



Union pour la Méditerranée  
Union for the Mediterranean  
الإتحاد من أجل المتوسط

# SECRETARIAT OF THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN (UfMS)



## CODE OF CONDUCT

*PROJECTS FOR PROGRESS*



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## FOREWORD

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The skills, competencies, experience and professionalism of members of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfMS) are key to helping the Organization fulfil its core missions and strategic goals. In this context, and because of the international nature of the duties at the Secretariat, standards of professional ethics must be amongst the highest.

This Code of Conduct contributes inter alia to keeping the ethical standards of the UfMS in line with best practices. These standards should be seen as the common understanding of the professional values and culture the Organization wants to promote and uphold.

The Code is not a stand-alone document. Its purpose is to complement and develop provisions in our Statutes and Staff Regulations, in simple and concrete terms. Accordingly, the Code of Conduct does not replace existing legal provisions, nor does it expand or restrict their scope.

At the same time, whilst this document provides a broad range of guidance concerning standards, integrity and the conduct required from UfMS members, it does not address all situations. It is not a substitute for personal responsibility, but is intended to serve as a guideline for each member of the Secretariat for the way daily duties should be carried out.



## I. INTRODUCTION

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This Code of Conduct is introduced in order to consolidate an ethical culture at the UfMS and enhance transparency, objectivity and clarity.

It sets out the values and principles to guide the professional conduct and behaviour of UfMS members, including all categories of its staff members and helps the UfMS accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes. In this regard, it has to be understood in conjunction with the UfMS Statutes and its Staff Regulations.

### I.1 Structure of the Code of Conduct

*The Code of Conducts includes two essential components:*

- Principles that are relevant to the profession and practice management;
- Rules of Conduct that describe behavioural norms expected from UfMS members. These rules aid to interpret the Principles into practical application and are intended to guide the professional ethics of such members.

### I.2 Applicability and Enforcement

The Code of Conduct applies to all UfMS members<sup>1</sup>, except where otherwise expressly provided herein. It applies also to Interns and non-staff (external) personnel to the extent defined in their contractual relationship with the UfMS and the general legal framework applying to their situation.

## II. PRINCIPLES

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UfMS members shall accomplish their activities with a strong commitment to its objectives and respect the principles of loyalty, honesty, confidentiality and impartiality.

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<sup>1</sup> Includes all staff members regardless of their category (contracted or seconded and/or statutory positions, without prejudice to article 8 of the Staff Regulations).



Efficient and high-quality services establish trust and thus provide the basis for reliance on the work, therefore, they are expected to discharge their professional duties diligently, efficiently and to the best of their abilities while at the same time safe-guard the UfMS interests and image.

In particular, the following principles shall be upheld:

**1) Objectivity and independence**

UfMS members must exhibit the highest level of professional objectivity and impartiality in gathering, evaluating, and communicating information about an activity.

They shall ensure that expression of personal views and convictions does not compromise or appear to compromise the performance of the UfMS.

They shall not act in a way that unjustifiably could lead to actual or perceived preferential treatment for, or against particular individual, groups or interests. In this regard, they shall not seek or receive instructions from any government or any other person or external company to the UfMS).

**2) Confidentiality**

UfMS members shall respect the value and ownership of the information they receive in carrying out their duties and shall not disclose it without prior appropriate authority, unless there is a legal obligation to do so.

**3) Competency**

UfMS members shall carry out their duties to the best of their knowledge, skills and experience.

**4) Equal treatment, respect and dignity at work**

All forms of discrimination, in particular based on sex, race, colour, language, ethnic or social origin, nationality, ideology, religion, belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, are prohibited, therefore all UfMS members shall be treated themselves and shall treat other colleagues on an equal basis and in the same manner courteously and respectfully while respecting the diversity of the UfMS.



UfMS members shall also be ensured equal opportunities and enjoy respect of their dignity. In view of this, harassment and bullying of any kind, are unacceptable.

**5) Loyalty and professional transparency**

UfMS members shall be loyal to the purposes, values and principles of the UfMS and in fulfilling their official duties and responsibilities, they shall make decisions in the interest of the UfMS. Namely, UfMS members shall communicate with their line managers prior to making any decision likely to compromise the performance of the UfMS.

**6) Accountability**

UfMS members shall be accountable for the proper discharge of their functions and for their decisions and actions. In fulfilling their official duties and responsibilities, they shall make decisions in the interests of the UfMS. Therefore, UfMS members shall submit themselves to scrutiny as required by their position.

### **III. RULES OF CONDUCT**

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**III.1 General Rules**

- a) UfMS members shall comply with the internal rules, procedures and guidelines.
- b) No influences by personal considerations or relations shall be allowed, in any circumstances.
- c) UfMS members shall avoid conflicts of interest. In particular, if in doubt, they shall bring the issue to the attention of their line manager.
- d) UfMS members shall respect the dignity and private lives of their colleagues.
- e) UfMS members shall respect the UfMS property and generally make appropriate use of the facilities made available to them for carrying out their duties.

**III.2 Internal activities**

With regard to internal activities, UfMS members shall perform their work with competency, honesty, diligence, and responsibility. They shall not be involved in any illegal activity and they shall not engage in acts which are discreditable to their duties or to the UfMS.



UfMS members shall respect and contribute to the legitimate and ethical objectives of the UfMS. In the performance of their functions, they shall neither seek nor accept instructions from any government or any other authority outside the UfMS.

In discharging their professional duties, UfMS members shall present and conduct themselves in a professional, proper and courteous manner in all appearances and all forms of communication, whether oral or written.

### **III.3 External activities**

UfMS members are encouraged to engage in teaching or research, particularly if the subject matter is related to topics covered by their work. They may, for example, deliver lectures, write articles or books and pursue similar activities of an academic nature, provided that such activities are in line with the Staff Regulations and this Code, in particular as regards confidentiality.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, UfMS members shall refrain from any act or activity:

- a) Which is incompatible with their functions, or
- b) Which would be morally or materially or financially damaging for the UfMS.

Likewise, UfMS members shall not participate in any activity or relationship that may impair or be presumed to impair their unbiased assessment. Such participation includes activities or relationships that may be in conflict with the interests of the UfMS. In such a case, any conflicting activity, external to UfMS work, shall be communicated to the Director of Legal and Administration Department prior to being undertaken, or prior to the signing of the employment contract with the UfMS, in case such activity pre-existed to the recruitment by the UfMS. Such activity may be allowed if it does not appear to be damaging for the UfMS activities.

### **III.4 Confidentiality and non-disclosure**

UfMS members are bound by the obligation of confidentiality in respect of information received in the course of their duties.

In particular, except where the performance of their functions so requires, they may not divulge to parties outside the UfMS or to colleagues within not involved in the specific activity, information relating to the drawing-up and execution of any of the UfMS' contracts, such as those pertaining to the supply of goods or services.



This obligation continues to be binding on them following the expiration of their service at the UfMS.

### **III.5 Conflict of interest**

UfMS members shall not involve themselves in any situation which presents them with a direct or indirect conflict of interest. If such a conflict does arise between their private interest and their official duties and responsibilities, the conflict shall be disclosed and resolved in favour of the interests of UfMS.

Anyone with information regarding a conflict of interest or anyone discovering a conflict of interest between one's own private interest and official duties and responsibilities shall report this situation to the Oversight Committee (see «antifraud and anticorruption rules» section IV.1)

Conflicts of interest arise where private or personal interests of the UfMS members may influence or appear to influence the impartial and objective performance of their duties.

- UfMS has a zero-tolerance policy towards the acceptance by a member of the Secretariat of any gift or any offer of hospitality (outside normal activities) from Project Promoters. UfMS members will not accept any invitation to sporting or cultural events, offers of holidays or other recreational trips. UfMS labelled Project Promoters and partner organisations/institutions/companies shall not offer any benefit such as free goods or services, employment or sales opportunity to an UfMS member.
- Likewise, UfMS members shall not act in such a manner as to take improper advantage of their official functions and positions, including privileged information obtained from such functions and positions, when seeking employment or appointment after leaving their service with the UfMS.

### **III.6 Non-abuse of powers**

UfMS members shall not exceed the powers conferred upon them in the performance of their duties, especially by taking advantage of colleagues, beneficiaries or other individuals or groups, for financial, political, sexual or other gain.

### **III.7 Internal Relations**

UfMS highlights those key characteristics which create an environment reflecting the highest professional standards. Thus, UfMS always conducts honestly and honourably, and expect UfMS





members to do the same. Thus, UfMS incorporates high ethical principal and standards including but not limited to:

a) *General principles to be adhered to in working with colleagues*

The UfMS strives to promote working relations based on loyalty and mutual trust. Relations between colleagues, irrespective of hierarchical levels, should be characterized by cooperativeness, mutual respect and courtesy. Furthermore, each member of staff should respect the cultural diversity among UfMS members.

b) *Behaviour towards subordinates*

Superiors shall ensure that the tasks assigned to their units are performed properly. They shall also be expected to foster an atmosphere conducive to good working relations and to prevent personal conflicts. Subordinates must be treated and assessed with respect and without any favouritism. Criticism must be expressed openly and honestly, without innuendoes or veiled threats.

c) *Behaviour towards superiors*

UfMS members shall respect the authority of their superiors and carry out faithfully the tasks assigned to them, provided that these are compatible with their duties. They are welcome to offer suggestions and constructive criticism.

d) *Behaviour between colleagues*

The UfMS encourages its members to demonstrate a spirit of cooperation in good faith. Misinformation or the withholding of information, unwarranted refusal to collaborate with colleagues as well as, in general, obstructive behaviour or systematic denigration, are firmly discouraged at all levels.

e) *Dignity at work*

Harassment and bullying of any kind, are unacceptable. The UfMS is obliged to show those in question concern and offer its support.

f) *Psychological harassment*

This takes the form of repeatedly hostile or tactless remarks, acts or behaviour over a fairly long period by one or more UfMS members towards another member. A disagreeable remark or a quarrel in the course of which unpleasant words are voiced in the heat of the moment cannot be said to constitute psychological harassment. On the other hand, when repeated consistently



for weeks or months on end, incessant outbursts of temper, victimization, disagreeable remarks or hurtful innuendoes are clear signs of harassment in the workplace.

*g) Sexual harassment*

This consists of any form of sexual overtures or soliciting that is clearly unwelcome to the person for whom it is intended or any clearly unwelcome remark, gesture or behaviour with sexual undertones.

*h) Sexual blackmail*

This is a particularly serious form of sexual harassment consisting of any situation in which individuals are explicitly or implicitly intimidated or threatened, with a view to obtaining sexual favours, by someone in a position of authority in the workplace or by someone with influence over their recruitment, professional status or career development.

*i) Duty to lend assistance*

Any UfMS member who witnesses behaviour constituting any form of harassment or bullying is duty-bound to offer assistance to the victim and to report the situation. UfMS members who, with full awareness of the facts, have prevented or contributed to preventing victims from coming forward or to discrediting them, shall be deemed to share responsibility for the situation.

*j) Aggravating circumstances*

Where the perpetrators of a form of harassment are the victim's superior and are able to influence that person's recruitment, professional status or career development and their attitude remains unchanged after having been formally required to cease such harassment, they are guilty of grave misconduct liable to result in dismissal.

## IV. DISCIPLINE

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Any failure by UfMS members to comply with his/her obligations under his/her secondment agreement/contract, the Staff Regulations or other relevant administrative issuances, or to observe the standards of conduct required, whether intentionally or through negligence on his/her part, may amount to misconduct and may lead to the institution of a disciplinary process and the imposition of disciplinary measures for misconduct in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Staff Regulations and applicable law.