



COMPLAINT AND FEEDBACK MECHANISM

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1. Objective

In fulfilling its mission, Caritas Czech Republic (hereafter CCR) strives to uphold its values and high standards of professional and personal conduct. We recognise that sometimes our values and requirements of conduct may not be upheld to the standard expected. If this is the case, we want to be informed. We welcome the information to try and put things right and improve our quality and effectiveness.

This Mechanism aims to provide guidance and steps on handling feedback and complaints for the whole of CCR, including country offices and exclusive partners and Hotel and Training Centre Marianum in Prague.

This document is an adapted version of the Mechanism developed by Caritas Internationalis Accountability Sector Working Group and published by Caritas Internationalis to Caritas organizations in February 2019.

2. Description

2.1 Scope

The Complaint and Feedback Mechanism addresses the behaviour and practices that concern CCR Representatives. CCR Representatives, for the purposes of this policy, include staff (board of directors, paid employees, interns and volunteers), as well as other third parties (such as partners, contractors and guests) and any other person asked or authorised to carry out work for, or represent, CCR.

2.2 Commitments

2.2.1. Accountability

We welcome and accept all complaints, take them seriously and manage them in a timely, fair and appropriate manner.

We ensure our complaints handling process is documented and in place and covers complaints about

our work, sexual exploitation and abuse, and other abuses of power.

We communicate how our mechanism can be accessed and the scope of issues it can address. We resolve complaints as far as possible, seeking to provide restitution for any loss or damage that cannot be replaced or repaired.

We report complaints on a yearly basis to the CCR Board of Directors and, if requested, to relevant regulatory bodies and donors. In these occasions, no personal information about the cases will be shared. Only general statistics about the type of complaint, the number of cases, consequences and decisions adopted, and country programs of occurrence will be shared. By proceeding this way, the confidentiality of all complaints is ensured.

We refer any complaints that do not fall within the scope of our organisation to a relevant party in a manner consistent with good practice. For example, any complaint that indicates a possible criminal offence has been committed, refers to the statutory authorities.

All complaints will be managed confidentially and sensitively by a trained Complaints Handling Officer (CHO).

2.2.2. Transparency & Accessibility

We provide information about our organisation, the principles we adhere to, how we expect our representatives to behave, the programmes we implement and what we intend to deliver.

We ensure the people and communities we work with are specifically aware of the expected behaviour of our representatives, including organisational commitments made in preventing sexual exploitation and abuse.

We communicate in languages, formats and media that are easily understood, respectful and culturally appropriate for the general public and different members of the communities we work with, especially vulnerable and marginalised groups.

We ensure policies for information-sharing are in place and promote a culture of open communication.

2.2.3. Confidentiality & Safety

We manage complaints in a manner that prioritizes the safety of the person raising the complaint and those affected at all stages.

We ensure information related to the complaint is only shared on a need-to-know basis among those directly handling or overseeing the complaint.

Generally, we do not share the names or personal details of those individuals involved. If it is necessary to disclose information to 3rd parties this is decided on a case-by-case basis and, as far as possible, with the agreement of the person who has raised the complaint, except in cases of criminal activity. When information about the complaint is reported higher up, the information will be anonymized as appropriate to preserve confidentiality.

It is helpful if names and contact details are provided as this allows those responding to be in contact if additional information is needed, and to keep individuals updated where appropriate. It can also help us ensure that individuals do not experience any negative consequences for raising a complaint in good faith. However, we recognise there may be some circumstances where individuals have good reasons for anonymity (for example fear of retaliation). If a complaint is raised anonymously, it is especially important that detailed information is provided as it may not be possible to pursue cases that lack enough information. It may not be possible to provide updates for anonymous complaints.

2.3 Quality & Learning

We review and adapt or revise practices considering analysis of complaints received. We pay particular attention to inclusivity in terms of the gender, age, and diversity of those raising complaints. We use analysis of anonymized complaints information as part of continuous improvement processes.

3. Categorization of Feedback/Complaints

Sensitivity levels are categorized below:

Non-sensitive	Question
	Positive feedback
	Suggestion
	Non-relevant complaint
Sensitive	Allegation of fraud, corruption, bribery
	Allegation of sexual abuse or exploitation
	Allegation of conflict of interests
	Violation of Code of Ethics or Conduct or other serious misconduct

Feedback can be both positive and negative and has scope for improvement.

Complaint is negative and is an expression of something that is unacceptable/unsatisfactory.

Non-sensitive feedback or complaints could be related to unsatisfactory quality and/or quantity of services or assistance, slow implementation of activities, changes of timing and/or locations of distribution of assistance or other project-related concerns. They usually require no further investigation.

Sensitive feedback and complaints relate to issues of corruption, exploitation, abuse, misconduct, negligence or any other abusive or inappropriate behaviour by staff, volunteers, or affiliates. They will be treated urgently and confidentially by Complaint Handling Officer and the senior staff within the organisation in the shortest time possible and archived in a Complaints Database. Sensitive complaints require management follow-up and possible investigation, including risk assessment based on a level of possible damage.

4. The procedure

There are 4 types of raising a feedback or complaint based on 4 types of CCR work and running practise.

4.1 Caritas Czech Republic Secretariat

Non-sensitive feedback or complaints can be submitted to the CCR secretariat by phone +420 296 243 330 or email sekretariat@charita.cz. These feedback or complaints will be handled by the secretariat team of CCR or forwarded to the relevant CCR staff/team, the HQ Complaint Handling Officer.

A sensitive feedback or complaint can be submitted only in written form either on emails complaints@caritas.cz or stiznosti@charita.cz, or via post addressed to Vladislavova 12, Praha 1, 110

00. Those who will submit the complaint via phone will be asked to submit the complaint in written form. The complaint will be handled by the HQ Complaint Handling Officer and the senior staff.

If sensitive feedback or complaint is received via another channel, it will be immediately resent to the Complaints Handling Officer and deleted from that channel. Complaints received at HQ from beneficiaries at the country offices will be delegated to the HQ Complaint Handling Officer.

If the feedback or complaint is not relevant to CCR work or activities, the secretariat team will probe those raising feedback or complaints and eventually inform him/her that no measures can be taken.

4.2 Training Center and Hotel Marianeum

A non-sensitive feedback or complaint can be submitted by phone +420 221 592 541, on email info@mariauneum.cz or by web form to be found at <https://www.marianeum.cz/kontakty-charita/napiste-nam/>. These feedback or complaints will be handled by Operations Manager.

A sensitive feedback or complaint can be submitted only in written form either on emails complaints@caritas.cz or stiznosti@charita.cz, or via post addressed to Vladislavova 12, Praha 1, 110 00. Those who will submit the complaint via phone will be asked to submit the complaint in written form. The complaint will be handled by HQ Complaint Handling Officer.

If a sensitive feedback or complaint is received via another channel, it will be immediately resent to HQ Complaint Handling Officer and deleted from that channel.

4.3 Czech Caritas Network

A complaint can also be raised about a personnel or activities of an institution within the Czech Caritas network and within archdiocesan and diocesan Caritas and other CCR member organisations.

CCR will encourage those submitting a complaint about Caritas within Czech Caritas network to contact directly the respective archdiocesan, diocesan Caritas and other CCR member organisation.

As CCR has no executive power over its member organisations, the secretariat team or HQ Complaint Handling Officer will find respective contacts and will ask the complainant to resend the feedback or complaint to a respective arch/diocesan Caritas or member organisation which is responsible for setting up its own complaint's mechanism. CCR informs the individual or group raising the complaint about this measure.

4.3.1 Exceptions

If the HQ Complaint Handling Officer deliberates the situation as potentially harmful for the whole Caritas network (e.g., risk of reputational damage), the Secretary General and the Director will be informed about the complaint and manage the situation in cooperation with the Member Organisations of CCR and/or with the respective Archbishoprics or Bishoprics and/or with the Czech Bishops' Conference.

If the complaint concerns the Director or the President of a CCR Member Organisation, the CCR Secretary General and the CCR Director will be informed about the complaint and manage the situation in cooperation with the Archbishoprics or Bishoprics and/or with the Czech Bishops' Conference.

4.4 CCR country offices and exclusive partners

CCR country offices and exclusive partners have set up their own feedback and complaint procedures which are in line with this Mechanism. These procedures have been assessed by CCR and can be found in the Annexes below.

4.5 Other Sources of Complaints

CCR acknowledges that complaints, including sensitive complaints, may be raised in unexpected ways

(such as complaints raised verbally to CCR staff or contractors in the field). For this reason, all CCR staff should be prepared to deal with complaints raised by beneficiaries. The staff member must encourage the complainant to submit a written complaint to the sources above.

4.6 Appealing to Complaint Decisions

Individuals or groups who have raised a complaint and who are unsatisfied with CCR's response have the right to appeal. The Secretary General will review the complaint records before responding fully.

To take the issue outside the organisation individuals can contact the Czech Bishop Conference at sekretariat@cirkev.cz or the respective Archbishopric or Bishopric.

5. Outcomes

Feedback and the progress of any concerns raised will be given as soon as possible. Some situations may be resolved promptly, whilst others may take longer because they require formal investigation or hearings. If the individual is not satisfied with the response they have received, they can have a right to appeal.

Once the investigation is complete, appropriate action will be taken to resolve the issue. This may involve taking disciplinary action if a clear case of malpractice can be proved and reporting to the police if a criminal offence such as fraud or theft has been committed. During the investigation, investigators should record all actions in the Case Management Tool, which is an appendix to this document.

The Case Management Tool should be shown only to people working on the case who have clearance and need the information and should be stored privately.

6. Reporting to Board of Directors

Complaints Handling Officers from Country Offices (CO) must report every 6 months to HQ (to their respective Regional Manager, the Head of HDD Department and the CCR Complaint Handling Officer) by sending a copy of the Complaints Database. Sensitive complaints with medium or high damage level will be reported immediately to Regional Manager and Head of HDD. The reports are **due on February**

15th and August 15th each year. If there are no relevant complaints to be sent, the Complaints Handling Officer should still report the lack of complaints on these dates.

The HQ Complaint Handling Officer must report to the Secretary General and the Board of Directors once a year via the Activity Report.

The aim of these reports is to keep the management informed and to look for possible patterns and therefore reveal any deep systematic malpractice and possible improvement measures.

This guide will be continually improved and adapted, based on our future experiences in implementing complaint mechanisms and enriched with lessons learnt and good practices from within our network.

7. List of Abbreviations

CCR	Caritas Czech Republic
HQ	Headquarters

8. List of Annexes

Annex 1	Reporting Form for Country Office
Annex 2	Case Management Tool

9. List of Relevant Documents

- Complaint and Feedback Mechanism in Zambia
- Complaint and Feedback Mechanism in Iraq
- Complaint and Feedback Mechanism in Mongolia
- Complaint and Feedback Mechanism in Moldova
- Complaint and Feedback Mechanism in Georgia
- Complaint and Feedback Mechanism in Ukraine
- Complaint and Feedback Mechanism in Syria/Türkiye