not justify / allow the treatment of an incident of harassment or sexual harassment in a different way from that of such an incident in general.**

## **8 - The stages of the Procedure**

### **A. Internal / Informal Procedure**

**The internal / informal procedure** aims to immediately address harassment or sexual harassment, before it further escalates, instead of gathering data for the purpose of documenting them.

This is a suitable procedure mainly when:

- The employee who claims to have been harassed or sexually harassed is informed about the procedure, confirms that he/she wishes to follow this procedure instead of the formal procedure;
- The complainant and the alleged offender have continuous or frequent contact due to the nature of their work duties and therefore the complainant wishes to deal with the harassment or sexual harassment unofficially with the aim to restoring a positive working relationship between them;
- Incidents of harassment or sexual harassment which are less serious in nature and the complainant expects harassment or sexual harassment to cease without having to follow the formal procedure.

**Each competent authority shall ensure that the internal / informal procedure for handling complaints of harassment or sexual harassment:**

- Is clear, explained and understood by all staff;
- Conducted in a confidential and objective manner;
- Provides satisfactory guidance and support to the complainant;
- The complainant is not to be victimized;
- No witnesses are victimized;
- Produces results within a reasonable period of time from the date of submission of any complaint;
- Shall not substitute the formal procedure of submitting and investigating a complaint for harassment or sexual harassment.

**The internal / informal procedure may at any time be converted into an official case if this is the complainant's request.**

Within the context of the internal / informal examination process of any complaint of harassment or sexual harassment, each competent authority shall:

- Approach and treat the complainant with respect;
- Encourage the complainant to report incidents that constitute harassment or sexual harassment either orally or in writing;
- Recommend to the complainant to carefully keep any information available to him / her regarding his / her behavior;
- Ask the complainant if he / she wishes to deal with it himself / herself the situation or if it needs assistance;
- Inform the complainant of his / her right to submit a formal complaint.

**The complainant may request any competent authority to speak to the offender regarding the harassment or sexual harassment.**

In such case:

- The complainant submits a written complaint of harassment or sexual harassment to his / her superior or to the competent authority;
- If it is required and without having stigmatized the parties involved, any professional cooperation between them shall be avoided and if they are located in nearby offices or on the same floor, they shall be relocated from each other;
- The competent authority shall inform the offender in writing of the complaint no later than 3 days after its submission and shall invite him / her to submit his / her comments within the immediately following 3 days.;
- If the offender admits orally or in writing the complaint to the competent authority within the above deadline, the latter invites him/her to immediately apologize to the complainant;
- Then the informal procedure is terminated.

If the offender does not admit or omits to answer whether or not he/she admits to the alleged harassment actions, **the competent authority shall inform, upon the deadline, the complainant of his/her right to submit a formal complaint.**

## **B. Formal Procedure**

For a formal procedure to be initiated, a complaint of harassment or sexual harassment, must be submitted in writing by the complainant to the competent authority in order to be investigated and **in accordance to the procedure laid down in the Laws and Regulations for disciplinary offenses.**

Article 12 of the Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Training Law applies to all employees in the public service, regardless of their employment status, and the employer must act in accordance with its provisions.

It is understood that in any case, harassment or sexual harassment may be reported to the Police, who will investigate the incident in regards to whether or not a criminal offence was committed.

## **9 - Official Institutions for submitting a complaint**

A complaint or complaint of harassment or sexual harassment may also be submitted to the following Institutions:

### **Commissioner for Administration and Protection of Human Rights – Equality Body**

Address: Era House, 2 Diagorou, 1097, Nicosia

Tel. No.: 22405500/501

Website: [www.ombudsman.gov.cy](http://www.ombudsman.gov.cy)

E-mail: [ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.cy](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.cy)

### **Gender Equality Committee in Employment and Vocational Training**

Address: Klimentos 9, 3rd floor, office 312, Nicosia

Tel. No.: 22400894/5

Website: [www.eif.gov.cy](http://www.eif.gov.cy)

E-mail: [genderequalitycommittee@mlsi.gov.cy](mailto:genderequalitycommittee@mlsi.gov.cy)

**Inspectors of the Labour Department, Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance**

Address: Klimentos 9, 4th floor, Nicosia

Tel. No.: 22400801

E-mail: [director@dl.mlsi.gov.cy](mailto:director@dl.mlsi.gov.cy)

**Police**

Address: Police Headquarters, Evangelou Floraki Street, 1478, Nicosia

Tel. No.: 1460 (citizen line) and 22808080

Website: <http://www.police.gov.cy>

E-mail: [police@police.gov.cy](mailto:police@police.gov.cy)

The above bodies are also available for any information in relation to this Code of Practice or for any other assistance in relation to the prevention and combat of incidents of harassment or sexual harassment.

## **Annexes**

### **Annex I.**

#### **Myths and stereotypes about harassment and sexual harassment / scientific research**

**Sexual harassment**, while is a **complex social phenomenon**, is often **oversimplified**, with references that express in particular the prevailing perceptions of the role of the two genders in the workplace, in the family and in society in general, which perpetuate a complacent mythology.

#### **Typical examples:**

- Sexual harassment is an attempt to have an affair
- It is a problem faced only by attractive women
- Women cause sexual harassment
- There is sexual harassment of hierarchical subordinates, holders of lower-ranking jobs
- Men are not sexually harassed
- All men sexually harass
- Sexual harassment does not concern the employer
- If sexual harassment is ignored it will subside
- Measures to prevent sexual harassment violate privacy
- The cost of preventing sexual harassment is high.

#### **However, scientific research confirms that:**

- Sexual harassment is not caused by intense sexual desire. It is usually a demonstration of the perpetrator's power and abuse of power
- The possibility of sexual harassment is more related to the vulnerable position of the victim than to his / her appearance
- The perpetrator (male or female) may also be an equal of the victim of sexual harassment
- Not only women but also men are sexually harassed, albeit to a lesser extent

- Sexual harassment is not a private difference between the perpetrator and the victim, but a result of the opportunities provided by the work environment and the working relationship
- Perpetrators of sexual harassment typically recognize when their behavior is offensive, humiliating or unpleasant to the victim
- Informing and raising awareness of employees helps to alleviate the phenomenon of sexual harassment
- The cost of sexual harassment for the victim and the employer is greater than the cost of adopting and implementing a sexual harassment prevention policy.

## **Annex II**

### **Consequences of harassment and sexual harassment**

**Harassment and sexual harassment insult the dignity of victims. In addition to:**

- **At the individual level**, they lead to a decrease in self-esteem, anger, fear, anxiety, symptoms that can culminate in health problems, both physical and mental.
- **In the workplace**, they disrupt interpersonal relationships, reduce productivity at work, affect the work environment, and tarnish the image of the public service.

**Harassment and sexual harassment contribute to the creation of a hostile work environment, to increased absences from work, affect the morale of civil servants, reduce efficiency in the workplace.**

**The right to work includes the right to a friendly working environment, as well as the right to quietly perform the duties of a working post in the public service, without sexual harassment or harassment, physical, verbal, visual or otherwise.**