



**15 January 2026**



# JOINT STATEMENT ON PREVENTING VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

BY THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL PARTNERS IN THE BANKING SECTOR



## I. INTRODUCTION

The European Social Partners for the banking sector are committed to supporting and promoting a healthy and safe working environment. All employees have the right to work with dignity and respect, in a workplace free from all forms of violence and harassment. The impact of violence and harassment on employees not only undermines an individual's health and self-worth, but can also have a very real economic impact in terms of absences from the workplace, turnover and organisational culture.

The European Social Partners acknowledge that, in order to prevent violence and harassment in the workplace, many banks of all pillars have implemented strategies and policies to reach this aim – and we encourage those that have not yet done so to establish these.

The European Social Partners note the primary employer responsibility for the occupational health and safety of all employees and workplaces, together with shared employee obligations, in accordance with Art. 5 et seq. and Art. 13 of EU Directive 89/391/EEC and the relevant daughter directives, national legislation and collective agreements.

We also refer to wider EU and International commitments against violence and harassment in the workplace, including the EU Roadmap for Women's Rights (and its commitment to "eliminating gender-based violence and sexual harassment in the world of work"),<sup>1</sup> ILO Convention n.190<sup>2</sup> and Recommendation n.206<sup>3</sup> on Violence and Harassment, and the fundamental right to health and safety at work as recognised by the ILO.<sup>4</sup>

## II. ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

The European Social Partners confirm that social dialogue at all levels, including collective bargaining, represents an effective and positive tool for addressing violence and harassment in the workplace (including in a remote work context) – from prevention and monitoring to complaints mechanisms and effective remediation. The aim of preventing all forms of violence and harassment is a prerequisite for creating a safe and inclusive working environment. Therefore, the European Social Partners propose that corresponding strategies be established where this is not yet the case.

### A. Gender-based violence and harassment

The European Social Partners note the importance of ensuring that the gender perspective is taken on board in all occupational health and safety measures, in an inclusive and integrated way. Gender-sensitive approaches and risk assessments help to ensure that specific challenges to women's health and safety at work (including gender-based violence and harassment), as well as the underlying causes (such as gender stereotypes, unbalanced gender-based power relations, and multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination), are fully addressed, including through prevention and protection measures.

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<sup>1</sup> [A Roadmap for Women's Rights](#)

<sup>2</sup> [ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 \(No. 190\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [ILO Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 \(No. 206\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> [A safe and healthy working environment is a fundamental principle and right at work](#)



## **B. A joint social partner approach**

The European Social Partners encourage our respective members at the national/sectoral/(multinational) company level, including works councils, to implement joint social partner actions (including in collective bargaining and other collective agreements) to address and prevent violence and harassment in the workplace. According to national law and practices, employees and their trade union representatives/works councils should be actively involved in the process – from the design to the implementation and monitoring of policies – to increase acceptance and ensure they reflect employees' needs and realities.

### ***i. Training and awareness raising***

The European Social Partners encourage the sector to reinforce policies on preventing violence and harassment at work, also taking into account and building on established good practices. This should include, as part of the regular trainings for employees (preferably during working hours), gender-sensitive training and awareness raising for all employees, including managers and supervisors, on how to recognise signs of violence and harassment at work, situations in which it may arise, and how to respond appropriately in line with company policies, collective agreements and local social dialogue. All employees should be made aware and work together to implement the various tools and mechanisms available to prevent, report and resolve violence and harassment in the workplace, and trained in how to use them.

### ***ii. Prevention***

The Social Partners should jointly implement a comprehensive approach to prevent workplace violence and harassment, also taking into account and building on established good practices. Prevention measures should be periodically assessed and reviewed, to ensure compliance and effectiveness, and to assess the need for potential new measures and/or organisational change. The European Social Partners are committed to promoting a gender-sensitive and collaborative corporate environment, where open communication is encouraged, fostering a work environment where employees are treated equally and feel safe raising and discussing their concerns.

### ***iii. Detection, investigation and resolution***

The European Social Partners encourage our members to continue to elaborate and implement clear and structured methods and procedures to detect, monitor, report and resolve instances of violence and harassment in the workplace, while also making use of existing good practices. These can include measurable objectives for identifying potential hazards and assessing potential risks (to an individual, group and wider workforce), investigating and resolving cases in a timely manner with full confidentiality and impartiality, and protecting and accompanying the victim, witness and/or whistleblower as required by national law (including by facilitating access to medical, psychological, social, managerial and HR support). These methods and procedures should clearly outline responsibilities to ensure effective implementation and accountability. Failure to adhere to workplace violence and harassment policies should trigger established mechanisms regarding proportional sanctions, as defined by collective agreements and/or national legislation.

The European Social Partners stress that employees must be able to raise concerns, file complaints, support others and/or participate in investigations without fear of reprisal.

### ***iv. Access to further support***

The social partners should promote and help facilitate access to further external information, including legal, medical, psychological and financial support. Peer support groups or networks



could also be created on an *ad hoc* basis, for employees to share their experiences and access support from colleagues.

### **C. Challenges in a digitalised workplace**

The impact of modern technology on employment in banking continues to be a key area of focus for the social partners and we recognise that the effects of digitalisation on the financial sector are profound. They can lead to higher autonomy and increased job satisfaction, but also new occupational health and safety risks.

The European Social Partners' 2021 Joint Declaration on Remote Work and New Technologies noted a potential "higher risk of technology-enabled harassment such as work-related cyberbullying".<sup>5</sup> The European Social Partners remain vigilant to these risks and are ready to act to prevent, monitor and minimise these situations.

### **D. Workplace-related, third-party violence and harassment**

The European Social Partners recognise that workplace-related third-party violence and harassment can have a considerable impact on the victim's work, productivity and performance, as well as on the working environment as a whole.

Employers have a responsibility, where possible, to take appropriate measures to prevent and mitigate any risk of workplace-related third-party violence and harassment, and to provide protection and support to workers who are affected. Joint steps could be taken by the social partners at the appropriate level to strengthen prevention policies, improve reporting and follow-up procedures and ensure that victims are supported and kept safe at work.

### **E. Domestic violence**

While an employer cannot prevent domestic violence itself, joint steps could be taken by the social partners at the appropriate level to raise awareness of domestic violence and its impact on the workplace, promote and facilitate access to specialist services for all employees and provide workplace-based support for victims, including helping them remain safe at work.

The European Social Partners recognise that domestic violence – whose victims are disproportionately women – can have a considerable impact on the victim's work, productivity and performance, as well as on the working environment as a whole. The measures described above should also be made available to victims of domestic violence, including, where applicable, adjustments to work arrangements.

## **III. JOINT RECOMMENDATIONS**

In light of all the above-mentioned aspects, the European Social Partners encourage our respective members at the national/sectoral/(multinational) company level to reinforce policies on preventing violence and harassment at work, also taking into account and building on established good practices. Trade union representatives/works councils should be actively involved in the process, from design to implementation and monitoring of policies.

The European Social Partners encourage:

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<sup>5</sup> [Joint Declaration on Remote Work and New Technologies by the European Social Partners in the Banking Sector](#)



- Extending existing and prospective internal rules on prevention of violence and harassment to remote work situations, while acknowledging its differences, by integrating appropriate support and safety measures for all victims into workplace policies and procedures (including collective bargaining agreements);
- Providing an employee who has been the victim of workplace-related violence and harassment, upon their request, with flexible work arrangements and/or leave;
- Refraining from dismissal and disciplinary measures for being late to or absent from work in cases with evidence of workplace-related violence and harassment, wherever possible;
- Raising awareness of and informing employees about workplace-related violence and harassment, how it impacts the workplace, and referring them to specialist services, easily available to all employees;
- Supporting and equipping managers and supervisors with the skills and capacity to recognise and respond to instances of workplace-related violence and harassment.

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The European Social Partners for the banking sector affirm the fundamental right for all employees to work in a safe, healthy and respectful environment, free from any forms of violence and harassment, as a core value of the sector. Continuous social dialogue, including collective bargaining, is a very effective and positive tool to prevent, address and remedy incidents of violence and harassment in the workplace.

The European Social Partners commit to promoting this Joint Statement in the best feasible way and strongly encourage our members to make use of it at the European, national, sectoral and (multinational) company levels. We will continue to monitor and exchange on the issue, including through the sharing of good practices, within the European sectoral social dialogue structures, and strongly encourage our members to do the same at all levels.



## ANNEX – FURTHER INFORMATION, DEFINITIONS AND REFERENCES

### I. KEY EU AND INTERNATIONAL REFERENCES

- [EU Directive 2024/1385 on combatting violence against women and domestic violence](#)
- [The EU Roadmap for Women's Rights](#)
- [European Social Dialogue: Multi-Sectoral Guidelines to Tackle Third-Party Violence and Harassment Related to Work \(2010\)](#)
- [European Commission: What is gender-based violence?](#)
- [EIGE: Cyber violence against women](#)
- [ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 \(No. 190\)](#)
- [ILO Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 \(No. 206\)](#)
- [ILO: A safe and healthy working environment is a fundamental principle and right at work](#)
- [Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence](#)

### II. DEFINITIONS

- *Violence and harassment* in the world of work refers to a range of unacceptable behaviours and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm, and includes gender-based violence and harassment.
- *Gender-based violence and harassment* means violence and harassment directed at persons because of their sex or gender, or affecting persons of a particular sex or gender disproportionately, and includes sexual harassment.
- *Psychological harassment* can be defined as repeated actions, the purpose or effect of which is a deterioration in working conditions that could harm the victim's rights and dignity, affect their physical or mental health, or compromise their professional future.
- *Sexual harassment* can be defined as imposing upon a person repeated words or behaviour with sexual connotations that violate the person's dignity due to their degrading or humiliating nature or create an intimidating, hostile or offensive situation. Conduct assimilated to sexual harassment can also consist of any serious form of pressure, even where there is no repetition, used with the real or apparent aim of obtaining an act of a sexual nature, whether for the benefit of the person engaging in the conduct or for a third party.
- *Third-party violence and harassment* can be defined as a form of workplace violence and harassment that arises from an interaction with members of the public/customers in the provision of services. It can be physical, psychological, verbal and/or sexual and can be a one-off incident or a more systematic pattern of behaviour.



- *Domestic violence* is defined by the EU Commission as “all acts of physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence that occur within the family, domestic unit, or between intimate partners. These can be former or current spouses also when they don’t share the same residence.”

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**Signed in Brussels on 15 January 2026**

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