

## **INTERNAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE VAN HILTEN ADVOCATEN & MEDIATORS**

### **Article 1 definitions**

The following definitions are used in this internal complaints procedure:

- *complaint*: any written expression of dissatisfaction from or on behalf of the client towards the attorney or the employees who work for him with regard to the establishment and the execution of an agreement to provide services, the quality of the service or the amount of the invoice, not being a complaint as referred to in paragraph 4 of the Lawyers Act;
- *complainant*: the client or his representative who expresses a complaint;
- *Complaints Officer*: the attorney who is tasked with the handling of the complaint;

### **Article 2 scope**

1. This internal complaints procedure applies to every agreement to provide services between Van Hilten Advocaten & Mediators and the client.
2. Every attorney of Van Hilten Advocaten & Mediators is responsible for processing complaints in accordance with the internal complaints procedure.

### **Article 3 objectives**

The purpose of this internal complaints procedure is:

- a. to create a procedure to handle complaints from clients in a constructive manner and within a reasonable period of time;
- b. to create a procedure to determine the causes of complaints of clients;
- c. to retain and improve existing relationships by means of proper complaints processing;
- d. to train employees to respond to complaints in a client-oriented manner;
- e. the improvement of the quality of the services with the help of complaints processing and complaints analysis.

### **Article 4 information upon start of services**

1. This internal complaints procedure has been published. The attorney informs the client before the conclusion of the agreement that the office uses an internal complaints procedure and that this procedure applies to the services.
2. Van Hilten Advocaten & Mediators has included, via the General Terms and Conditions, to which party or institution an unresolved complaint can be submitted in order to receive a binding decision, and has disclosed this with the order confirmation.
3. Complaints as referred to in article 1 of this internal complaints procedure which remain unresolved shall be submitted to the Disputes Committee for the Legal Profession. The Regulations of the Disputes Committee for the Legal Profession can be requested from the committee's secretary (address: Bordewijklaan 46, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, 2591 XR The Hague, P.O. Box 90600, 2509 LP The Hague, telephone +31 (0)70-3105310).

### **Article 5 internal complaints procedure**

1. If a client contacts the office with a complaint, then the complaint shall be forwarded to Mr. W. de Vries, LL.M., who shall act as Complaints Officer.
2. The Complaints Officer informs the person concerned in the complaint of the submission of the complaints, and gives the complainant and the person concerned in the complaint an opportunity to explain the complaint.
3. The person concerned in the complaint shall attempt to find a solution together with the client, whether or not after the intervention of the Complaints Officer.
4. The Complaints Officer processes the complaint within four weeks after receipt of the complaint or shall inform the complainant, with statement of reasons, about the deviation of this time period including the time period in which a decision will be made regarding the complaint.

5. The Complaints Officer informs the complainant and the person concerned in the complaint in writing about the decision regarding the merits of the complaint, whether or not accompanied by recommendations.

6. If the complaint was handled satisfactorily, the complainant, the Complaints Officer and the person concerned in the complaint shall sign the decision about the merits of the complaint.

**Article 6 confidentiality and free of charge complaints handling**

1. The Complaints Officer and the person concerned in the complaint shall observe confidentiality during the processing of the complaint.

2. The complainant shall not owe any fee for the processing of the complaint.

**Article 7 responsibilities**

1. The Complaints Officer is responsible for the timely processing of the complaint.

2. The person concerned in the complaint shall keep the Complaints Officer informed about any contact and a possible solution.

3. The Complaints Officer shall keep the complainant informed about the processing of the complaint.

4. The Complaints Officer updates the complaints file.

**Article 8 complaint registration**

1. The Complaints Officer registers the complaint including the object of the complaint.

2. A complaint may be divided in several subjects.

3. The Complaints Officer shall periodically issue a report about the processing of the complaints and shall make recommendations to prevent new complaints, as well as to improve procedures.

4. The reports and the recommendations shall be discussed at the office and be presented for a decision at least once a year.