

# AGREEMENT ON THE PREVENTION OF WORK-RELATED STRESS

## EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER



**GP&R**  
Group Human Resources

JANUARY 10, 2017



**BNP PARIBAS**

The bank  
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world



# AGREEMENT ON THE PREVENTION OF WORK-RELATED STRESS

## EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER

### It is hereby agreed, by and between:

**Yves MARTRENCAR**, Head of Group Human Resources, on behalf of the **BNP Paribas Executive Committee**,

**on the one hand,**

### And the European Federations:

- **Jean-Marc GUEGUEN**, on behalf of the European Federation of Credit Establishment Managerial Staff (FECEC)
- **Angelo DI CRISTO**, on behalf of the European Trade Union Federation for Services and Communication (UNI Europa)

### The members of the European Works Council:

- **Gabriel DI LETIZIA**, BNP Paribas European Works Council Secretary
- **Luc BROOS**, BNP Paribas European Works Council Assistant Secretary
- **Silvia ROMANO**, BNP Paribas European Works Council Assistant Secretary,

**on the other hand,**

### That:

# FOREWORD

“ BNP Paribas attaches great importance to action conducted in the field of health and safety in the workplace, and considers stress assessment and prevention to be key components in this effort, which is part of the broader theme of preventing psycho-social risks.

Consistent with the 8 October 2004 European Framework Agreement on Work-Related Stress and agreements on the same topic in effect in the Group across Europe, the parties to the agreement herein emphasise that tackling stress at work – an issue that can be of relevance in any work environment, to any employee and to any type of company within the Group, regardless of size or activity – contributes to greater efficiency and improved occupational health and safety, with consequent economic and social benefits for all players involved.

It should be noted that the agreement herein deals only with work-related stress. Violence in the workplace and harassment, while potential work-related stress factors, call for specific responses, in particular taking into account the legislative framework in place in each country.

As pertains to BNP Paribas' context at the European level, it is in a process of profound change, with the banking business lying at the heart of major upheavals that have been gaining pace over the past few years.

In particular, banks are required to cope with an intensification in regulatory restrictions, with customer behaviour changes due to such factors as digitisation and with heightened competition, all within an uncertain and challenging economic environment, especially in Europe.

This necessary adaptation process, itself a factor of continual change, must proceed from an effort to prevent work-related stress at the European level, the agreement herein describing the actions to be implemented and/or strengthened.

This agreement shall apply to all countries within the scope of the Group's European Works Council and forms a shared foundation on stress prevention in the workplace. Working in conjunction, should the situation so require, with the Secretary and Deputy Secretaries of the European Works Council, the agreement herein may be supplemented by each company in the scope of the Group's European Works Council, in particular for the purpose of addressing features specific to the relevant company, taking into account the procedures already in place and the legislation specific to each country, through further-developed measures, provided that it does not prevail over any part of the agreement herein in a less favourable sense. ”

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# 1 | DESCRIPTION OF WORK-RELATED STRESS AND FACTORS IN WORK-RELATED STRESS

## Article 1: Description of Work-Related Stress

Although work-related stress is a complex phenomenon, the definitions provided by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, as well as that resulting from the 8 October 2004 European Framework Agreement, enabled a shared approach to work-related stress.

According to the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, *"People experience stress when there is an imbalance between the perceived demands made of them and the perception of resources they have available to cope with those demands. Although the process of appraising those requirements and resources is psychological in nature, the effects of stress are not only felt psychologically. Stress also affects the physical health well-being and productivity of the person subject to it"*.

The 8 October 2004 European Framework Agreement describes work-related stress as *"a state, which is accompanied by physical, psychological or social complaints or dysfunctions and which results from individuals feeling unable to bridge a gap with the requirements or expectations placed on them. The individual is well adapted to cope with short-term exposure to pressure, which can be considered as positive, but has greater difficulty in coping with prolonged exposure to intensive pressure. Moreover, different individuals can react differently to similar situations and the same individual can react differently to similar situations at different times in life. Stress is not a disease, but prolonged exposure to stress may reduce effectiveness at work and may cause ill health"* and furthermore specifies that *"not every manifestation of stress in the workplace should be considered stress due to work"*.

## Article 2: Factors in Work-Related Stress

Stress is a complex phenomenon, but identification of stress-related problems should draw upon analysis of factors such as:

### **Work organisation and processes, including:**

- working time arrangements,
- alignment between work, skills of the employees and/or resources provided to them,
- degree of autonomy left to employees,
- implementation of training initiatives enabling employees to better understand the changes to which their positions or work environment are subject,
- management styles,
- The attention paid by the manager to working hours, fostering work-life balance.

### **Working conditions and work environment, including:**

- exposure to an aggressive or abusive environment,
- exposure to noise, heat or cold,
- exposure to overly-confined spaces that may result in a drop in efficiency.

### **Communication regarding the position held, including:**

- clarity about the position's main responsibilities and professional aims established,
- communication on the organisational changes likely to impact the position in the short or medium term, as early as possible,
- limitation of periods of uncertainty regarding employment outlook and changes to come.

### **Interpersonal factors in the workplace, including:**

- emotional and social pressure,
- feeling unable to cope with a given situation,
- perceived lack of support.

It should be noted that the aforementioned list is not comprehensive.

## 2 | ASSESSING WORK-RELATED STRESS

### Article 1: Work-Related Stress Assessment Mechanisms

The ability to identify and measure stress in the workplace must be developed by implementing specific assessment mechanisms, so as to build up a reference base from which perceived stress in the workplace can be tracked and so as to reach diagnostic conclusions that are shared by all parties involved, including management, occupational medicine and workers' representatives.

These assessment mechanisms must protect confidentiality in data collection and archiving, all the while making it possible to produce analyses of populations experiencing situations of extended or repeated stress, and pinpoint, where applicable, the work-related stress factors responsible (job typologies, profiles, organisational components, etc.).

In order to offer the best guarantees of confidentiality, the signatories to the present agreement recommend that the stress assessment management system be run by the company's Occupational Health Service.

The signatories request that mechanisms as described above be set up whenever possible to assess stress and extended or repeated stress – or maintained, if applicable – in each BNP Paribas Group country or company in Europe, tailored to the context and compliant with the local legislation.

They furthermore agree that reporting on the analyses conducted should be delivered to both management and the workers' representatives so as to enable discussion on the conclusions reached and facilitate the development of shared action plans.

### Article 2: Global People Survey (Internal Survey)

As a supplement to the stress assessment mechanisms, the Global People Survey (GPS) has, since 2013, made it possible to establish an index on the topic of stress prevention, using specific questions.

Within the framework of this agreement, the signatories agree that a reference index connected with stress prevention should be maintained in the GPS, based on ad hoc questions, and that the results of the metric, as well as trends therein, be made the focus of discussion and shared analysis by members of management and workers' representatives in each country and company within the scope of the Group's European Works Council, the moment reporting sessions are held.



# 3 | PREVENTING WORK-RELATED STRESS FACTORS

## Article 1: Raising Awareness about Stress and Providing Information

General information about preventing stress in the workplace must be provided to all Group employees and companies in all countries within the scope of the Group's European Works Council. Information is one of the leading factors for prevention, in that it makes it possible to increase awareness and understanding of work-related stress by management, employees and workers' representatives.

In light of this, and as a supplement to information already provided where applicable, the signatories agree that the agreement herein shall be published on the intranet of each company or office of BNP Paribas Group operating in a country within the scope of the Group's European Works Council, in the national language and in English.

Furthermore, communication about stress level measurements provided by management to workers' representatives and employees, through mechanisms set up specifically for this purpose, and through the GPS benchmark metric, also contribute to preventing stress.

The signatories once again assert their attachment to having employees and workers' representatives informed of GPS results, in each country within the scope of the Group's European Works Council, with a special focus on the sections regarding stress prevention, whenever possible.

## Article 2: Stress Management Training

Stress management training, whether organised as a distinct course or as part of management training, can also help prevent work-related stress.

The signatories agree that a section on stress prevention and management will be systematically incorporated into all basic training for managers so as to raise awareness in management on the potential negative impacts of stress and help develop a managerial attitude that is conducive to lowering potential risk of extended or repeated stress, for all countries within the scope of the Group's European Works Council.

## Article 3: Managing Organisational Change

Organisational transformation or major changes to organisations can, due to the shifts they entail, be a source of concern for the employees affected and thus potentially foster the emergence of a work-related stress situation.

In order to best facilitate management of such change, the company undertakes, further to applicable law, to duly inform about the issues at stake and conditions involved in projects entailing major organisational change. In particular, it will inform about the foreseeable impacts for employees affected by the projects (change in reporting lines, modifications to job

profiles, working hours, place of work, etc.) and on the accompanying measures implemented for employees impacted by the projects after taking into account the impacts on working conditions and risk prevention.

#### **Article 4: The Use of New Information and Communications Technologies (ICT)**

New Information and Communications Technologies (electronic mail, laptop computers, mobile telephones, smartphones, etc.) are an integral part of the working environment and are essential to the smooth flow of the company's operations. Nonetheless, it is important that the usage thereof does not become a factor for stress.

Within the framework of this agreement, the signatories emphasise the need to ensure that the use of ICTs does not become a factor in employee isolation during work, and instead, that they secure a continued high-quality, respectful relationship, both in the content and form of communication, and that they align with the work-life balances of their users and the right to privacy. ICTs are to be used during usual working hours, without infringing on weekly rest periods.

Moreover, the signatories reaffirm that actions to raise awareness of the proper use of ICTs among managers and users may be deployed.

#### **Article 5: Workload and Support with Work Duties**

Workload and work organisation, along with work-life balance, should be discussed regularly between managers and employees, in particular but not only at the time of the professional annual appraisals.

Meetings must be planned during the reference hours as customary to the country or business sector, except in the event of an emergency or in connection with specific activities.

Management styles based on the systematic use of pressure may not be used as a form of team management.

The targets set during professional annual appraisals must be clear, attainable and suited to the type of activity and responsibility of the position involved, time-bound and measurable.

Any training necessary in order for employees to continue to hold job duties and take up responsibilities emerging as a result of changes in job scope, where applicable, must be systematically organised.

Supplementary support measures, where necessary, are decided in accordance with the manager and the employee.

The signatories wish to emphasise, within the framework of this agreement, the importance of managers' compliance with the above terms.

## 4 | ADDRESSING WORK-RELATED STRESS

### Article 1: Overall Action to Prevent or Remedy Stress

Companies have a legal obligation to protect the occupational safety and health of their employees; this duty also applies to problems of work-related stress insofar as they entail a risk to health and safety.

Work-related stress problems shall be addressed by setting up appropriate preventive mechanisms to assess stress and determine remedial action where applicable, at the individual or overall level, pursuant to this agreement and as a supplement to the measures described.

This refers first and foremost to measures aimed at mitigating the factors identified as contributing to work-related stress, whether due to work organisation and processes, working conditions and environment, communication of information and opportunity for discussion on the responsibilities and objectives connected with each job as well as the resources provided.

The signatories wish to highlight the importance of social partners' involvement in the implementation of these prevention mechanisms, whenever possible, and reiterate the need to adopt remedial measures as soon as collective situations of extended or repeated stress are identified.

### Article 2: Individual Assistance Mechanisms

Where possible and appropriate, the organisation shall institute, in conjunction with the company's Occupational Health Services when they exist, telephone assistance mechanisms run by healthcare professionals, internally or as sub-contracted, in compliance with rules on confidentiality, so as to provide interested employees with an outlet or advice on stress, for themselves or a co-worker.

These healthcare professionals shall be familiar with the European and national-level regulations on risk prevention and prevention principles, be informed of any existing assistance procedures at the company and be invited to refer employees, when possible and relevant, to those procedures. Furthermore, an agreement shall be instituted with the said telephone assistance organisations so that they provide regular feedback – every six months, or at least once each year – in confidential, summarized format of the factors enabling due analysis of psychosocial risks in the workplace.

### **Article 3: Providing for Instances of Individual Difficulties in the Workplace**

Where it is identified that a given employee, despite the prevention mechanisms already in place, is facing a situation of extended or repeated stress, the manager and the Human Resources manager with the support of representatives of the Occupational Health Services – physician, social worker, or advisor on psycho-social risk prevention working at the company, if applicable – within the scope of their respective skills and prerogatives, and in keeping with rules on confidentiality, respect for the employee’s personal situation and privacy, shall determine the most appropriate solution and ad hoc support to be provided.

The aforementioned parties may be involved at different times and for different purposes.

# 5 | APPLICATION AND MONITORING OF THE AGREEMENT

## Article 1: Duration of the Agreement

This agreement is entered into for a term concluding on 30.06.2018 and shall come into effect from the date of its signature.

Upon reaching its term, it shall be renewable by tacit agreement for a four-year period, aligning with the representatives' mandates, unless terminated by one of the signatories, with at least six months' notice prior to the end of the period. As long as it is in effect, this agreement may be modified by additional clause.

## Article 2: Communication on the Agreement Herein

The signatories agree that the French language version of the agreement shall be authoritative. It shall thus serve as the reference text in the event of divergences in interpretation or dispute.

The agreement shall also be translated into English and Italian. For all other countries within the scope of the Group's European Works Council, each Country manager and Human Resources manager shall furthermore ensure that the agreement herein is translated into their country's language.

Notice of the agreement herein will be addressed to all employees within the scope of the Group's European Works Council via an on-line bulletin posted to the intranet of each BNP Paribas Group country or office within the scope of the Group's European Works Council, and in the language of the local country, no later than 31 March 2017.

## Article 3: Agreement Monitoring Mechanism

Due application of the agreement herein shall be monitored and, every two years, be presented in one of the plenary sessions of the Group's European Works Council, being formally listed on the agenda.

Prior to this presentation, a pre-meeting shall be held with members of the European Works Council's working group and its Select Committee, not included in the working group.

The first meeting on the agreement monitoring shall be held in connection with the winter plenary session in late 2017.

Signed in Paris, on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2017







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