

## ***ACTION FRAMEWORK AT THE NATIONAL OBSERVATORY OF ATHENS (NOA) FOR THE COMPILATION OF A GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN***

### **INTRODUCTION**

The NOA is a research, working, and educational environment that respects the constitutionally enshrined principle of gender equality and seeks to promote and ensure substantive equality between women and men at all levels of its operation and areas of activity. In line with the objectives, directives and the broader EU strategy for gender equality in research and innovation, as well as with the corresponding initiatives at national level, the NOA is committed to implement targeted actions, tailored to its structures and needs, in order to address disparities and gender inequalities, so that the gender dimension becomes a key pillar within the NOA in human resources management, as well as in the access and participation of the personnel in management and decision-making bodies, and proceeds to the formulation and implementation of a Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP).

### **A. PRIORITY AXES OF THE GEAP**

- I. Balanced gender representation in leadership positions and decision-making processes:** The NOA recognizes the importance of balanced participation, pluralism, and inclusiveness in the composition of decision-making instruments and in the leadership positions of the body, for the effective addressing of gender prejudices and the symbolic change of established perceptions. In this context, it prioritizes the enhancing of balanced representation and gender equality in institutions and decision-making processes.
- II. Gender equality in hiring, employment, and professional development:** Based on the fundamental principles of equality and meritocracy in access to employment, professional development, and training, the NOA aims to eliminate barriers and prejudices related to gender in all areas of its human resources.
- III. Inclusion of the dimension of gender in the academic, research and teaching framework:** To address gender stereotypes in the production and transmission of knowledge, the NOA seeks to enhance the gender dimension in the research content, in innovation and all its programs and actions.
- IV. Balance between professional and personal life and organizational culture:** In the framework of achieving equality between men and women in terms of opportunities and treatment at work, the NOA seeks to provide a multi-faceted support to personnel to improve the work-life balance, as well as the broader creation of an organizational culture without exclusions based on gender.
- V. Preventing and responding to gender-based violence, including mobbing and sexual harassment:** The NOA has zero tolerance for gender-based violence in any form (be it physical, psychological, sexual, or economic) and aims to adopt a set of measures to prevent and combat incidents of moral and sexual harassment, as well as any other form of violence.

### **B. ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMITTEE ON GENDER EQUALITY**

A Gender Equality Committee (GEC) is established. The committee will consist of 5 members (1 member from each Institute, 1 member from the central service, and 1 member from the Special Research Funds Account) serving a three-year term of office as an advisory body for the promotion of equality. The appointment of the members of the Committee and its composition

will be made by the decision of the Board of Directors, following a proposal by the Directors of each of the Institutes for the members of the Committee from each of the Institutes and following the proposal by the Directorate of Administration and the Head of the Special Research Funds Account for the members of the Committee from the central service and the Special Research Funds Account respectively. The task of the Gender Equality Committee is:

1. The organization, coordination. and monitoring of the following phases:
  - Assessment of the current state regarding gender equality in the NOA, through the collection and analysis of data on human resources management, the decision-making bodies and processes, the research and lecturing content.
  - Formulation of the Gender Equality Action Plan. Based on the current state assessment, the Action Plan for enhancing equality will be formulated, which will include target setting, identification of priorities, timeframe, determination of intervention areas with specific measures and actions, identification of implementation indicators, monitoring and evaluation, etc.
  - Implementation and monitoring of the Gender Equality Action Plan (management of actions, monitoring of data - indicators, possible adjustments, etc.)
  - Evaluation of the Gender Equality Action Plan (systematic and objective evaluation of the design, implementation, effectiveness, and impact of the GEAP).
2. Recommending to the competent bodies measures to promote equality and combat sexism.
3. Providing information and training to NOA's employees, researchers etc. on gender and equality issues,
4. Mediation services in cases of complaints of discrimination or harassing behavior.
5. Support to victims of discrimination when they complain of discriminatory treatment. NOA's internal Regulation may regulate the issues of supporting the victims of discrimination by the Committee.

### **C. DESIGNATION OF A PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR GENDER EQUALITY**

For the development of the NOA's GEAP, it is decided to appoint, by a relevant decision of the Board of Directors at its next meeting, a person responsible for Gender Equality with the main responsibility to formulate and implement the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) in cooperation with the Gender Equality Committee, the Board, and the Directors of the Institutes. The GEAP is a comprehensive intervention that aims to integrate the gender dimension into NOA's structures, practices, and internal operation. With the GEAP to be conducted by the Gender Equality Committee in cooperation with the person responsible for Gender Equality, the NOA will identify specific objectives, strategies, and actions on how to integrate the gender dimension, tailored to its structures and needs, to address any disparities and gender inequalities. Starting from the assessment and analysis of the current state in the NOA, objectives will be determined, which should be measurable and the implementation of

each action will be accompanied by the monitoring of its effectiveness with quantitative and qualitative indicators on gender issues, as defined by international, European, and national institutions, to assess gender mainstreaming in the relevant measures and policies.

## **D. MEASURES AND REGULATIONS ON HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE AT**

### **WORK PREAMBLE**

With Law. 4808/2021 (PART II) a modern framework was established to prevent, address and combat the forms of violence and harassment, contributing to the creation of a working environment that respects, promotes, and safeguards the right of every person to a working environment that lacks violence and harassment (Article 2) The scope of the above law (Article 3) covers employees and persons employed in the private sector, regardless of their employment contract, including those employed under a work contract, independent services, paid mandates, and those employed through third-party service providers, as well as persons undergoing training, including trainees and apprentices, volunteers, employees whose employment relationship has ended, as well as job applicants and employees in the informal economy, while as regards the employees and the persons employed in the above categories in the public sector, Articles 4 to 8, 13, 14, 15 and, mutatis mutandis, Article 12 of this Act shall apply.

Within the framework set out in the above-mentioned law, the NOA adopts and puts into effect for employees and persons employed by the NOA, regardless of their employment contract, including those employed under a work contract, independent services and paid mandates, as well as persons performing internships, a framework to prevent, address and combat forms of violence and harassment in order to ensure at all times a working environment that respects the right of every person to work in an environment that lacks violence and harassment, as follows:

#### Article 1

##### **Prohibition of violence and harassment at work**

1. All forms of violence and harassment, whether related to or arising from the working environment, including gender-related violence and harassment as well as sexual harassment, are prohibited.
2. a) The terms "violence and harassment" suggest any form of conduct, acts, practices, or threats thereof, which are intended to cause, result in or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual, or economic harm, whether occurring in isolation or repeatedly. (b) The term "harassment" suggests any form of conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, whether or not it constitutes a form of discrimination, and includes harassment on the grounds of sex or other grounds of discrimination. (c) |The term "gender-based harassment" suggests forms of conduct related to the gender of a person which have the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of that person and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. These forms of behavior include sexual harassment, as well as forms of behavior linked to a person's sexual orientation, expression, identity, or gender characteristics.
3. Forms of violence and harassment could take place in particular: (a) at the workplace, including places where the employee takes a rest or meal break, and in personal hygiene and care areas, (b) during travel or trips in the performance of work duties, as well as work-related events and social activities; and (c) during work-related communications, including

those carried out through information and communication technologies.

## Article 2

### **NOA's obligations to prevent and respond to violence and harassment**

1. The President of the NOA and the Directors of the Institutes are obliged: a) to receive, investigate and manage any complaint or report related to violence and harassment with zero tolerance, with confidentiality and in a manner that respects the human dignity, and not to obstruct the receipt, investigation and management of such complaints or reports, (b) to provide support and access to any competent public, administrative or judicial authority in the investigation of such an incident or conduct, if requested by them, (c) to provide employees with information on the potential risks of violence and harassment in the workplace and on prevention and protection measures, including the obligations and rights of employees and the NOA in such incidents, (d) to post in the workplace and to make accessible information on the procedures that exist at the NOA for reporting and dealing with such conduct, as well as the contact details of the competent administrative and judicial authorities in accordance with the applicable provisions.
2. The NOA shall act appropriately to ensure that employees receive all the necessary information regarding a) the legislation in force concerning the risks and measures of protection and prevention relating to the combat against violence and harassment at work, including sexual harassment.

## Article 3

### **Enhancing the concept of psychosocial risks**

The NOA shall: a) ensure that the measures and arrangements of the present framework are adapted to the changing circumstances and seek to improve existing situations, b) implement the recommendations of health and safety inspectors and generally facilitate their work during inspections, c) supervise the correct application of health and safety measures for employees; d) inform employees of the occupational risk arising from their work, e) draw up a program of preventive action and improvement of the working conditions in the Entity, taking into account, in particular, the organization of work, social relations, environmental and technological factors, as well as psychosocial risks, f) ensure the maintenance and monitoring of the safe operation of equipment and installations, (g) encourage and facilitate the training and education of employees, (h) take collective measures for the protection of employees, and (i) assess psychosocial risks, including the risks of violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, and take measures to prevent, control and constraint them.

## Article 4

### **Rights of victims - Effects on violations of the prohibition of violence and harassment**

1. Any person who is affected by an incident of violence and harassment against him or her, even if the relationship in the context of which the incident or conduct is alleged to have occurred against him or her has ended, has the right, in addition to judicial protection, to have recourse to the Ombudsman as a body promoting and supervising the principle of equal treatment, and to lodge a complaint within the NOA.
2. When an employee or other staff member violates the prohibition of violence and harassment, the NOA shall take appropriate and proportionate measures, as appropriate,

against the complainant in order to prevent and avoid a similar incident or behavior from reoccurring. These measures may include a recommendation for compliance, a change of position, working hours, place or manner of work or termination of the employment or cooperation relationship and the implementation of Disciplinary Law.

3. Any person who suffers an incident of violence and harassment against him or her has the right to leave the workplace for a reasonable period of time, without loss of pay or other adverse consequence, if in his or her reasonable belief there is an imminent high risk to life, health or safety, in particular where the employer is the perpetrator of such conduct or where the employer fails to take the necessary and appropriate measures to restore work-related harmony, or where such measures are not sufficient to cease the violent and harassing conduct. In this case, the employee who leaves the workplace is obliged to inform beforehand the employer (e.g. the scientific manager of the program in which he/she works or the Head of the service to which he/she has been assigned) and the administration of the body (e.g. the Chairman of the Board of Directors) in writing, indicating the incident of violence and harassment and the circumstances that justify his/her conviction that there is a high risk to his/her life, health or safety. If the risk does not exist or has ceased to exist and the person concerned refuses to return to work, the provisions in force concerning the non-fulfilment of statutory or contractual obligations shall apply.
4. The violation of the prohibitions of the present framework gives rise, inter alia, to a claim for full compensation of the injured person, which covers his/her material and non-material damage, as well as moral damages.

## **Article 5**

### **Prohibition of retaliation**

The dismissal or termination in any way of the legal relationship on which the employment is based, as well as any other adverse treatment of an aggrieved person, if it constitutes retaliatory behavior or a countermeasure for an incident of violence and harassment, shall be prohibited, shall be null, and considered invalid.

## **Article 6**

### **Action brought by legal entities and associations of persons**

Legal entities and associations of persons having a legitimate interest may, with the consent of the person affected by the infringements of the present framework, bring proceedings in his or her name before the competent administrative or judicial authorities. They may also intervene in his or her defense before the administrative or judicial authorities.

## **Article 7**

### **Burden of proof**

Where a person falling within the scope of the present framework alleges that he or she has been subjected to treatment involving harassment or violence and invokes facts or evidence from which it is presumed that there has been direct or indirect harassment or violence, the respondent shall have the burden of proving that there has been no violation of the above prohibitions.