



RECOMMENDATION

of the Head of the Civil Service

regarding

online activities of members of the civil service

Distinguished members of the civil service,

As Head of the Civil Service, I respect and support the right of members of the civil service to be active online. It offers certain benefits and, in the context of rapidly advancing digitalisation, the prospect of new opportunities and possibilities for the civil service as well. However, online activity can have unintended consequences. Please remember - the freedom to express one's views is not an absolute freedom.

- I am forwarding this Recommendation to:
- help corps members and their employers to strengthen the image of a professional, reliable, impartial and politically neutral civil service,
- build the confidence of citizens in the Corps and public institutions, which is essential for the proper functioning of the State,
- support corps members in proper understanding of civil service principles and corps ethics in the context of online activity.

Following the advice contained herein will help you avoid the risks associated with online activity.

Dobrosław Dowski-Urbański

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Head of Civil Service



GUIDANCE FOR CORPS MEMBERS

1. Before becoming active online, pay attention to the following:

- The catalogue of activities is extensive. It includes, among others:
 - publishing and sharing posts, verbal and graphic commenting, 'liking', following other posts,
 - maintaining a page/profile, using profile overlays,
 - blogging or video blogging,
- Your activity can be visible to other users. You influence the image of yourself, your employer and public institutions,
- **You are building the image of the civil service at work and outside it.** Your activity in business and private forums requires caution,
- You have a duty of care to the best interests of the office. Reckless posting of information, particularly relating to your work, may lead to the disclosure of legally protected secrets as well as personal data and the unauthorised use of such data to the detriment of your employer,
- **Nothing ever dies on the internet.** Regardless of where and when you take action and what position you currently hold, online activity can either enhance or damage your image,
- Your comments may be seen as offensive or discriminatory to other users.

2. When becoming active on online:

- **comply at all times with the Civil Service Rules and the Ethics of the Civil Service Corps** (hereinafter: the rules), including during leisure time,
- take into account the private, professional and social **risks** associated with the activities undertaken,
- **keep private and work activities separate** - do not post private photos and information in professional forums and vice versa,
- **be reliable** - always disseminate exclusively validated content,



- **be particularly cautious of the widespread phenomenon of disinformation and 'fake news'** - use several sources of information,
- **respect others' privacy and copyrights** - acknowledge the source/author, do not disseminate data or images to which you do not have rights,
- **behave with dignity** - do not insult, do not "hate", do not discriminate, do not be guided by prejudice and stereotype,
- **pay attention to correct speech** - follow the rules of spelling and grammar,
- **only engage in polite discussions** - do not use profanity, do not react to provocation.

3. Take particular care when:

- **showing your support for actions, activities, information** - consider their context,
- **you engage in political topics and social issues that generate controversy** - be aware of the ban on public display of political views and the obligation to respect the rules, in particular: political neutrality, impartiality, professionalism and dignified behaviour,
- **you engage in the running of your office's social media page** - remember that this does not relieve you of your duties as a corps member.

4. Always use common sense:

- **when in doubt, consult your ethics advisor or superior,**
- **if you are still in doubt - abandon the activity.**



GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYERS

1. Encourage proper employee behaviour online:

- **conduct regular information campaigns** on compliance with the rules,
- **provide employees with regular access to information and training** on their rights and obligations,
- **Talk to employees about the opportunities and risks** of online activity. Encourage questions, clarify doubts,
- **Promote the right attitude among employees. Emphasise special role and responsibility of employee managers for how they conduct themselves online,**
- **set a good example.**

2. Use the Recommendation:

- **disseminate it among your employees in the usual way,**
- **do not underestimate breaches of online policy by your employees,**
- treat the Recommendation as a guideline for raising staff awareness, not as a basis for control,
- draw consequences proportional to the misconduct.

3. Incorporate the issue of appropriate online behaviour in internal regulations, e.g. office rules.



REMEMBER!

1. **Personal liberties and personal rights are ensured by the Constitution of the Republic of Poland.** They also include the issues of communication, expression of opinions, obtaining and disseminating information.
2. **Restrictions of these liberties derive from the law¹.** They also apply to online activities.
3. **Their violation** may result in disciplinary, civil or criminal liability

¹ Articles 31(3) and 153(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997. Articles 76-78 and 80(1) of the Civil Service Act of 21 November 2008. Ordinance No. 70 of the Prime Minister of 6 October 2011 on the guidelines for observance of the principles of civil service and on the principles of ethics of the civil service corps.