



## **CEDEFOP POLICY**

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### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY**

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#### **1. Introduction**

The principles of non-discrimination, equality and diversity are among the core values of the European Union, finding their expression, inter alia, in the European legal and policy framework. These principles are set out in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights Article 21, which prohibits general discrimination, in Articles 12 and 13 of the Treaty Establishing the European Communities (TEC), and are also covered in secondary legislation.

Furthermore, the principles of diversity and non-discrimination are set out in the Staff Regulations, are an integral part of the European Employment Strategy and the Lisbon Agenda and were promoted in several Action Programmes designed by the European Commission over the years.

As a European Union Institution, Cedefop works for and represents all European Union citizens. It recognises the importance of attracting, developing and retaining staff, which reflects the diversity of the EU society today. It is convinced that diversity can be an advantage at the workplace by creating a productive environment, in which everyone feels valued, where their talents are being fully utilised and in which organisational goals are met.

This policy is adopted by the Executive Director after consultation with the Staff Committee.

#### **2. Objectives**

The objectives of the policy are to:

- communicate Cedefop's commitment to equal opportunities and diversity for existing and potential staff members; and
- outline activities to promote equality of opportunities and diversity at Cedefop.

#### **3. Scope**

The policy applies to all Cedefop staff members, trainees, seconded national experts (SNEs) as well as job applicants.

#### 4. Legal basis

- Article 1d Staff Regulations (SR);
- Articles 10 and 124 Conditions of Employment of Other Servants (CEOS);
- Cedefop decision <sup>(1)</sup> laying down rules on the secondment to Cedefop of national experts;
- Decision <sup>(2)</sup> on the traineeship scheme at Cedefop

#### 5. Definitions

**Diversity** shall be understood as individual uniqueness and variety but also as inclusiveness and togetherness. The mosaic of people who bring a variety of cultural, social and historical backgrounds, styles, perspectives, values and beliefs as assets to the groups and organisations with which they interact. Diversity management is the action through which variety and difference shall be valued by promoting inclusiveness based on tolerance, respect and professionalism. It is the action aimed at creating a positive work environment, promoting personal and professional development, empowering all people to reach their full potential, attracting talents, removing barriers that hinder progress, improving organisational performance and workplace relations.

**Equal opportunities** shall be understood as meaning that everyone should be treated fairly within the workplace and shall have equal access to employment-related opportunities. Access to such opportunities are based on merit and are not linked to age, gender, disability, marital status, race, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic or social origin, religious beliefs, political opinion or group/organisational affiliation, etc. Furthermore, it involves the prevention and elimination of discrimination based on such grounds. Equal opportunities principles, strategies and practices should be mainstreamed into all aspects of the Agency's human resource management system.

**Direct discrimination** occurs when "one person is treated less favourably than another is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation" on grounds of age, gender, disability, marital status, race, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic or social origin, religious beliefs, political opinion or group/organisational affiliation, etc.

**Indirect discrimination** occurs when "an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons of a certain age, gender, disability, marital status, race, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic or social origin, religious beliefs, political opinion or group/organisational affiliation, etc. at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons, unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary".

**Positive action** refers to the adoption of "specific measures to prevent or compensate for disadvantages linked to age, gender, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, race, nationality, ethnic or social origin religious beliefs, political opinion or group/organisational affiliation etc., with a view of ensuring full equality and diversity

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<sup>(1)</sup> [DIR/2009/259](#)

<sup>(2)</sup> [DRS/HR/RB\(2020\)00650](#) of 29 May 2020

in practice.”

**Reasonable accommodation** means that employers shall take appropriate measures, where needed, to enable a person with a disability to have access to, participate in, or advance in employment, or to undergo training, unless such measures would impose a disproportionate burden on the employer. This burden shall not be disproportionate when it is sufficiently remedied by measures existing within the framework of the disability policy of the Member State concerned.

## **6. Commitment**

Cedefop is committed to (i) safeguarding equality of opportunity for all prospective and current employees through its recruitment and employment policies, procedures and practices and (ii) creating a working environment free of bullying, harassment and discrimination <sup>(3)</sup>.

Cedefop ensures that no job applicant or staff member is treated inequitably due to gender, marital status, age, sexual preference, disability (physical and/or sensory differences which do not affect work performance), ethnicity, philosophical or religious beliefs, with regard to:

- recruitment and selection;
- conditions of work;
- prospects for career development and promotion; and
- learning and development opportunities.

Cedefop undertakes to provide a working environment that is sensitive to individual differences, where contributions of all staff are recognised and valued and which sustains a work ethos whereby all employees can reach their full potential.

Cedefop integrates equality considerations throughout the core business, its strategic and institutional processes and policies as well as when designing new projects and programmes.

## **7. Parties involved**

The enforcement of this policy places responsibility both on management and on individual staff members. It requires shared commitment and understanding of what it means to promote equality in the organisation's policies, implementing practices and processes as well as in daily work.

Management at all levels (Management Board, Director's Office, Heads of Departments) have a duty to actively support equal opportunities and to encourage and implement equal opportunities in the workplace. Managers should foster inclusiveness and should intervene in case of inappropriate behaviour.

Each individual staff member is expected to cooperate with any measures introduced to develop or monitor equal opportunity, refrain from making discriminatory comments or undertake discriminatory actions, and inform management if they are aware of any action contrary to this policy.

The Human Resource (HR) Service is assigned the responsibility for monitoring the

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<sup>(3)</sup> The Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy and Cedefop's policy on protecting the dignity of the person and preventing any form of psychological and sexual harassment (Cedefop/DGE/12/2011) are interlinked.

implementation of this policy. HR reviews periodically the implementation of the policy and makes recommendations for remedial action if deemed necessary. HR provides training and guidance to management and staff regarding equal opportunities.

## **8. Building blocks**

### **8.1. Selection/recruitment**

Cedefop is an equal opportunity employer. This is mentioned in all vacancy notices.

Vacancy notices are drafted using gender-neutral language. All vacant posts are open to all suitably qualified candidates. Vacancy notices avoid references to skills or characteristics that directly or indirectly apply to a particular type of person.

Cedefop encourages applications from all potential candidates and reaches out and makes any possible additional effort through targeted dissemination to attract candidates from under-represented population.

Age and gender balance is, as far as possible, secured on selection boards, while preserving other requirements of the SR regarding their composition <sup>(4)</sup>.

No bias is displayed against candidates during a selection process. Selection boards should not assess the suitability of individuals for certain types of work on grounds that would be discriminatory (such as gender, age or marital status). To that effect, all selection board members are provided with training on unconscious bias, good interview practice, on design of non-discriminatory recruitment tests and interview questions as well as on the prevention of discrimination in shortlisting. Staff selection methods are designed to afford all candidates an equal opportunity for success.

Questions at interviews are directed towards assessing the suitability of the candidates for the job. Where it is essential to assess whether personal circumstances affect performance of the job (e.g. where the job involves unsociable hours or extensive travel) similar relevant questions are asked of all applicants and the answers are evaluated on an equal basis.

The documentation related to the recruitment and selection should contain no reference of a discriminatory nature.

### **8.2. Conditions of Work**

Cedefop creates an inclusive working environment where flexibility is offered to staff to enable them to achieve as much as possible a good balance between personal and work commitments. Staff benefits from flexible working time arrangements, options for parental leave and part-time work as well as opportunities for teleworking arrangements.

The following good practices are also encouraged:

- as a general rule and as far as possible, meetings are scheduled within core time;
- deadlines for deliverables are set taking into account the needs of the service in such a manner that staff is able to plan their work efficiently;

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<sup>(4)</sup> In line with the SR, if a Selection Board consists of more than four members, it must comprise at least two members of each gender.

- sufficient resources are made available to replace absent staff or alternatively objectives are adjusted in case of long staff absence or part-time work possibilities are offered.

### 8.3. *Career Development and Promotion*

Cedefop ensures that its procedures and practices are transparent, fair and equitable and that discrimination does not occur with regard to performance appraisal and access to career development prospects and promotion/reclassification.

Reporting officers are provided with information and training regarding equal opportunities.

An integral part of Cedefop managers' performance assessment is the way they value and promote equality and whether they act in a way which is consistent with the equal opportunity policy.

The Executive Director, with the support of the whole management, ensures that promotions give all eligible staff an equal opportunity of career progression.

Cedefop seeks to ensure gender balance in management positions. All staff is given the same opportunities to develop their qualifications and expertise, as well to acquire the necessary experience to apply for management positions.

### 8.4. *Learning and development*

Cedefop is committed to maintaining an environment which enhances the skills and expertise of all staff through the creation of learning opportunities and the provision of training. It is an integral part of this commitment that all staff is given equal access to relevant training. Accordingly, training courses aimed at developing the potential of all staff, according to the needs of the various categories, are included in the training offer.

Training provision at Cedefop promotes inclusiveness and equal opportunities, and is intended to strengthen the sense of belonging of each and every staff member to the organisation.

In-house training courses are offered to facilitate a greater participation by staff who have obligations which prevent them from travelling. Decisions regarding external training requests are made without regard to gender, age or any other non-relevant factors.

Management training programmes support managers to understand their role and responsibilities for the creation of an inclusive and flexible working environment.

## 9. **Organisational culture and decision-making process**

Strong and consistent leadership is an essential foundation for integrating equality into decision and policy making. By applying this policy as part of their daily work, managers make it clear to all staff that equality is significant to them and is linked to successful organisational performance.

Cedefop creates a culture of equal opportunity. Cedefop does not tolerate the use of discriminatory or sexist language and where pictures or other illustrations are used, portrays activities in a non-discriminatory and non-sexist way.

While involving staff in decision making through discussion and consultation, Cedefop

seeks balanced representation with particular regard to gender and age on all internal boards, committees, working groups, etc.

An important source of input on whether staff members believe they are respectfully and equally treated, is the regular staff surveys in which staff is able to provide their feedback on the matter.

#### **10. Working Environment and facilities**

Cedefop is committed to providing a working environment that is geared to the special needs of disabled staff and visitors.

#### **11. HR data and statistics**

HR data is monitored and analysed annually. This includes staff data disaggregated by gender, age, grade, nationality, etc., as well as qualitative data through staff surveys. Examples of data that is monitored are: promotion rates disaggregated by the above categories, attrition rates etc.

Should HR data point to any significant disadvantage for one particular group, the management takes action to analyse the causes behind such disadvantage and design a remedial action to address it.

#### **12. Awareness raising on equal opportunities**

Cedefop communicates the Equal Opportunities Policy to staff and makes sure it is widely understood. Staff members with disabilities are informed on their rights to request for special accommodation.

Dedicated information sessions on equal opportunities are offered to staff periodically as a refresher and to newcomers as part of the induction programme.

Training and information is provided through courses, workshops and other means to impress on managers and staff at all levels the need for equal treatment, and to assist them in ensuring there are no discriminatory practices in Cedefop.

#### **13. Anti-harassment and dignity at work**

For attracting and retaining a diverse workforce, it is necessary to establish a respectful working environment where harassment, as any other form of discrimination, is not tolerated.

Since 2011 Cedefop has a policy on protecting the dignity of the person and preventing any form of psychological and sexual harassment (Cedefop/DGE/12/2011) <sup>(5)</sup> complemented by a detailed manual of the informal procedure.


Information on dignity at work, including contact details of the confidential counsellors, is accessible on Intranet. Each staff member is provided with a paper copy of the Cedefop Dignity at work leaflet and awareness raising sessions in various formats are regularly provided to staff and management.

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<sup>(5)</sup> <https://livelink.cedefop.europa.eu/livelink/livelink.exe?func=ll&objId=23223297&objAction=viewheader>

**14. Continuous follow-up**

The follow-up includes, but is not limited to, annual report on the implementation of the dignity at work policy, regular reporting on the geographical distribution of staff and percentage of the most represented nationality, regular reporting on gender balance in various staff categories, as well as evolution of the gender balance in the management team.



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Jürgen Siebel  
Executive Director