

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003307/26
to the Commission
Sander Smit (ECR), Jessika van Leeuwen (ECR)
(24 August 2026)**

Subject: Reports of verbal and physical harassment within the European Commission

POLITICO ⁽¹⁾ has recently revealed that almost 1 000 written complaints have been received by the European Commission's confidential counsellors since 2024. These reports cover topics including verbal and physical harassment by managers, humiliation, high workload and fear of repercussions when submitting complaints. However, the counsellors themselves have no authority to investigate. This raises questions about the internal administrative culture within the European Commission and how complaints are followed up. The EU is founded on democracy, equality and respect for human dignity. It is therefore very important that these values are respected and protected within the European institutions too.

1. What concrete measures is the Commission taking to systematically combat verbal and physical harassment and abuse of power by managers?
2. Is the Commission willing to report annually and transparently on the nature of the reports, and what guarantees are there of diligent and independent follow-up?
3. What is the Commission's assessment of the risk that reports of verbal and physical harassment, abuse of power and inadequate handling of complaints could harm the confidence that European citizens have in the European institutions and the credibility of the EU?

Submitted: 24.8.2026

**Answer given by Mr Serafin on behalf of the European Commission
(16 October 2026)**

The Commission has a zero-tolerance policy against harassment at the workplace. With the anti-harassment Decision of December 2023 ⁽¹⁾, the Commission reinforced the informal procedure, including the creation of the role of Chief Confidential Counsellor ('CCC') who is the first contact point for colleagues feeling harassed.

Since her start in September 2024, the CCC has provided extensive awareness-raising actions and mandatory training for managers in the Commission, and support and guidance to staff.

During this period, over 960 colleagues have contacted her office, out of which 700 related to situations of alleged harassment ⁽²⁾. Most of these situations lead to internal solutions. The high number of contacts to the CCC may be due to the stronger awareness about the need to have a respectful work environment.

The CCC reports directly to the Commissioner responsible for public administration on her activities on an annual basis. The Commissioner has addressed questions on harassment in the context of previous discharge hearings.

Formal complaints and requests for assistance can be made via a dedicated Human Resources service and the Investigation and Disciplinary Office of the Commission (IDOC). IDOC reports a sTable 20-25 harassment allegation cases per year.

It examines claims independently, impartially, in full compliance with the applicable rules and case-law, and in respect of the rights of defence and the rules on data protection. Both annual reports of the IDOC and the CCC are made available to all staff.

¹ Starcevic S., *1 000 complaints made to European Commission's anti-harassment team*, POLITICO, 6 August 2026, <https://www.politico.eu/article/1000-complaints-european-commissions-anti-harassment-team/>.

⁽¹⁾ Decision C(2023) 8630 final.

⁽²⁾ The CCC does not investigate, nor provide legal assessment or conclude on the establishment of harassment.