

Institute of Vertebrate Biology of the CAS, v. v. i.
Director's Instruction No. 4/2024
Directive: Ombudsman
Valid from: 1st February 2024
For all employees

I. Introductory Provisions

1. This Directive establishes rules for the function of the Ombudsman to prevent conflicts in interpersonal relations, improve the culture of conduct in the workplace, including ethical scientific principles, and enhance employee satisfaction and safety. In particular, the Ombudsman is responsible for addressing the following issues:
 - equal access,
 - discrimination,
 - sexual harassment,
 - bullying,
 - barriers to labour relations,
 - good research practice.

II. Appointment

1. The Ombudsman is appointed by the Director of the IVB for a term of five years, and any full-time IVB staff member may hold this position but should be familiar with the Institute's environment and scientific background, including institutional procedures.
2. Concerning gender equality, the Director shall fill the position of Ombudsman with one woman and one man per term of office.
3. The Ombudsman is independent of the management of the Institute, is impartial and maintains confidentiality.
4. Any employee of the Office of the Ombudsman may submit a petition for the removal of the Ombudsman to the Director.

III. Principles of action

1. The Ombudsman is entitled to conduct independent investigations initiated by any member of staff and to draw attention to his/her initiative to:
 - illegal (contrary to the law)

- improper conduct (conduct that does not contradict the law but is otherwise defective or improper and therefore does not comply with the principles of democratic legal proceedings and the conduct of the IVB),
 - inaction by the IVB authorities
 - violates the principles of the Code of Ethics of the IVB.
2. The Ombudsman may seek the opinion of anyone affected by the complaint or incident. If necessary, they may also consult with a lawyer from the CAS. They may work independently or in tandem when dealing with individual cases. They may consult with each other and may represent each other in resolving cases.
 3. If misconduct is found, the Ombudsman may require the authorities concerned to take corrective action or propose recommendations leading to such action. If no remedy is forthcoming, then he/she requests it from the superior authority.
 4. The following principles guide the Ombudsman's work:
 - defends the legitimate interests of employees and proposes measures to employers to safeguard and protect them,
 - takes scrupulous care to maintain the confidentiality of information entrusted to it to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and to preserve the dignity of employees,
 - helps to strengthen trust between employees and the employer.
 5. The ombudsman can be contacted in person, by email or anonymously on the *oznamto.cz* portal (under the Submissions to the Ombudsman tab). If the whistleblower's anonymity prevents the resolution of the matter, the ombudsman will fulfill his/her duty proportionately to this fact.
 6. The ombudsman procedure aims to reach an agreement or resolve the conflict as quickly as possible. The length of the procedure depends on the supporting documents provided and the willingness of the parties to cooperate. There is therefore no maximum time limit for the procedure.
 7. The Ombudsman cannot replace the work of constitutional bodies and cannot overrule or change their decisions.
 8. If the matter is in litigation or if it is foreseeable that a party may wish to litigate the matter, the Ombudsman will not be involved; if the Ombudsman is litigating and one of the parties calls a lawyer, the proceedings will be discontinued.