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NEWS REPORT

Country:	The Netherlands
Title:	Minister of Social Affairs and Employment announces the establishment of a team to combat mobbing, harassment and discrimination
Date:	6 October 2016
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<u>Context</u>	
Issue at stake:	Announcement of government measures against unwanted conduct at work
Ground of discrimination:	All grounds
Source:	Policy development
Field:	Employment
Applicable law:	Article 3(2) Working Conditions Act

Content

Policy development:

Through a letter to Parliament on 25 September 2016, the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment announced the introduction of new measures against mobbing and other unwanted conduct at work. The Minister will establish a special team to support companies in the approach to these types of conduct. The team will provide training to management, give information and bring good practices to the attention of employers and employees. The Minister will subsidize the project with EUR 500 000. The team will become operational in 2017.

In 2016, the Labour Inspectorate will carry out approximately 300 inspections in the area of unwanted conduct, aggression, work stress and discrimination. The experience gained from these inspections will be used to advise other companies. In addition, the Minister will investigate whether it is possible to require employers that take insufficient measures to improve their working climate to attend a course in this respect. Furthermore, research will be done to find out if every employee that is confronted with mobbing or other unwanted conduct has access to a basic confidant or another expert.

These measures are a follow-up to the campaigns that have been waged in the previous years with the aim of raising awareness about mobbing, harassment and discrimination. A new campaign starts in October 2016. In addition, the Minister will organise meetings with various stakeholders in the field, such as managers, social partners, basic confidants, company doctors and company social workers.

Key points of analysis: There have been various campaigns against unwanted conduct at work in recent years. The new measures that have been announced appear to be

somewhat more concrete than before. The Labour Inspectorate is actually carrying out inspections into the policy of employers with respect to unwanted conduct at work and further measures might follow, such as an obligatory course for obstinate employers. However, 300 inspections is not much, when taking into account that there are more than 400 000 companies in the Netherlands. The Government therefore focuses strongly on raising awareness. This appears to help in so far as unwanted conduct at work has become a familiar theme, inter alia in the media. However, the number of workers that report that they have been bullied at work has not significantly declined. In 2015, a 7,8 % of workers in the Netherlands had been occasionally mobbed, whereas structural mobbing was faced by 1,8 % of the workers. The figures were reported by the Central Bureau for Statistics (CBS).

Internet link source:

<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2016/09/26/minister-asscher-team-tegen-pest-en-op-de-werkvloer>, accessed 3 October 2016.