
CELLULE RESPECT – 2021 Report

INTRODUCTION

The Cellule Respect (Cellule) has held 23 meetings in 2021. During these meetings, the Cellule has discussed and treated complaints, reflected on its governance, enhanced its visibility, communication and transparency, supported the work of the Task Force Harassment A-Z and the future Respect structure, improved and structured the coaching measures offered to professors and staff as well as the process to become a student coach, and continued strengthening its partnership with the Person of Trust and case management alignment with Legal Affairs, among other tasks.

Cellule Respect members in 2021

Claudia Noth, (since April 2020)
Eric Du Pasquier (since May 2018)
Françoise Chardonnens (since 2019), President
Ines Ariceta (since May 2018), Coordinator
Kathryn Hess (since January 2021)
Luisa Lambertini (since January 2021)

COMPLAINTS (CASES) AND DISCUSSIONS

General observations

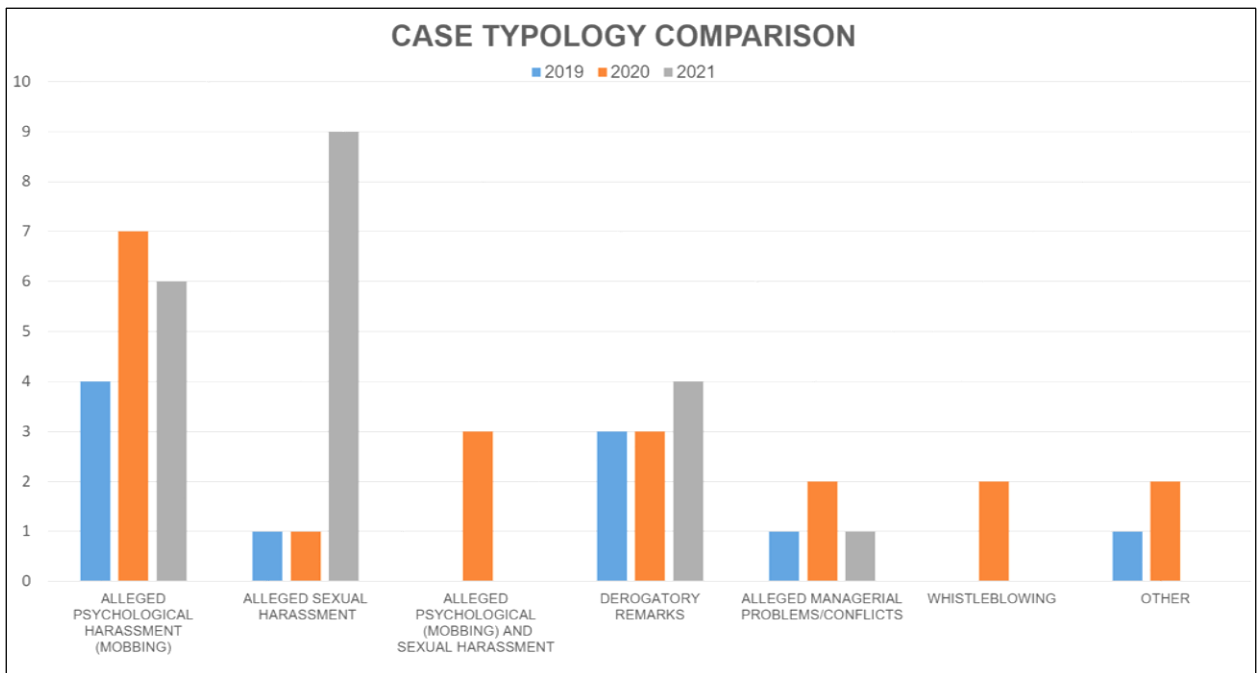
- The Cellule opened 20 cases in 2021 (compared to 20 in 2020, 10 in 2019 and 6 in 2018 during six months of activity) of which, 13 have been managed and closed. In addition, the Cellule closed the 5 cases that remained open from 2020. There are still 3 cases open from 2020 and one case from 2018 in process by Legal Affairs.
- 16 of the 20 cases were received directly in the respect inbox (respect@epfl.ch). The remaining 4 were either sent directly to a Cellule member or the Cellule was in copy of the email.
- 16 cases were directly received from the complainant, and 4 cases were received from a Support Network member or a Line Manager on behalf of the complainant. The typology of these 4 cases is alleged sexual harassment. As suggested by the Cellule, in 2 of the 4 cases, complainants agreed to submit their complaint directly to the Cellule. In 1 case the complainant followed up with the Cellule on their own initiative and in 1 case, the Cellule never heard directly from the complainant.
- There is an increase of complaints from students, specifically, alleged sexual harassment cases from female students.
- There is a decrease in the use of social media as a harassment tool. However, social media is predominantly used for alleged sexual harassment cases.
- The Cellule has been able to treat or refer all cases to internal instances and has not requested the opening of any administrative investigation in 2021.
- The Cellule has reopened 2 CASES that had been treated and closed in the past.
- The Cellule has opened 13 DISCUSSIONS in 2021 compared to 7 in 2020. DISCUSSION is a typology created in 2019 to reflect and track additional situations brought up to the Cellule that are not formal complaints.
- 1 DISCUSSION has turned into a formal complaint and 10 of the 13 DISCUSSIONS have been treated and closed in 2021.

- The Cellule starts counting the case treatment length upon receipt of all the necessary information.
- After the Cellule has referred a case to an internal instance, the Cellule closes the case when the internal instance has treated the complaint and has circled back with the Cellule.
- This report reflects the status of cases as of December 31, 2021.

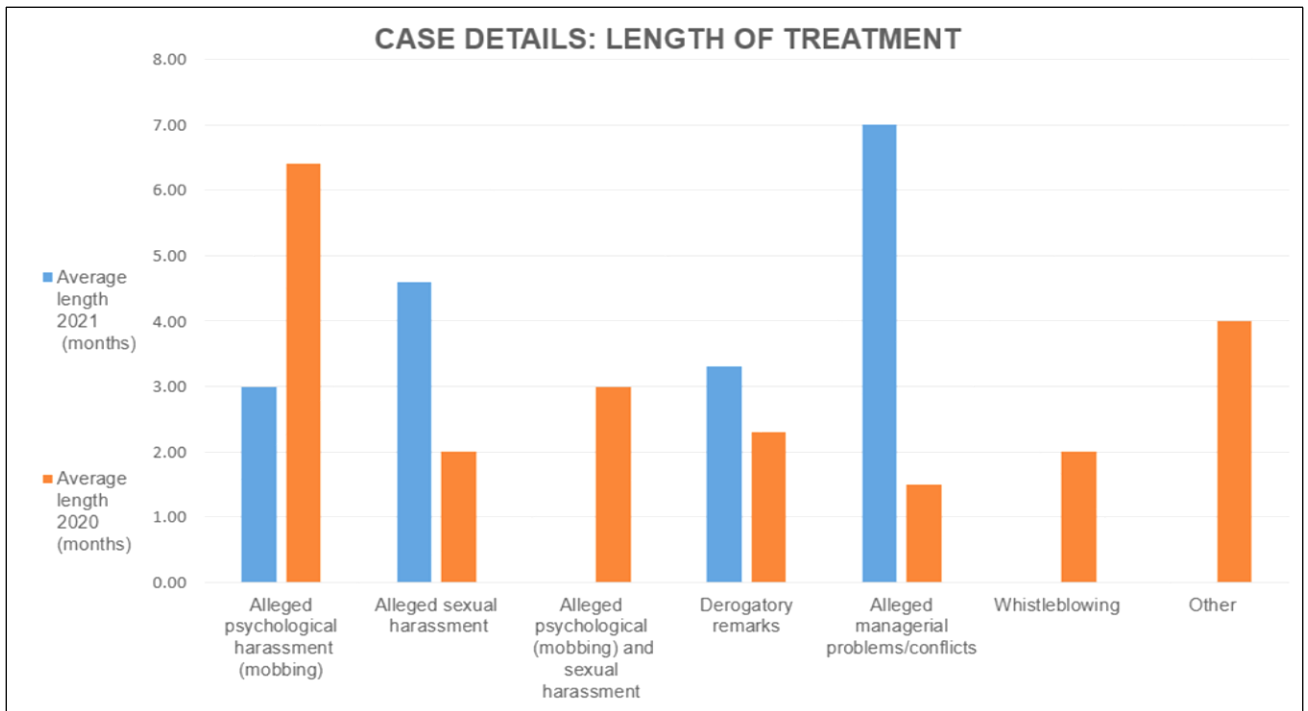
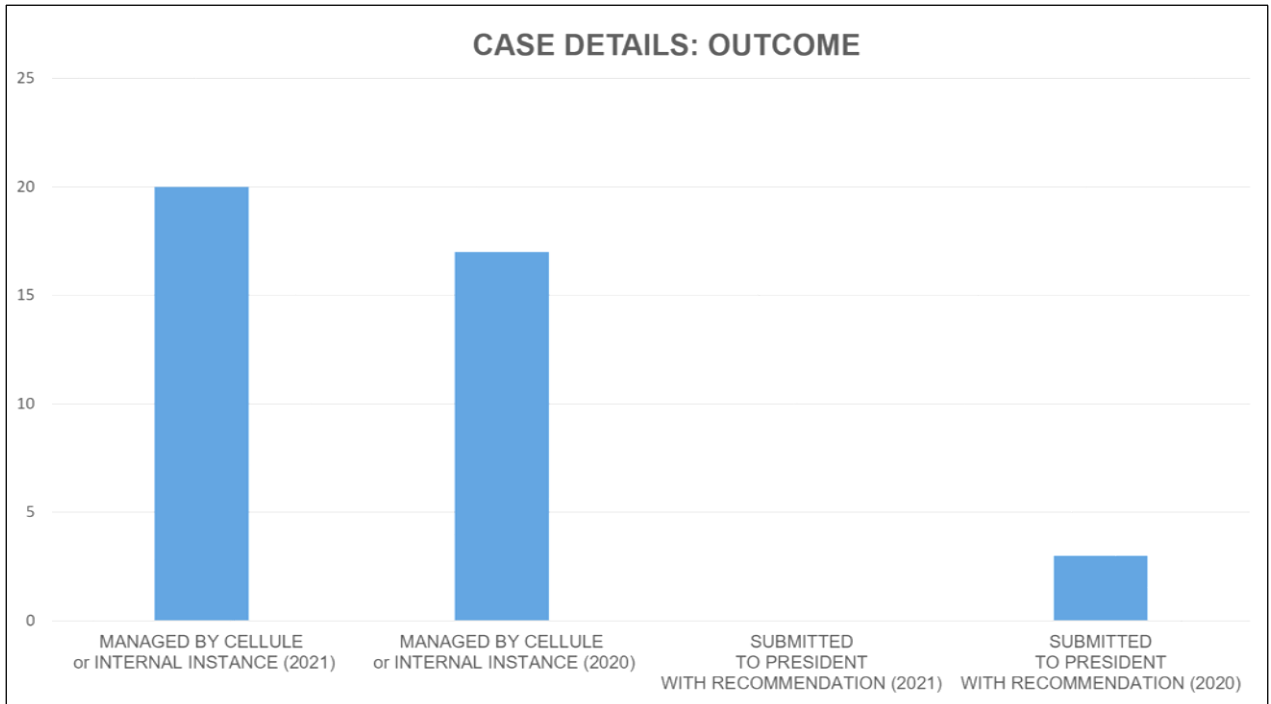
Case typology and totals for 2021

- 9 cases of alleged sexual harassment
- 6 cases of alleged psychological harassment (mobbing)
- 4 cases of derogatory remarks
- 1 case of alleged managerial problems/conflicts
- 0 cases under “other”
- 0 cases of alleged psychological (mobbing) and sexual harassment

Case typology comparison in 2021, 2020 and 2019



Overview of case details in 2021



GOVERNANCE

- The Cellule successfully onboarded two new members in 2021. The Cellule’s governance was reviewed and validated again after their onboarding.
- The Cellule has continued to meet twice a month with specific focus assigned to each meeting and has adapted the meeting schedule to respond to new members’ needs.

- The Cellule discussed the rotating 6-month presidency system, as it is too short. Current Cellule President has been in the role since January 2020. The Cellule planned to appoint a new President in the fall of 2021 and decided to wait in view of the Task-Force Harassment A-Z's work.
- The Cellule has dedicated ample time to the discussion of the future Respect structure, including the Respect Compliance Officer (RCO) and its committee, which will replace the Cellule Respect. Cellule's input has been directly shared with the Vice-President for Responsible Transformation (VPT) and with the Task-Force Harassment A-Z.
- The Cellule has continued to discuss the importance of having professors (1-2) in the Cellule and in the future RCO structure. Ideal candidate(s) would be leaders of a large experimental laboratory and respected both at a human and professional level.

COMMUNICATION

- The Cellule has updated & improved the “Respect” website in partnership with the VPT. The “ownership” of this website has been transferred to the VPT.
- The Cellule has continued to standardize its communication and proactivity with all parties involved in complaints.

LEARNINGS FROM 2021

- **Case management**
 - The EPFL community is increasingly aware that Respect is a central value of our school. The work of the Task-Force Harassment A-Z's has provided increased visibility to the Cellule and the respect@epfl.ch mailbox, managed by the Cellule. This has resulted in an increase of DISCUSSIONS (typology mentioned above) as community members have submitted their questions, suggestions and requests for advice related to issues of respect. This visibility has also led to increased complaints from students. These elements imply:
 - The Cellule's main role (i.e. treat formal complaints) needs further clarification.
 - The need to define, communicate and implement a support structure, initiative led by the Task-Force Harassment A-Z.
 - The importance to have a system to file formal complaints for students.
 - In a few cases, coaching was proposed as an intervention measure. The Cellule has reviewed the coaching process to enhance its positive and sustained impact.
 - There has been an increase in the number of alleged sexual harassment cases (8 in 2021 compared to 1 in 2020). These complaints were originally either submitted by a person on behalf of the alleged victim, submitted to the Director of Security, Safety and Facilities Operations (also a Cellule member) or anonymously. Most of these complainants are female students or female PhD students. These cases take a long time. Specific training on this topic to increase awareness in our efforts to enhance EPFL's respect culture will be important.
 - A case demonstrated the need to review and improve the student coach, super coach and hyper coach structures. This was done in partnership between the Cellule and AGEPoly. The key elements are:
 - Creation of coaching charters that outline roles, responsibilities and expected behaviors from students.
 - Requirement of student coaches to sign the coaching charters.
 - There continues to be a lack of trust in the Cellule's work.
 - The Cellule closes a case when the Cellule has directly responded to the complainant or when the case has been internally handled by the EPFL service to which the Cellule has transferred it. The Cellule does not have a system to measure

if the handling of the case or response/support offered to complainants is acceptable or helpful. A feedback system to measure this could lead to improved satisfaction, trust and an opportunity to learn.

- Administrative investigations take very long and have a negative impact on everyone. It is important to support all people involved in an administrative investigation. In addition, further reflection on how to best “welcome” people once the investigations are closed is important. Communication and support for all parties involved seem of essence.
- The Cellule has learned that EPFL student Associations lack a formal process to exclude members and might not be aware of their responsibilities and the consequences for their decisions.
- Internally referred cases require proactivity with case follow up to ensure a timely handling and closure of situations.
- The onboarding and stepping down of members to increase efficiency and ensure the confidentiality of cases and information shared continues to be important.
- **Governance**
 - The 6-month rotating Presidency is too short and not realistic. The validated dedicated position of RCO would assume this responsibility.
- **Communication**
 - Careful attention needs to be placed in the reporting of the Cellule’s work to avoid sexist stereotypes or other misinterpretation(s) (e.g., the respect initiative only concerns students and not staff, cases in Central Services are not taken seriously).

IMPORTANT FOLLOW-UPS FROM CELLULE’S 2020 REPORT

- Reflect and create a case management system that is sustainable for the Cellule’s long-term work and aligned with Legal Affairs for an enhanced case follow-up.
 - The Cellule and Legal Affairs have aligned their case management and follow-up system in 2021.
- Reevaluate the 6-month rotating Presidency:
 - The 6-month rotating Presidency is too short and not realistic. The first two Presidents have held their role for a minimum of 1 year. The current President holds her role since January 2020. The Cellule decided to keep its current President due to the Harassment A-Z Task-Force’s work and the upcoming new Respect structure at EPFL.
- Continue and improve communication about the Cellule Respect’s work and other existing resources for the EPFL community in partnership with the VPT’s Task Force Harassment A-Z.
 - The Cellule wrote an article in the Open Campus newsletter with the aim of increasing its visibility and improving transparency. The Cellule received positive as well as constructive feedback on this initiative.
 - Several members of the Cellule are part of the VPT’s Task Force Harassment A-Z and specific Work Groups.
- Simplify and clarify the complaint management system and de-escalation procedures within the VPT’s Task Force Harassment A-Z.
 - Several members of the Cellule have participated in the Work Group *Gestion des plaintes et processus de désescalade* of the Task-Force Harassment A-Z with the aim of improving the communication and transparency of the administrative investigations.

NEXT STEPS/FOLLOW-UP WORK

- Develop and send a communication to EPFL student Associations to increase their awareness on their responsibilities in regards to excluding members.
- Continue to increase awareness and trust in the Cellule's work and the future respect structure:
 - The Cellule will publish its annual report online (respecting confidentiality).
 - The Cellule will write an article in the Open Campus newsletter detailing the composition of the Cellule and a summary of the report.
- Develop a system to detect teams that have difficulties:
 - The Cellule suggests performing climate surveys in laboratories following a rotational format (1/3 of the laboratories every year).