



TEPAV GENDER EQUALITY AND PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, ABUSE AND HARASSMENT (SEA-H) POLICY

Policy Document on Combating Discrimination, Harassment, Psychological Harassment (Mobbing), Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault, and Ensuring Gender Equality

1. PURPOSE

In all its activities, TEPAV regards respect for human dignity, human rights and the principle of equality, as well as the creation of a safe, inclusive and discrimination-free working environment, as fundamental principles.

The purpose of this policy is to prevent the following forms of conduct:

- Discrimination
- Harassment
- Psychological harassment (mobbing)
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual assault
- Sexual exploitation
- Sexual abuse
- Abuse of authority and power
- Threats and coercion
- Retaliation

The policy also aims to establish a safe reporting and response mechanism when such conduct occurs.

TEPAV adopts a **zero-tolerance** approach to discrimination and violence in the workplace.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- Managers and employees
- Project personnel
- Volunteers
- Interns
- Consultants
- Suppliers and service providers
- Project partners
- Beneficiaries
- Persons acting on behalf of the Foundation

- Other persons associated with TEPAV activities

The policy applies on TEPAV premises as well as during fieldwork, meetings, training sessions, travel, social events, digital communications and in other work-related settings.

3. LEGAL AND NORMATIVE BASIS

This policy has been prepared in accordance with applicable national legislation and international human rights and labour standards.

The principal legal and normative instruments include:

Türkiye Legislation

- Constitution of the Republic of Türkiye
- Labour Law No. 4857
- Turkish Code of Obligations No. 6098
- Turkish Penal Code No. 5237
- Law No. 6284 on the Protection of the Family and Prevention of Violence against Women
- Law No. 6701 on the Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye
- Law No. 6698 on the Protection of Personal Data
- Law No. 5378 on Persons with Disabilities
- Child Protection Law No. 5395
- Occupational Health and Safety Law No. 6331
- Other applicable national legislation and secondary regulations

Since information concerning an individual's sex life, health or similar matters obtained in connection with a complaint or investigation may constitute special categories of personal data under Law No. 6698 on the Protection of Personal Data, particular care is taken to protect such data.

International Framework

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- European Convention on Human Rights
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- International Labour Organization (ILO) Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)
- ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), and Recommendation No. 206
- United Nations policies and standards on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse
- Other international standards applicable to TEPAV's international projects

Türkiye ratified ILO Convention No. 111 on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) in 1967, and the Convention is in force for Türkiye.

ILO Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206 have also served as important international standards guiding the preparation of this policy on the prevention of violence and harassment in the world of work.

4. CORE PRINCIPLES

TEPAV adopts the following principles:

4.1. Equality

No person may be subjected to discrimination on the grounds of gender, age, disability, marital status, social or economic status, nationality, ethnic or cultural origin, language, belief, opinion or any other characteristic.

4.2. Gender Equality

TEPAV regards ensuring and maintaining equality between women and men in the workplace as a fundamental principle. Women and men have equal rights and opportunities in relation to recruitment, the assignment of duties and responsibilities, remuneration, promotion, training, access to projects and other work opportunities, and working conditions.

Practices and approaches that may hinder the equal participation of women and men in working life or their equal access to institutional opportunities are not permitted. TEPAV supports the application of gender equality principles across all areas of working life and the adoption of appropriate measures to ensure equality where necessary.

4.3. Respect for Human Dignity

Every individual's physical and psychological integrity, privacy and personal dignity shall be respected.

4.4. Zero Tolerance for Violence

No form of violence is acceptable, including harassment, mobbing, sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

4.5. Consent

Consent to conduct of a sexual nature must be explicit, freely given and voluntary. Silence or failure to resist due to fear does not constitute consent. Consent given under pressure, threat or fear, or within a relationship of power or dependency, is not considered freely and voluntarily given.

4.6. Prohibition of Retaliation

Retaliation against any person who files a complaint, submits a report, gives testimony or contributes to an investigation is prohibited. Threats, pressure, exclusion or other adverse conduct amounting to retaliation are not permitted.

4.7. Confidentiality

The utmost confidentiality shall be maintained throughout the reporting and investigation processes. Information and documents shall be shared only with persons whose involvement is necessary for the process and only to the extent required by applicable legislation.

4.8. Duty of Care

Reports shall be received and reviewed with due care, impartiality and sensitivity so as not to cause secondary victimisation or undermine human dignity or the sense of justice.

5. PROHIBITED CONDUCT

5.1. Discrimination

It is prohibited to subject a person to unequal treatment on the grounds of gender, age, disability, ethnic origin, language, religion or belief, marital status or similar characteristics in recruitment, the assignment of duties and responsibilities, remuneration, promotion, training, access to projects and other work opportunities, or working conditions. Neither direct nor indirect discrimination is permitted.

5.2. Harassment

Harassment includes unwanted verbal, written, visual, physical or digital conduct directed at an individual that undermines their dignity or is intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive. Insults, threats, belittling, humiliation, exclusion, intimidation, unwelcome or persistent communication and similar conduct are considered harassment and are not permitted.

5.3. Psychological Harassment (Mobbing)

Systematic, repeated or persistent conduct directed at an individual that is intended to intimidate, exclude or discredit that person, make their working conditions more difficult or drive them out of the workplace, or that produces any of these outcomes, is prohibited.

Examples include:

- Repeatedly demeaning a person
- Deliberately excluding a person
- Withholding information from a person
- Repeatedly threatening a person

- Systematically devaluing a person's work
- Humiliating a person in front of others

5.4. Sexual Harassment

Unwelcome words, conduct, messages, images, innuendo or physical contact of a sexual nature are considered sexual harassment.

5.5. Sexual Assault

Any physical contact or assault of a sexual nature against a person's sexual or bodily integrity without their consent is strictly prohibited.

5.6. Sexual Exploitation

The abuse of a position of power or trust, or of a person's vulnerability, for sexual purposes, as well as the exploitation of that person for sexual purposes, is prohibited.

In particular:

Requesting sexual conduct in exchange for money, employment, assistance, education, project support, services, payment or any other benefit is prohibited.

5.7. Sexual Abuse

The sexual abuse of children or vulnerable persons through the exploitation of a relationship of trust, power or dependency is strictly prohibited.

6. ABUSE OF POWER AND AUTHORITY

Power derived from one's position as a manager, project lead, employee, consultant or in any other role may not be used to:

- Request sexual relations
- Obtain personal gain
- Request sexual conduct in exchange for assistance or services
- Threaten an individual
- Make an individual's role or opportunities conditional upon sexual demands

The same standards apply to persons who provide services on behalf of TEPAV, collaborate with TEPAV or participate in TEPAV activities.

7. REPORTING MECHANISM

The process begins with a written report to the Ethics Committee by a person who has experienced discrimination, harassment, mobbing, sexual harassment or sexual assault, or who believes that they have been discriminated against on the grounds of gender. A report

may be submitted using a printed application form or by email. Reports by email must be sent to etik@tepav.org.tr. The email account is accessible only to members of the Ethics Committee, and confidentiality is guaranteed.

Reports are reviewed by a three-member Ethics Committee established within TEPAV. The Committee consists of one member designated by the TEPAV Executive Directorate and two employee representatives elected by the employees from among themselves. Two alternate members are also designated. Committee members are selected from among persons with awareness of discrimination, gender equality, violence, harassment, mobbing and nonviolent communication. If a member leaves their position or is unable to participate in the assessment because they are a party to or the subject of the report, the relevant alternate member shall take their place on the Committee.

Before handling any report, members of the Ethics Committee shall sign a declaration of impartiality and confidentiality.

No member of the Ethics Committee may be a party to an incident falling within the scope of this policy.

The reporting process shall be completed as promptly as possible. The Ethics Committee shall complete the preliminary assessment within no more than one month and the review or investigation within two months. The Committee may seek expert assistance where necessary.

Decisions of the Ethics Committee shall be taken by a majority vote.

The outcome of the review shall be communicated to the parties in writing. The person who is the subject of the report may appeal the outcome within one month.

8. PROCESS FOLLOWING A REPORT

Upon receipt of a report:

1. The report is recorded.
2. Any immediate safety risk is assessed.
3. Necessary protective measures are taken.
4. An impartial preliminary assessment is conducted.
5. A review or investigation is initiated where deemed necessary.
6. The parties and any relevant witnesses are consulted.
7. The findings are assessed, and appropriate measures or sanctions are applied.
8. The risk of retaliation against the complainant is monitored.

Where conduct may constitute a criminal offence, cooperation with the competent authorities shall be ensured in accordance with applicable legislation.

Sanctions

Where a breach of this Policy Document is established, one or more of the following sanctions or measures may be applied, taking into account the nature, severity and circumstances of the breach:

- **Where sexual harassment or sexual assault is established in relation to the incident reported:**
 - The employment contract of the employee found to have committed the conduct shall be terminated pursuant to the relevant provisions of Labour Law No. 4857.
- **Where discrimination, mobbing or harassment is established in relation to the incident reported:**
 - The measures and decisions taken may vary depending on the subject matter of the report. These may range from a written warning to termination of employment.
 - If a person who has received a written warning repeats the conduct in question, their employment relationship shall be terminated.
- **Where it is established that an intentionally false statement has been made:**
 - If it is conclusively established, leaving no room for doubt, that the complainant deliberately lied and made false statements during the process initiated following the allegation, sanctions shall be imposed on the complainant. These sanctions may range from a written warning to termination of employment.

9. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PERSONAL DATA

Information obtained in connection with a complaint or investigation may be used only by persons who require access to it and only to the extent necessary.

Particular care shall be taken to protect personal data, especially in relation to allegations of sexual harassment, sexual assault and sexual abuse.

Personal data shall be processed and retained in accordance with the applicable provisions of Law No. 6698 on the Protection of Personal Data and TEPAV's data protection procedures. The Law provides for enhanced protection of special categories of personal data.

10. THIRD PARTIES

Project partners, consultants, suppliers, contractors and service providers are expected to comply with TEPAV's Policy Document and standards of conduct.

Where necessary, contracts shall include provisions on:

- Prohibition of discrimination
- Prohibition of harassment

- Prohibition of sexual exploitation and abuse
- Reporting obligations
- Prohibition of retaliation

11. TRAINING AND AWARENESS

TEPAV ensures that its employees and, where deemed necessary, other persons develop awareness of the following:

- Discrimination
- Gender equality
- Nonviolent communication
- Harassment
- Mobbing
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual assault
- Child safeguarding
- Reporting mechanisms
- Confidentiality and the prohibition of retaliation

New employees are informed about the TEPAV Policy Document during onboarding.

12. RESPONSIBILITIES

All parties are required to comply with applicable laws. Submitting a report to the Ethics Committee does not, under any circumstances, limit any person's legal rights.

TEPAV Executive Directorate

The TEPAV Executive Directorate is responsible for:

- Supporting the implementation of the Policy Document
- Providing the necessary resources
- Ensuring that the Policy Document is reviewed regularly
- Informing all members and employees about the existence and operation of the Ethics Committee
- Making the Policy Document publicly available
- Reporting breaches of the Policy Document to the Ethics Committee
- Providing a safe working environment for the parties during the Ethics Committee's assessment process
- Ensuring protection against retaliation
- Observing the principles of confidentiality and privacy to support the proper conduct of the Ethics Committee's assessment process
- Implementing the decisions of the Ethics Committee

The TEPAV Executive Directorate is also responsible for taking the necessary measures to ensure gender equality. To this end, it:

- Collects gender-disaggregated data on employees and interns annually and analyses the data in a gender-sensitive manner
- Monitors and assesses whether women and men have equal opportunities and working conditions
- Develops and implements policies aimed at ensuring the equal representation of women and men in senior management
- Ensures that gender equality awareness activities are incorporated into the onboarding process for new employees
- Collaborates with relevant experts to implement equality policies and mainstream gender equality throughout TEPAV
- Takes any other institutional measures deemed necessary to ensure gender equality

TEPAV Employees

TEPAV employees are responsible for:

- Reporting breaches of the Policy Document to the Ethics Committee
- Observing the principles of confidentiality and privacy to support the proper conduct of the Ethics Committee's assessment process
- Performing their duties in accordance with the principles set out in the Policy Document

Ethics Committee

The Ethics Committee is responsible for:

- Observing the principles of confidentiality and privacy to ensure the proper conduct of the assessment process
- Conducting its work impartially
- Submitting reports on its work to the TEPAV Executive Directorate and informing the relevant members
- Making structural recommendations where necessary