

NEWS REPORT

Date: 10 February 2010
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Title: New research materials on the problem of victimisation
Country: The Netherlands

Context

Issue at stake: Protection against victimisation
Ground of discrimination: All grounds
Source: Research report published by Equal Treatment Commission
Field: All fields

Legislative provisions: Art. 1 WGBm/v, art. 8(1) and 8a AWGB.

Content

New research materials: In January 2010 a study into the issue of victimisation has been published by the Equal Treatment Commission. It concerns the first *large-scale* research into this topic in the Netherlands. Previous smaller studies in 1985, 1999 and 2006, had shown that victimisation indeed is a problem. Not only does complaining about discrimination often lead to serious negative consequences for the victims, but also many victims do not make official complaints out of fear for victimisation. The new research confirms these findings. The research was done by the University of Twente (in Enschede) and consisted of 4 different empirical studies. The first concerned a quantitative research done under 132 persons who had filed a complaint at the Equal Treatment Commission about discrimination in the area of employment (on all grounds) in the years 2004-2006. The second concerned a qualitative research, done by means of in-depth interviews with 6 victims of victimisation. Thirdly, a questionnaire was sent out to 824 members of an internet panel, all having a paid job. Finally, a questionnaire was filled in by 61 professionals who work in functions where they might have to advise people about whether or not to file a complaint about discrimination. The general outcome out of these studies is that in a considerable number of cases people are victimised as a consequence of (in-officially or officially) complaining about discrimination. Also, a great number of people abstain from making any complaints out of fear for negative consequences. Out of the 824 employees 14% had experiences with discrimination. 60% of them in the end did not succeed in what they hoped to achieve with their complaints. 19% experienced outright negative consequences of making complaints about discrimination, varying from maltreatment to dismissal. Of the persons who had filed a complained at the ETC 90% says to be happy to

have been engaged in this procedure. However, only one third of these persons stated that they had not experienced any kind of victimisation. The qualitative research (in-depth interviews and questionnaires with professionals) revealed that a number of factors determine the seriousness and the prevalence of victimisation. These are most importantly the (long) time it takes to deal with a complaint and taking the route of a formal complaints procedure. The researchers found that serious forms of victimisation most often occurred in case of discrimination on the ground of race, sex or disablement, where it concerned a case of discriminatory treatment at the work floor by colleagues and direct supervisors, and where the claimant was in an isolated position at work.

Internet link source and additional information:

Marieke van Genugten & Jörgen Svensson: *Dubbel de dupe? Een studie naar de benadeling van werknemers die ongelijke behandeling aan de orde stellen.* University of Twente/ CGB, 2010. To be downloaded from: http://cgb.nl/webfm_send/506