

European Social Partners for the Banking Sector publish new Joint Statement to reaffirm commitment to preventing Violence and Harassment at Work

Brussels, 15 January 2026 — European Social Partners for the Banking sector today reaffirmed their strong commitment to ensuring safe, healthy and respectful workplaces, free from all forms of violence and harassment. The sector recognises that dignity and respect at work are fundamental rights and essential to employee wellbeing, organisational performance and sustainable business success.

Across Europe, banks have taken concrete steps to prevent violence and harassment by implementing policies, training programmes and joint initiatives with employee representatives. Employers acknowledge their primary responsibility for occupational health and safety and are committed to acting in line with EU legislation, international labour standards and national collective agreements.

“Every employee has the right to work in an environment where they feel safe, respected and valued,” said Dr. Jens Thau, Chair of the EBF Banking Committee for European Social Affairs and Deputy General Manager for AGV Banken. “Violence and harassment have no place in our sector. Preventing them is not only a moral, but also a legal obligation and an economic imperative that strengthens trust and wellbeing, whilst ensuring an open and friendly working environment as a foundation for high-quality, long-term performance.”

A joint and preventive approach

The European Social Partners emphasise the importance of **social dialogue – including collective bargaining** – as effective tools to prevent, detect and address violence and harassment in the workplace. By working closely with trade unions and works councils, employers aim to ensure that workplace policies are credible, inclusive and responsive to employees’ real needs.

A strong focus is placed on **prevention**, including regular risk assessments, awareness-raising initiatives and training for all employees — particularly managers and supervisors — to recognise and respond appropriately to harmful behaviours.

“Prevention starts with awareness and leadership,” said Dr. Michael Kammas, Vice-Chair of the EBF Banking Committee for European Social Affairs and Director General of the Association of Cyprus Banks. “By investing in training, clear procedures and open dialogue, we create workplaces where concerns can be raised early and addressed fairly, confidentially and without fear of retaliation.”

Addressing gender-based and third-party violence

Employers underline the importance of **gender-sensitive occupational health and safety measures**, recognising that women are disproportionately affected by certain forms of violence and harassment. Policies increasingly address underlying risk factors such as stereotypes, power imbalances and intersecting forms of discrimination.

“This joint statement is a testament to the power of dialogue and cooperation,” said **Michael Budolfson**, President of UNI Europa Finance. “By jointly committing to these principles, we are creating workplaces where employees can thrive without fear of violence or harassment. It’s a concrete step forward for workers across Europe.”

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The sector also acknowledges emerging risks linked to **digitalisation**, including technology-enabled harassment, as well as the impact of **third-party violence** involving customers or clients. Employers commit to monitoring these risks closely and taking appropriate preventive and protective measures.

Safe workplaces depend on shared responsibility and continuous improvement. By working together with employee representatives, we can adapt our policies to new challenges — from remote work to third-party interactions — while ensuring support for anyone affected.

Supporting employees and looking ahead

Where incidents do occur, European Social Partners commit to clear and structured procedures for reporting, investigation and resolution, ensuring confidentiality, impartiality and protection against reprisals. Access to medical, psychological, legal and social support is recognised as a key component of effective remediation.

European Social Partners will continue to promote good practices, exchange experience and monitor progress through ongoing social dialogue at European, national and company level.