



Reinforcement of the institutional policy on sexual and workplace harassment

XVII. Reinforcement of the institutional policy on sexual and workplace harassment

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights has made a firm and clear commitment to prevent and, if applicable, not to tolerate any type of harassment, which constitutes an act contrary to human dignity. Accordingly, it is constantly endeavoring to take all necessary steps to generate and reinforce a hospitable, healthy and respectful working environment, free of improper conduct and any form of discrimination.

As part of this institutional policy, the Inter-American Court has taken new measures in this regard and has adopted new internal Regulations on conflict resolution for the prevention and elimination of all forms of sexual and workplace harassment, which have been in force since July 10, 2020. The purpose of the Regulations is to prohibit and prevent sexual and workplace harassment and, as appropriate, to sanction this and adopt the necessary corrective measures.

The Regulations establish a conflict resolution system that takes into account the interests of the parties in disagreement, promotes constructive dialogue, achieves improved collaboration in the workplace, and manages any conflicts that arise appropriately, recommending options to resolve problems and grievances related to sexual and workplace harassment and, in certain cases, the adoption of the required corrective measures. To this end, the Regulations establish the mechanism of the “Counselor” who is the person delegated to conduct the informal conflict resolution procedure. They also create the Sexual and Workplace Harassment Committee responsible for substantiating any complaints of sexual or workplace harassment under the formal procedure established in the Regulations.

Furthermore, aware that the prevention of sexual and workplace harassment is an essential component of the measures that the IACtHR must take, compulsory training and awareness-raising activities will be held on a regular basis for everyone, whether or not they are members of the Court’s staff. The purpose of these activities is to create awareness of zero tolerance for any type of sexual and workplace harassment within the Court, to promote a better understanding of what constitutes workplace harassment, to provide guidance on the Regulations and the corresponding procedures, and also to encourage the creation of an open and harmonious working environment. These activities will be organized by the Working Environment Committee which, among other functions, was created to initiate, coordinate and follow up on the implementation of the preventive and proactive measures established in the Regulations.

The training and awareness-raising activities will be mandatory for everyone to whom the Regulations apply, whether or not they are members of the Court’s staff. Therefore, this includes interns and visiting professionals, visitors, translators, interpreters, consultants and anyone who is subcontracted.

Information regarding the Regulations on Sexual and Workplace Harassment

1. General training for all the Court's staff

The Court's staff attended a training and awareness-raising workshop on the Regulations of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on conflict resolution for the prevention and elimination of all forms of sexual and workplace harassment.

To improve results, the staff of the Inter-American Court were divided into three groups of approximately 25 persons each to facilitate increased interaction and participation in the workshops and so that each group would receive, in addition to general information, information in keeping with their functions and responsibilities. Each group took part in three 2.5 to 3-hour sessions, for a total of eight hours training. The sessions took place between June 29 and August 15, 2021.

2. Self-training course

The self-training course which resulted from the activities conducted during 2021 has been available since October 20, 2021, and currently operates on the Evol Campus platform of the IACtHR, based on which training is provided to everyone who comes to work at the Court and to participants in the program of professional visits and internships.

From November 2021 to the end of 2022, 55 people completed the self-training course.

3. Internal communications and newsletters

As an example of the continued commitment of the Working Environment Committee to promote an environment free of any kind of harassment in the IACtHR, as well as to enhance the organizational climate, each month during the first two years that the new Regulations were in effect, the Committee emailed officials communications and newsletters with information and tools to increase their awareness of the Regulations, and increase communication and interaction between everyone.

4. Leadership workshop

Following the general training workshops on the Regulations offered to all the Court's staff, it was recommended that the Working Environment Committee examine the matter further with the heads of departments who have staff working under them. Consequently, in 2022, the Committee offered a training workshop to those occupying management and coordination functions within the organization to develop and reinforce their skills and capabilities to manage working teams and interpersonal communications efficiently through positive leadership and within a harmonious working environment.