



Brussels, 12.6.2019  
C(2019) 4231 final

**COMMISSION DECISION**

**of 12.6.2019**

**laying down general implementing provisions on the conduct of administrative inquiries  
and disciplinary proceedings**

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### laying down general implementing provisions on the conduct of administrative inquiries and disciplinary proceedings

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to the Staff Regulations of Officials ('Staff Regulations') and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants ('CEOS') of the European Union, laid down by Council Regulation (EEC, Euratom, ECSC) No 259/68<sup>1</sup>, and in particular Articles 2(3) and 30 of Annex IX of the Staff Regulations,

After consulting the Staff Committee and the Staff Regulations Committee,

Whereas:

- (1) In order to take account of the developments in the case-law of the European Union Courts and in the light of the experience acquired by the Investigation and Disciplinary Office of the Commission (IDOC) in the field of inquiries and disciplinary proceedings, it is necessary to replace Commission Decision C(2004) 1588<sup>2</sup> which laid down general implementing provisions on the conduct of administrative inquiries and disciplinary procedures.
- (2) It is necessary to ensure the effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of administrative inquiries, pre-disciplinary proceedings and disciplinary proceedings, in compliance with the provisions of the Staff Regulations and CEOS.
- (3) Information obtained or forwarded in the course of IDOC's proceedings should enjoy the protection guaranteed by Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council<sup>3</sup>. The rules set out in Commission Decision (EU) 2019/165<sup>4</sup> concerning the provision of information to data subjects and the restriction of certain data protection rights should apply where relevant. It is necessary to ensure the confidentiality of personal data processed in the context of administrative inquiries and disciplinary proceedings.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 56, 4.3.1968, p.1, as last amended by Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1023/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2013 (OJ L 287, 29.10.2013, p.15).

<sup>2</sup> Commission Decision C (2004)1588 of 28 April 2004 on general implementing provisions on the conduct of administrative inquiries and disciplinary procedures.

<sup>3</sup> Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC (OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39).

<sup>4</sup> Commission Decision (EU) 2019/165 of 1 February 2019 laying down internal rules concerning the provision of information to data subjects and the restriction of certain of their data protection rights by the Commission in the context of administrative inquiries, pre-disciplinary, disciplinary and suspension proceedings (OJ L 32, 4.2.2019, p. 9).

- (4) Administrative inquiries, pre-disciplinary proceedings and disciplinary proceedings should be conducted in such a way as to give the person concerned the opportunity to put forward facts and circumstances relevant to the case.
- (5) Administrative inquiries, pre-disciplinary proceedings and disciplinary proceedings should be conducted within a reasonable period of time, in accordance with good administrative practice.
- (6) Staff members involved in administrative inquiries, pre-disciplinary proceedings and disciplinary proceedings should be informed of their rights and obligations.
- (7) The alleged victim of a situation of harassment should be informed without undue delay once an administrative inquiry has been opened into this situation. At the end of the inquiry, the alleged victim should be informed of the decision by the appointing authority to close the case or to follow it up.
- (8) In order to ensure that staff members maintain high standards of ethics and integrity in compliance with their obligations, it is necessary to raise awareness by providing them with adequate information and publicity about disciplinary matters.
- (9) For the sake of legal certainty, it is necessary to ensure that administrative inquiries are opened within a reasonable period of time and in any event not later than 10 years after the alleged breaches ceased. However, it should be possible to open administrative inquiries beyond this time limit in cases of serious allegations of fraud, corruption and any other illegal activity affecting the financial interests of the Union, as well as in cases where the Staff Regulations or of the CEOS so provides.
- (10) In implementing this Decision, due account should be taken of: the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union; Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union; Commission Decision C(2006)1624 of 26 April 2006 on the European Commission policy on protecting the dignity of the person and preventing psychological harassment and sexual harassment (C(2006) 1624); Commission Decision C(2013)3288 of 4 June 2013 on the exercise of powers conferred by the Staff Regulations on the appointing authority and by the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants on the authority empowered to conclude contracts of employment, as amended (C(2013)3288); and the Communication to the Commission of 28 January 2015 on Administrative arrangements on cooperation and a timely exchange of information between the European Commission and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) as amended ('Administrative arrangements'), and in particular Annex II thereof, relating to cooperation between OLAF and the Investigation and Disciplinary Office of the Commission (IDOC)<sup>5</sup>.
- (11) In accordance with the Staff Regulations, the members of IDOC should carry out their tasks in full independence and should avoid conflicts of interest. They should inform their hierarchy immediately if they have any personal interest which impairs or could be seen as impairing their independence when dealing with a case.
- (12) The accuracy of the information received by IDOC in relation to a possible breach of statutory obligations should be assessed in order to enable the appointing authority to decide on the appropriate follow-up of such information. To that end, IDOC should conduct a preliminary assessment of the information.

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<sup>5</sup> SEC(2015) 79 final.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

## CHAPTER 1

### General provisions

#### *Article 1*

#### *Organisation of IDOC and proceedings*

1. The Investigation and Disciplinary Office of the Commission (IDOC) is attached to the Directorate-General for Human Resources and Security.
2. IDOC shall carry out:
  - (a) preliminary assessments
  - (b) administrative inquiries
  - (c) pre-disciplinary proceedings
  - (d) disciplinary proceedings
  - (e) suspension proceedings.

#### *Article 2*

#### *Definitions*

For the purposes of this Decision, the following definitions shall apply:

- (1) ‘staff member’ means Commission officials and former officials within the meaning of the Staff Regulations, as well as servants and former servants within the meaning of CEOS; for the purposes of Chapters III and IV of this Decision, it also means national experts, persons employed under private law contracts working on Commission premises, and trainees;
- (2) ‘person concerned’ means any staff member whose conduct is the subject of an administrative inquiry, pre-disciplinary proceedings, disciplinary proceedings and/or suspension proceedings;
- (3) ‘witness’ means any staff member or any other person who is requested to provide information relating to facts which are the subject-matter of an administrative inquiry, pre-disciplinary proceedings and/or disciplinary proceedings;
- (4) ‘alleged victim’ of harassment means a person who brought forward allegations of harassment against him or her through a formal procedure, without prejudice to whether or not such harassment is finally established;
- (5) ‘appointing authority’ means the competent appointing authority in the European Commission, as set out in Commission Decision C(2013)3288, as amended;
- (6) ‘preliminary assessment’ means all actions directed at evaluating the information received by IDOC in order to enable the appointing authority to decide on the appropriate follow-up of such information;
- (7) ‘administrative inquiry’ means all actions directed at establishing the facts and circumstances of the case for which IDOC has been issued with a mandate, in accordance with Article 2 of Annex IX to the Staff Regulations;

- (8) ‘pre-disciplinary proceedings’ means all actions directed at enabling the person concerned to be heard, in accordance with Article 3 of Annex IX of the Staff Regulations, on the established facts and circumstances of the case, including their legal qualification, in order to enable the appointing authority to decide on the appropriate follow-up to the case;
- (9) ‘disciplinary proceedings’ means all actions directed at enabling the appointing authority to decide upon the disciplinary penalty to be imposed on the person concerned in accordance with Articles 9 and 10 of Annex IX to the Staff Regulations;
- (10) ‘suspension proceedings’ means all actions directed at enabling the appointing authority to decide whether to suspend a staff member, in accordance with Article 23 of Annex IX to the Staff Regulations.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Principles, rights and obligations**

#### *Article 3*

##### *General principles*

1. IDOC shall carry out all its tasks objectively and impartially, in conformity with the principles of legality, proportionality and confidentiality, taking account of all circumstances brought to its knowledge.
2. The presumption of innocence shall apply at all procedural stages.

#### *Article 4*

##### *Duration of proceedings*

All proceedings shall be carried out within a reasonable period of time commensurate with the circumstances and complexity of the case.

#### *Article 5*

##### *Rights of the person concerned*

1. The person concerned shall be informed of his or her rights and obligations applicable to the proceedings at the moment he or she is informed for the first time that these proceedings have been opened.
2. The person concerned shall have the right not to incriminate him or herself.
3. The person concerned may, at any step of the proceedings, put forward facts and circumstances in relation to the case. That right shall not be used to unduly delay the proceedings.
4. In addition to the general rights set out in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3, the person concerned shall have the specific rights listed below in Chapters IV, VI, VII, VIII and X.

*Article 6*  
*Rights of the witnesses*

1. Witnesses requested to testify in the course of the proceedings shall be informed of their rights and obligations before being heard orally or in writing for the first time in the course of such proceedings.
2. In addition to the general right set out in paragraph 1, the witnesses shall have the specific rights listed below in Chapters IV, V, VI and VIII.

*Article 7*  
*General obligations*

1. In accordance with their duty of loyalty to the institution, staff members called upon to provide information shall cooperate and provide all requested information available to them, subject to obligations regarding confidentiality.
2. The person concerned shall remain at the disposal of the institution as long as the procedure concerning him or her is ongoing.
3. Without prejudice of their right to be accompanied, assisted or represented in the proceedings, staff members and any other person involved in the proceedings shall be prohibited from any unauthorised disclosure of information relating to the proceedings.
4. Information obtained or forwarded in the course of the proceedings, in whatever form, shall be subject to confidentiality and shall enjoy the protection given by Regulation (EU) 2018/1725.
5. The members of IDOC and any other person designated to participate in the proceedings shall declare any circumstance which could impair or could be perceived as impairing their independence or impartiality when dealing with a case.

*Article 8*  
*Protection of whistleblowers*

If the information triggering the proceedings laid down in this Decision has been submitted on the basis of the procedure set out in Article 22(a) of the Staff Regulations, the provisions of the Commission's Guidelines on whistleblowing<sup>6</sup> shall be taken into account in the context of the proceedings referred to in this Decision.

*Article 9*  
*Reimbursement of travel expenses*

Persons who are invited for a hearing in the context of the proceedings laid down in this Decision shall be entitled to reimbursement of their travel expenses as follows:

- (a) Staff members in active service shall be reimbursed on the basis of the applicable rules on mission expenses;
- (b) Former staff members and other persons shall be reimbursed on the basis of the applicable rules on expenses incurred by persons from outside the Commission attending a Commission meeting in an expert capacity.

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<sup>6</sup> SEC(2012) 679 final.

## CHAPTER III

### Preliminary assessment

#### *Article 10*

##### *Preliminary assessment*

1. Upon receiving information indicating a possible breach of statutory obligations, IDOC shall carry out a preliminary assessment of the information and accompanying evidence.
2. The preliminary assessment shall be aimed at evaluating the information received in order to determine the appropriate follow-up. In this context, IDOC may request complementary information, in particular from the relevant services and from the source of the initial information.
3. Where information received concerns or could concern facts for which OLAF is competent, IDOC shall transmit the information to OLAF without delay. For information falling within the scope of point 4 of Annex II to the Administrative arrangements, the procedures set out in those arrangements apply.
4. At the end of the preliminary assessment, IDOC shall draw up an assessment note for the appointing authority so that the latter could decide whether the case is to be closed without further action (non-case) or warrants a follow-up.

## CHAPTER IV

### Administrative inquiries

#### *Article 11*

##### *Opening of an administrative inquiry*

1. On the basis of the assessment note provided for in Article 10(4), the appointing authority may decide, in agreement with the Secretary-General, to open an administrative inquiry.
2. In accordance with the Administrative arrangements, before the opening of an administrative inquiry, IDOC shall consult OLAF to ascertain that it is not conducting an investigation for its own purposes and/or does not intend to do so.
3. Where OLAF is conducting an investigation within the meaning of Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council (EU, Euratom) No 883/2013<sup>7</sup> or informs IDOC or the appointing authority that it is considering whether or not to do so, no administrative inquiry shall be opened regarding the same facts unless otherwise agreed with OLAF.

<sup>7</sup>

Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 883/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 September 2013 concerning investigations conducted by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1073/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (Euratom) No 1074/1999, OJ L 248, 18.9.2013, p. 1.

4. An administrative inquiry shall not be opened in respect of alleged breaches older than 10 years. That period shall begin on the day on which the alleged breach ceases.
5. Paragraph 4 shall not apply to serious allegations of fraud, corruption or any other illegal activity affecting the financial interests of the Union, or where a provision of the Staff Regulations or of the CEOS provides otherwise.

#### *Article 12*

##### *Mandate*

1. In agreement with the Secretary-General, the appointing authority shall issue IDOC with a mandate setting out the purpose and scope of each administrative inquiry it decides to open. It shall require IDOC to establish the facts and determine the individual responsibility of the person(s) concerned in respect of the facts and circumstances of the case.
2. At any time during the inquiry, the appointing authority, in agreement with the Secretary-General, may decide to enlarge the scope of the mandate, in particular in order to cover additional facts. The person concerned shall be informed accordingly.

#### *Article 13*

##### *The exercise of powers as regards the administrative inquiry*

1. IDOC shall exercise its powers independently, within the scope of its mandate. It shall neither seek nor receive instructions regarding the conduct and findings of the inquiry.
2. IDOC shall have the power to request documents and other data relevant to the case in any format, summon any staff member to provide information, and carry out on-the-spot verifications.
3. IDOC may request assistance from other specialist departments of the Commission, in particular the service responsible for security, without prejudice to their own competence in this regard.
4. The appointing authority may appoint an investigator outside IDOC to conduct the administrative inquiry, in particular to avoid a situation of conflict of interest. Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 shall apply.

#### *Article 14*

##### *Information regarding the opening of an administrative inquiry*

1. IDOC shall inform the person concerned as soon as an administrative inquiry has been opened in his or her regard provided that that information does not hinder the inquiry. The information shall indicate, in particular, the nature of the facts concerned and when they are alleged to have occurred.
2. IDOC shall decide on the need to inform the service of the person concerned that an administrative inquiry has been opened, taking into account the circumstances of the case.



*Article 15*  
*Conduct of the administrative inquiry*

1. Administrative inquiries shall be conducted in an independent, impartial and thorough manner, in conformity with the principles of legality, proportionality and confidentiality.
2. Investigative measures shall be directed at establishing the facts and circumstances of the case including those which may attenuate the individual responsibility of the persons concerned or exonerate them entirely from their responsibility.
3. The administrative inquiry shall be carried out within an indicative timeframe of 12 months from the mandate.
4. While an inquiry is ongoing, the person concerned shall not have access to the file.

*Article 16*  
*Collecting statements*

1. IDOC may collect statements from staff members and any other person who may have information relevant to the administrative inquiry, either by calling them to a hearing or requesting them to submit written statements.
2. Hearings may be conducted by videoconference, phone or any equivalent media.
3. Staff members or any other person called to a hearing may be accompanied or assisted by a person of their choice.
4. Before staff members or any other person are being heard or requested to submit written statements, IDOC shall inform them of their rights and obligations regarding the ongoing procedure as well as the subject of the inquiry.
5. Where the hearing of a witness produces evidence that he or she may be a person concerned, the hearing shall be terminated. The witness shall be informed forthwith of his or her rights as a person concerned and be given a copy of the records of statements that he or she has already made in the course of the inquiry.
6. The hearing shall be recorded in a document signed by the staff member or any other person who was heard and by the interviewers once it has ended. Documents submitted by the staff member during the hearing shall be attached to it. The hearing may be audio recorded.

*Article 17*  
*Right to provide comments*

1. Once the administrative inquiry has been completed and before written conclusions referring by name to a person concerned are drawn up, the person concerned shall be given the opportunity to comment on the facts concerning him or her.
2. Where absolute secrecy is required in relation to investigative procedures by a national judicial authority, the obligation to invite the person concerned to comment may be deferred by the Secretary-General in agreement with the Director-General for Human Resources and Security.
3. IDOC shall invite the person concerned to submit his or her comments in writing. The invitation shall indicate the deadline for submitting comments, which shall not

be less than 10 working days from receipt of the invitation, unless otherwise agreed with the person concerned.

4. The conclusions of the inquiry shall be drawn on the basis of the information gathered and any comments of the person concerned. If no comments have been submitted within the deadline, other than in exceptional circumstances, the conclusions shall be drawn on the basis of the information gathered.

#### *Article 18*

##### *Administrative inquiry report*

1. At the end of the administrative inquiry, IDOC shall draw up a report.
2. The report shall set out the procedural steps followed, the facts and circumstances relevant to the case and, if appropriate, individual responsibilities. Its conclusions shall mention the potential breaches of the obligations incumbent on the person concerned in relation to the facts and circumstances established by the inquiry.
3. The report shall be accompanied by copies of all documents and statements relevant to the case including, where appropriate, the opinion of the body in charge of financial irregularities.
4. The director of IDOC shall transmit the report to the appointing authority and may issue recommendations on the appropriate follow-up.

#### *Article 19*

##### *Closure of the case by the appointing authority without further action*

1. Where the appointing authority decides to close the case without further action, it shall inform the person concerned of its decision in writing. At the request of the person concerned, this decision may be inserted in his or her personal file.
2. At the request of the person concerned, and subject to the protection of the legitimate interests of third parties, the appointing authority shall forward to him or her all the documents directly linked to the allegations concerning him or her.
3. The closure of the case shall not prevent the inquiry from being reopened on the basis of new facts in accordance with Article 28 of Annex IX to the Staff Regulations.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **Specific provisions concerning the rights of alleged victims of harassment and protective measures**

#### *Article 20*

##### *Information given to the alleged victim*

1. The alleged victim of a possible situation of harassment shall be informed without undue delay of the opening of the administrative inquiry regarding this situation.
2. Where the appointing authority decides to close the case without further action, it shall inform the alleged victim of that decision.

3. Where the appointing authority decides to give a follow-up to the inquiry regarding the allegations of harassment, it shall inform the alleged victim of its conclusions as regards these allegations.

*Article 21*  
*Protective measures*

At any time during the administrative inquiry, IDOC may recommend to the appointing authority to take appropriate and proportionate measures to protect the alleged victim of harassment and the witnesses requested to testify or to ensure the proper functioning of the service concerned. In accordance with the duty of care, such measures may in particular consist in transferring the alleged victim and/or the alleged harasser to another service.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **Pre-disciplinary proceedings**

*Article 22*  
*Mandate for pre-disciplinary proceedings*

1. Where appropriate and without prejudice to the powers conferred to it by Article 3 of Annex IX to the Staff Regulations, the appointing authority shall issue IDOC with a mandate to conduct the hearing pursuant to Article 3 of Annex IX to the Staff Regulations on its behalf. The mandate shall refer to the potential breaches to the person concerned in consideration of the established facts and circumstances.
2. At any time during the pre-disciplinary proceedings, the appointing authority may decide to open an administrative inquiry or refer the case to OLAF, in particular in order to cover additional facts outside the scope of the mandate.

*Article 23*  
*Rights of the person concerned*

1. The director of IDOC shall notify the person concerned of the mandate and invite him or her to a hearing.
2. The notification referred to in paragraph 1 shall include all documents relating to the potential breach of the statutory obligations, including the IDOC administrative inquiry report or the OLAF investigation report, except when this affects legitimate interests of confidentiality. In such cases, some of those documents or parts thereof may be withheld for a period of time proportionate to the protection of such interests and the person concerned shall be informed accordingly.

*Article 24*  
*Pre-disciplinary proceedings hearing*

1. The hearing shall take place no less than 10 working days after the person concerned has received the invitation to the hearing, unless otherwise agreed with the person concerned.

2. The hearing shall take place, in principle, in the physical presence of the person concerned. In agreement with the person concerned, it may be conducted by videoconference and/or telephone or other equivalent media.
3. The person concerned may be accompanied or assisted by a person of his or her choice.
4. The person concerned shall be informed before the hearing of his or her rights and obligations in respect of the ongoing proceedings and of their potential follow-up.
5. If, for objective reasons, the person concerned cannot be heard in person, he or she shall be given the opportunity to be represented by a person of his or her choice, or may be asked to comment on the documents referred to in Article 23(2) and to reply to IDOC's questions in writing, by a fixed deadline.
6. A hearing report shall be drawn up. It shall be signed by the person concerned and/or by the person accompanying, assisting or representing him or her. The person concerned shall receive a copy of the hearing report as well as a copy of any document presented to him or her during such hearing. The hearing may also be audio-recorded.
7. Where the person concerned fails to be represented at the hearing or to submit written comments and/or replies by the deadline referred to in paragraph 5, the appointing authority shall decide, in the interest of the proceedings, on the appropriate follow-up of the case.

#### *Article 25*

##### *Additional verifications*

1. Where certain facts relating to the allegations against the person concerned require further verification, the results of the verification shall be communicated to the person concerned for comments before the appointing authority decides on the appropriate follow-up of the pre-disciplinary proceedings.
2. Where it appears necessary to hear other persons, in particular at the request of the person concerned, the reports of those other hearings shall, subject to the legitimate interests of third parties, be communicated to the person concerned for comments when the facts mentioned are directly linked to the allegations.

#### *Article 26*

##### *Follow-up by the appointing authority*

1. On the basis of the record of the hearing referred to in Article 24(6) and all other relevant documents, the appointing authority shall take one of the decisions provided for in Article 3 of Annex IX to the Staff Regulations.
2. Where the appointing authority decides that no case can be made against the person concerned pursuant to Article 3(1)(a) of Annex IX to the Staff Regulations, he or she may request that a copy of the decision be inserted in his or her personal file.
3. Where the appointing authority decides to address a warning to the person concerned pursuant to Article 3(1)(b) of Annex IX to the Staff Regulations, it shall be inserted in his or her personal file. The person concerned has the right to add comments on the warning which shall also be inserted in the personal file. After 18 months of the date of the warning, the person concerned may ask the appointing authority to have it removed from his or her personal file.

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **Disciplinary proceedings**

#### *Article 27*

##### *General principles*

1. A single case of misconduct shall not give rise to more than one disciplinary penalty.
2. The severity of the disciplinary penalties imposed shall be commensurate with the seriousness of the misconduct. To determine the seriousness of the misconduct and when deciding upon the disciplinary penalty, the appointing authority shall take account of all facts and circumstances of the case including those which may aggravate or attenuate the individual responsibility of the person concerned. It shall in particular consider the following factors:
  - (a) the nature of the misconduct and the circumstances in which it occurred;
  - (b) the extent to which the misconduct adversely affects the integrity, reputation or interests of the institutions;
  - (c) the extent to which the misconduct involves intentional actions or negligence;
  - (d) the motives for the staff member's misconduct;
  - (e) the staff member's grade and seniority;
  - (f) the degree of the staff member's personal responsibility;
  - (g) the level of the staff member's duties and responsibilities;
  - (h) whether the misconduct involves repeated action or behaviour;
  - (i) the conduct of the staff member throughout the course of the career.

## **CHAPTER VIII**

### **Disciplinary proceedings not involving the Disciplinary Board**

#### *Article 28*

##### *Opening of the proceedings*

In cases where the appointing authority takes a decision provided for in Article 3(1)(c)(i) of Annex IX to the Staff Regulations, it shall initiate disciplinary proceedings and address to the person concerned a report containing the following:

- (a) the established facts and the circumstances in which they arose, including, if appropriate, any relevant aggravating or extenuating circumstances;
- (b) the alleged breaches of his or her obligations.

*Article 29*  
*Hearing by the appointing authority*

1. A hearing of the person concerned by the appointing authority shall take place no less than 10 working days after the person concerned has received the report referred to in Article 28 by the person concerned, unless otherwise agreed with the person concerned.
2. The hearing shall take place, in principle, in the physical presence of the person concerned and may be audio recorded. In agreement with the person concerned, it may be conducted by videoconference.
3. The person concerned may be accompanied or assisted by a person of his or her choice.
4. If, for objective reasons, the person concerned cannot be heard in person, he or she shall be given the opportunity to be represented by a person of his or her choice, or may be asked to comment in writing on the report referred to in Article 28, by a fixed deadline.
5. Where the person concerned fails to be represented or to submit written comments by the deadline referred to in paragraph 4, the appointing authority shall take its decision, in the interest of the proceedings, on the basis of the file.

*Article 30*  
*Decision by the appointing authority*

1. In the light of the hearing referred to in Article 29 and of all other relevant documents in the file, the appointing authority shall decide one of the following:
  - (a) to close the case without imposing any penalty;
  - (b) to address a warning to the person concerned pursuant to Article 3(1)(b) of Annex IX to the Staff Regulations;
  - (c) to address a written warning or a reprimand to the person concerned pursuant to Article 9(1)(a) and (b) of Annex IX to the Staff Regulations;
  - (d) to open disciplinary proceedings before the Disciplinary Board.
2. Where a warning is addressed to the person concerned pursuant to Article 3(1)(b) of Annex IX to the Staff Regulations, Article 26(3) of this Decision shall apply.

## **CHAPTER IX**

### **Disciplinary proceedings before the Disciplinary Board**

*Article 31*  
*Composition and appointment of the Disciplinary Board*

1. The Disciplinary Board shall consist of:
  - (a) a chairman and four permanent members, all of whom may be replaced by alternates, for cases where the person concerned is in a grade from AD 14 to AD 16;

- (b) a chairman and four permanent members, who may be replaced by alternates, together with two additional members belonging to the same function group and to the same grade as the person concerned, for cases other than those referred to in point (a).
2. The permanent members and their alternates shall be appointed:
  - (a) for cases where the person concerned is in grade AD 15 or AD 16, from amongst officials in active employment in at least grade AD 16;
  - (b) for all other cases, from amongst officials in active employment in at least grade AD 14.
3. The chairman shall be a former official of an institution of the Union or former member of an institution of the Union or another international organisation who is a citizen of a Member State of the Union. Unless otherwise agreed between the Authority Empowered to Conclude Contracts and the chairman pursuant to Article 123 of the CEOS, the chairman shall be remunerated on a daily basis at a level equivalent to 1/22 of the basic salary of an official in grade AD 16, step 1.
4. The chairman's alternate(s) shall be officials or former officials of an institution of the Union in grades AD 15 or AD 16. Former officials shall be reimbursed the travelling and accommodation expenses they incur when carrying out their duties as alternate chairman.
5. The Disciplinary Board shall include at least one member, who may be the chairman or the chairman's alternate, from outside the institution.
6. The chairman and his or her alternate(s), the members of the Disciplinary Board and their alternates shall be appointed for a maximum period of 3 years, which may be renewed.

#### *Article 32*

##### *Secretariat of the Disciplinary Board*

The appointing authority shall appoint the secretary of the Disciplinary Board and, where appropriate, the secretary's alternate, from amongst staff members in function group AD.

#### *Article 33*

##### *Independence, confidentiality, continuity and incompatibilities*

1. The chairman, chairman's alternate and the members of the Disciplinary Board shall be completely independent in the performance of their duties.
2. The members of the Disciplinary Board shall inform the chairman or the chairman's alternate immediately if they have any conflict of interest, which impairs or could be seen as impairing their independence or impartiality when dealing with a case. In case the chairman or the chairman's alternate is confronted with the same issue, they shall inform immediately the appointing authority.
3. The deliberations of the Disciplinary Board shall be secret.
4. Where disciplinary proceedings are in progress when their term of office ends, the chairman, the chairman's alternate and the members may continue their work until those proceedings are concluded, subject, if necessary, to a contractual adjustment as regards the remuneration or the expenses of the chairman and the chairman's alternate.

5. The relevant grade of the additional members to be taken into consideration pursuant to Article 5(2) of Annex IX to the Staff Regulations is the grade applicable at the time of drawing by lot provided for in Article 6(4) of Annex IX to the Staff Regulations.
6. The following persons shall not sit on the Disciplinary Board in a specific case:
  - (a) staff members employed at IDOC at the time the disciplinary proceedings are pending;
  - (b) staff members employed at OLAF or at the HR Security Directorate at the time the disciplinary proceedings are pending, in case OLAF or the HR Security Directorate, where the staff member is employed, has been involved in the case;
  - (c) immediate colleagues and direct superiors of the person concerned, as well as any other staff member who has an actual or potential conflict of interest.

*Article 34*  
*Report to the Disciplinary Board*

1. The appointing authority shall submit the report referred to in Article 12(1) of Annex IX to the Staff Regulations to the person concerned and to the chairman of the Disciplinary Board.
2. The chairman shall bring the report to the attention of the members of the Disciplinary Board called upon to deal with the case in question.

*Article 35*  
*Role of the chairman*

1. The chairman shall organise the work of the Disciplinary Board, ensuring that the appropriate organisational and procedural measures are taken and bringing all information and documents relating to the case to the attention of all Disciplinary Board members and parties to the proceedings.
2. The chairman may be assisted by the secretary to the Disciplinary Board in administrative matters. In particular all incoming and outgoing correspondence with the Disciplinary Board shall pass through its Secretariat. Furthermore, the secretary shall sign all correspondence on behalf of the chairman, unless the latter decides otherwise.

*Article 36*  
*Equality of arms*

1. The appointing authority shall be represented before the Disciplinary Board by the director of IDOC or a substitute designated by its director. The representative may be accompanied by other members of IDOC.
2. The person concerned and the appointing authority may call witnesses. They shall make an explicit written request to the chairman to that effect, specifying the facts in respect of which the witnesses are to be heard and the grounds for hearing them.
3. The Disciplinary Board shall assess the relevance of the proposed testimonies relating to the alleged breaches and whether the witnesses called for by the person



concerned or by the appointing authority should be heard orally or in writing. The person concerned and the appointing authority are informed thereof.

4. The Disciplinary Board may also call witnesses. The person concerned and the appointing authority shall be informed thereof.
5. The person concerned or his or her representative, as well as the representative of the appointing authority, shall be entitled to be present at the hearing of witnesses. They shall be entitled to cross-examine the witnesses if necessary.
6. In exceptional circumstances and by way of derogation to paragraph 5, upon duly motivated request from a witness or at the chairman's initiative, a witness may be heard in the absence of the person concerned. In this case, the witness shall be heard in the presence of a representative of the person concerned as well as of the representative of the appointing authority.

#### *Article 37*

##### *Hearing before the Disciplinary Board*

1. The hearing shall take place no less than 10 working days after the person concerned has received the invitation to the hearing, unless otherwise agreed with the person concerned. The hearing may be audio recorded.
2. If, for objective reasons, the person concerned cannot attend the hearing, he or she shall be given the opportunity to be represented by a person of his or her choice, or may be asked to comment on the report referred to in Article 34 and to reply to questions of the Disciplinary Board in writing, by a fixed deadline.
3. Failure by the person concerned to be represented or to submit written comments by the deadline referred to in paragraph 2 does not preclude the Disciplinary Board from issuing, in the interest of proceedings, a reasoned opinion on the basis of the file.
4. The person concerned shall be granted no less than 10 working days to submit written comments and shall be requested to submit them at the latest 5 working days prior to the hearing.
5. The chairman and the members of the Disciplinary Board may question both the person concerned or his or her representative and the representative of the appointing authority. The person concerned or his or her representative and the representative of the appointing authority may raise questions to the other party, under the authority of the chairman.
6. If witnesses are heard, they may be questioned by the chairman and the members of the Disciplinary Board, the person concerned and his representative, and the representative of the appointing authority.
7. The secretary of the Disciplinary Board or his or her alternate shall draw up records of the witnesses' hearings, which shall be signed by him or her and by the witnesses. These minutes shall be attached to the Disciplinary Board's opinion. The hearing may be audio recorded.

#### *Article 38*

##### *Hearing by the appointing authority*

1. After having been notified of the reasoned opinion of the Disciplinary Board, the person concerned shall be invited to a hearing by the appointing authority. The

hearing shall take place no less than 10 working days from the date of receipt of the reasoned opinion of the Disciplinary Board by the person concerned, unless otherwise agreed with the person concerned.

2. The hearing may be conducted by videoconference and be audio recorded.
3. The person concerned shall be entitled to be accompanied or assisted by a person of his or her choice.
4. If, for objective reasons, the person concerned cannot be heard in person, he or she shall be given the opportunity to be represented by a person of his or her choice, or may be asked to submit within a fixed deadline, in writing, comments on the case.
5. Where the person concerned fails to be represented or to submit written comments within the deadline referred to in paragraph 4, the appointing authority shall take its decision, in the interest of the proceedings, on the basis of the file.

#### *Article 39*

#### *Decision by the appointing authority*

In the light of the hearing referred to in Article 38 and of all other documents in the file, the appointing authority shall decide either:

- (a) to close the case without imposing any penalty;
- (b) to address a warning to the person concerned pursuant to Article 3(1)(b) of Annex IX to the Staff Regulations;
- (c) to impose one of the penalties provided for by Article 9 of Annex IX to the Staff Regulations commensurate with the seriousness of the misconduct.

For the purpose of point (b), Article 26(3) of this Decision shall apply.

## **CHAPTER X**

### **Impact of other procedures on disciplinary proceedings**

#### *Article 40*

#### *Parallel criminal prosecution*

1. The person concerned shall provide the appointing authority with evidence that he or she is the subject of criminal prosecution in a given Member State relating to the same facts that have given rise to disciplinary proceedings, as soon as he or she is informed of the prosecution.
2. Where the person concerned is prosecuted at national level in a Member State, this shall not prevent the appointing authority from opening parallel disciplinary proceedings relating to the same facts. However, in accordance with Article 25 of Annex IX to the Staff Regulations, the appointing authority shall not take a final decision on disciplinary measures until a final judgment has been handed down by the national court hearing the case. The appointing authority shall not be prevented from opening or continuing a disciplinary proceeding if the case has been closed according to national law.

3. Where criminal and disciplinary proceedings concern the same facts, the appointing authority shall be bound by the factual findings of the decision in the criminal procedure.
4. The appointing authority may impose a disciplinary penalty for facts constituting non-compliance with obligations under the Staff Regulations regardless of whether the criminal proceedings have resulted in a criminal conviction.

## **CHAPTER XI**

### **Suspension of a staff member**

#### *Article 41*

##### *Suspension proceedings*

1. The appointing authority may, at any time and even before the opening of an administrative inquiry or of pre-disciplinary or disciplinary proceedings, decide to suspend a staff member immediately on the basis of a preliminary assessment as referred to in Article 10 of this Decision and pursuant to Article 23 of Annex IX to the Staff Regulations.
2. Save in exceptional circumstances, before deciding on suspension, the appointing authority shall hear the person concerned orally.
3. Without prejudice to the powers conferred to it by Article 23(2) of Annex IX to the Staff Regulations, the appointing authority may issue the director of IDOC with a mandate to hear the person concerned orally on its behalf. The record of the hearing shall be transmitted to the appointing authority. The hearing may be audio recorded.
4. Prior to the hearing, and save in exceptional circumstances, the person concerned shall be informed of the alleged misconduct and, subject to the protection of the legitimate interests of third parties and the confidentiality of pending national or administrative proceedings, of copies of documents relating directly to the alleged misconduct.
5. The person concerned may be accompanied or assisted at the hearing by a person of his or her choice.
6. If, for objective reasons, the person concerned cannot be heard in person, he or she shall be given the opportunity to be represented by a person of his or her choice, or may be asked to submit comments in writing, by a fixed deadline.
7. Where the person concerned fails to be represented or to submit written comments by the deadline referred to in paragraph 6, the appointing authority shall take its decision, in the interest of the proceedings, on the basis of the file.

#### *Article 42*

##### *Decision by the appointing authority*

1. The appointing authority's decision shall state whether the person concerned is suspended for a specified or indefinite period and whether part of his or her remuneration is to be withheld under the conditions provided for in Article 24 of Annex IX to the Staff Regulations.

2. The appointing authority may decide to reintegrate the person concerned at any time upon a duly reasoned request from that person or at its own initiative.

*Article 43*

*Access rights of the suspended staff member*

1. During the period of suspension, the staff member's rights of access to the Commission's premises and/or IT services may be limited or withdrawn.
2. The decision referred to in Article 42 shall specify the extent to which these rights are limited.

## **CHAPTER XII**

### **Prevention and publicity**

*Article 44*

*Prevention*

IDOC shall provide training and undertake other awareness-raising activities on disciplinary matters for staff members.

*Article 45*

*Publication of the results of disciplinary cases*

Summaries of the disciplinary decisions adopted shall be published annually in an anonymous format.

## **CHAPTER XIII**

### **Final provisions**

*Article 46*

*Repeal*

Commission Decision C(2004)1588 of 28 April 2004 is repealed.

*Article 47*

*Date of taking effect and application*

1. This Decision shall take effect on the day of its adoption.
2. It shall also apply to inquiries and disciplinary procedures in progress on that date.

3. Acts performed under Commission Decision C(2004)1588 during administrative inquiries, pre-disciplinary proceedings, disciplinary procedures and suspension procedures in progress on the date of adoption of this Decision shall remain valid for the purposes of this Decision.

Done at Brussels, 12.6.2019

*For the Commission*  
*Günther H. OETTINGER*  
*Member of the Commission*