

# Integrity complaints procedure

## CATAPA

The complaints procedure aims to preserve efficient and proper handling of complaints and reports related to integrity violations. This procedure serves as a handhold and guide in handling complaints. We want to ensure that every report or complaint is taken seriously and followed up in an equal manner.

Everyone involved in CATAPA vzw has a responsibility to report possible breaches of the code of ethics or integrity violations.

This procedure applies to complaints or reports relating to integrity violations committed by all Catapistas<sup>1</sup>, partners or other stakeholders of CATAPA.

### Where?

On our website, you can use the fill-in form to submit a request for help to the integrity counsellor or file a formal complaint with the complaints manager. Of course, you can also address the individuals directly.

The current integrity complaints manager is Tille Dewulf. You can reach Tille at the e-mail address [integritycomplaints@catapa.be](mailto:integritycomplaints@catapa.be)

The backup for the integrity complaints manager is partnerwork officer Karlijn Van den Broeck. E-mails will be forwarded to Karlijn only in the exception that Tille is unavailable.

The current integrity counsellor is Aida Krnic. You can reach Aida at the e-mail address [integrity@catapa.be](mailto:integrity@catapa.be).

### What?

There is a difference between a question or informal notice (for the integrity counsellor) and a formal complaint (for the complaints manager).

#### Question or informal notice:

- The integrity counsellor will as soon as possible contact the person asking a question or making an informal notice and guide them through CATAPA's integrity policy.
- The integrity counsellor assures that the identity of the reporter remains anonymous unless they expressly wish to be known.
- The integrity counsellor reviews with the person what action to take next. If that is to file a formal complaint, the counsellor refers the person to the complaints manager.
- After a report/question, the integrity counsellor also looks for ways to prevent such events in the future:
  - o By investigating what led to such events taking place in the movement and name the causes and communicate them to the movement (when this does not endanger the reporter).

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<sup>1</sup> Any employee, volunteer, trainee, member of the General Assembly or board member of CATAPA is Catapista.

- o By recommending specific workshops or trainings for the movement to reduce the likelihood of this situation recurring in the future.
- o By proposing new actions for CATAPA's integrity policy.

#### **Complaint (formal):**

- The complaint is dealt with as soon as possible by the complaints manager through a complaints procedure.

#### Complaints procedure

1. The complaints manager first checks whether the complaint is **admissible**:
  - It concerns a complaint regarding a possible integrity violation.
  - The complaint was filed by an interested party.
  - The facts to which the complaint relates took place no more than 1 year ago.
  - For offences committed over a longer period of time, the last offence is taken into account for this purpose.
  - The complaint was submitted through the complaint form on CATAPA's website, orally with the petitioner's signature or through mail to [integritycomplaints@catapa.be](mailto:integritycomplaints@catapa.be).
2. If the complaint is admissible, the complaints manager will make a **preliminary investigation**, which may require further information from the complainant.
3. The complaints manager prepares a **report** of the preliminary investigation. If the preliminary investigation reveals a potentially risky situation requiring high urgency, this shall be noted in the report and priority shall be given to the file. The preliminary investigation report includes the admissibility assessment and an initial assessment regarding the authenticity and provability of the alleged facts. If, based on this information, a complaint investigation arises, the complaints manager makes a proposal of investigation which is included in the preliminary investigation report. Additional information may be requested from the complainant if necessary. If, based on the preliminary investigation report, there is no reason to initiate an investigation, the complainant is notified with a brief justification.
4. An **investigation** may be launched if the outcome of the preliminary investigation requires it. This decision is taken by the complaints manager.

Based on the facts and data of the investigation, it is decided which persons will be involved and whether the investigation will be conducted internally or externally. Discretion and confidentiality are guaranteed to the maximum extent and persons involved are only given information on a need-to-know basis. This approach is adopted throughout the investigation and in all investigative acts.

Each investigation requires an individual approach and there will always be flexibility with the facts and data specific to the investigation. All investigative actions and steps taken will be documented in the file, which will also include background information, documents received and conclusions. The investigation file also contains data concerning the investigator(s) and the parties contacted and involved, anonymously or not.

A number of **principles** deserve special attention and should always be respected during the course of the investigation. These are confidentiality of information, proportionality, treatment within reasonable time and absence of bias. The facts, sensitivity, risk and complexity of the complaint are always assessed against these principles when taking investigative action. Deviations from respecting these safeguards, applied for example to keeping the reporter's identity confidential, can only be made with the express consent of the parties involved or when required by law (e.g. in the case of a judicial enquiry).

5. Upon the outcome of the investigation, **the necessary measures** will be imposed:
  - If the investigation shows that **possible criminal offences** were committed, advice may be sought from an internal or external expert after which, if necessary, legal authorities will be informed.
  - If it appears that an **integrity violation** has been committed, appropriate action will be taken against the perpetrator. The appropriate sanction obviously depends on the case and can vary widely from a reprimand or warning to immediate dismissal with formal referral to criminal authorities.
  - **Determining the sanction** is done by the complaints manager, possibly after internal or external advice.
  - Besides sanctions, **alternative solutions** such as mediation or amicable settlement may also be proposed. This is determined by the complaints manager.
  - If the investigation shows that **no integrity violation** was committed, **no measure** will be imposed.
  - We offer, if desired by the victim and/or reporter, continued access to **medical and psychosocial support**.
6. Each investigation is **registered** and kept in CATAPA's archives after completion. The investigation file will be kept for a period of 5 years.

The outcome of the complaint investigation shall be **communicated** to the reporter and, if applicable, to the victim of the violation. This must occur within a reasonable timeframe. Adequate attention is paid to the victim of the report in the follow-up. The exact form of follow-up towards the victim depends on the facts, circumstances and the outcome of the investigation. In any case, the complaints manager keeps a finger on the pulse after the complaints procedure has been completed.

7. Fair complaint handling with respect for the **protection of the victim and the reporter** is always given priority over communication interests and considerations. This means, among other things, that information around a specific complaint or investigation is only communicated to actors who are or need to be directly involved. Communication around specific cases requires accurate moral considerations on a case-by-case basis. If other parties involved in a publicity-sensitive matter, other than the reporter or victim, are also at risk of some form of harm, they are informed of the situation. Information and communication to these stakeholders concerns only what is strictly necessary and only on condition that they too guarantee principles such as confidentiality. The appropriateness, timing, tone and content of other external communications are always reviewed according to the circumstances of the specific situation. Such communications always take into account trade-offs between the interests and rights of the victim, the offender, the public, the sector and possible other stakeholders. In addition to the aforementioned confidentiality and protection safeguards for the victim, offender and reporter, CATAPA's internal privacy policy also applies. Data received and handled throughout the procedure will be stored and processed in accordance with the privacy policy.
  8. Annually, CATAPA **reports** on complaints handled to the General Assembly. In light of the protection of the reporter, victim or other stakeholders, this reporting does not include any sensitive or case-specific data. Based on this annual reporting and analysis of reports, complaints and integrity violations, this complaints procedure can be updated to improve the quality of complaints handling.
  9. The NGO Federation is always informed about initiated or ongoing complaints procedures. The information is passed on confidentially to the director or integrity officer within the NGO Federation and confidentiality is always maintained.
- It is the responsibility of the complaints manager to:
    - o Ensure that the identity of the complainant remains confidential unless they specifically express that their identity may be known.
    - o Ensure transparency: the complainant (if their identity is known) should be actively involved and informed at every stage of the follow-up process.
  - When a decision must be made to give 'the benefit of the doubt' to someone accused of violating our code of ethics or to support the reporter, the reporter is given preference.
  - Possible consequences of a complaint could be:
    - o Deny individual(s) access to our organisation - this is a last resort and a decision to be approved by the General Assembly.

Central hotline

If the integrity violation is a misdemeanor of a sexual nature then the person can also file a complaint with the central hotline established by the FPS Foreign Affairs.

The central hotline only receives complaints on a subsidiary basis, i.e. the person must have appealed to CATAPA's complaints procedure before the complaint can be dealt with at the central hotline.

That is, the complaint in the central hotline will be **dealt with only** when:

- the complainant has already contacted CATAPA's complaint officer and has not received a response.
- CATAPA did not follow up on the complainant's report.
- the complainant considers that a conflict of interest exists within the CATAPA complaints procedure.

It is only about It concerns only **complaints linked to abuses of a sexual nature**, more specifically:

- sexual exploitation: any actual or attempted abuse of a person in a position of vulnerability, trust, or unequal power for sexual purposes, including - but not limited to - obtaining economic, social or political benefits from the sexual exploitation of another person.
- sexual abuse: actual or threatened physical transgressive behaviour of a sexual nature, whether by force, or coercion, or by exploitation of unequal power relations.
- sexual harassment: unacceptable and unwelcome sexual behaviour, including - but not limited to - sexual suggestions or demands, requests for sexual favours, and sexual, verbal or physical behaviour or gestures, which are offensive or humiliating or which may reasonably be perceived as such.

The complainant can submit a complaint to the central hotline through [the complaint form](#) on the hotline's website.

## Other options for complaints or help after integrity violation in CATAPA

In the cases provided for by law, **victims** can turn to **the police and/or prosecutor's office** (file a legal complaint).

In cases provided by law, **employees (and/or equivalents)** who are victims may:

- turn to **police and/or prosecutor's office** (file a legal complaint)
- file a complaint with the **Welfare at Work Supervision** Inspectorate
- file a complaint with the **labour auditor**
- filing an action in the **labour court**

- use **mediation** as regulated by the Judicial Code
- seek **trade union assistance** or mediation
- seek assistance of the **prevention advisor** of CATAPA in cases of psychosocial risks at work, in particular psychological harm, which may or may not be accompanied by physical harm, resulting from exposure to elements of the work organisation, the content of the work, the terms and conditions of employment and interpersonal relationships at work, on which the employer has an impact and which objectively pose a danger, such as violence at work, unwelcome sexual behaviour, harassment, discrimination, stress and burnout
- call on **the prevention advisor-occupational physician** for CATAPA
- seek the assistance and advice of a **private lawyer**