



## **Dispute Resolution Process**

### **Considerations**

- A.** According to the Quality Code all members of World Link for Law have to follow and apply common rules and procedures when they work together
- B.** Nevertheless disputes may arise between members
- C.** It is considered of upmost importance that disputes between members and adverse consequences for the members involved and the organisation as a whole resulting from disputes, are avoided.
- D.** This disputes resolution process, as an Appendix of the Quality Code, has the aim to prevent the adverse consequences of a dispute and is considered to be a service to the members to prevent a dispute from escalation and to offer guidance in case a dispute arises.

### **General**

#### **Article 1**

**1-1** This Dispute Resolution Process (DRP) provides the process of aiming to resolve any dispute among World Link for Law (WLL) member firms.

### **Complaint**

#### **Article 2**

**2-1** A member firm may report any problem or dispute with another member firm to the chair of the Quality Committee (QC) in a short written report (max 1 A4 sheet) describing the dispute and the point of view of both parties. A member firm may include supporting documentation. The chair of the QC provides a copy to the other party within 14 days after receipt and invites that party to present a written response on the matter (max 1 A4 sheet) and any additional supporting documentation. The other party must submit it's reply within 4 weeks following the receipt of the report sent to them by the chair of the QC.

**2-2** The chair of the QC informs the other members of the QC immediately after a report mentioned in 2-1 has been received and is entitled to request one of the other members of the QC to fulfil the role of the chair mentioned in 2-1.

### **Breach of Quality Code**

#### **Article 3**

If the report regards a dispute, in the opinion of the QC, concerning a (potential) breach of the Quality Code, the issue will be dealt with directly by the QC. The QC will inform the pertinent members about the procedure it will follow in the effort to solve the dispute. The QC may request supplement reports from the members involved and any additional documentation.

## **Disputes other than breach of the Quality Code**

### **Article 4**

**4-1** If the report is a problem other than a breach of the Quality Code, the chair of the QC advises both parties to start a mediation process.

**4-2** If both parties agree to mediation, they each nominate a mediator from either the QC, the Board or a former Board member. The QC takes the suggestions into account and appoints a mediator. The QC is not bound by the suggestions of the parties. Both parties will receive contact details of the mediator immediately following his/her appointment. If mediation results in an agreement, the mediator drafts the agreement and sends it to both parties. If they do not complain within 14 days after the draft has been sent to the parties, the draft of the agreement by the mediator is considered to be correctly drafted.

**4-3** All matters occurring before or presented to the mediator are confidential. Nevertheless, The QC is always entitled, before the mediator is appointed, to consult the President of WLL or one of the other members of the QC.

**4-4** The mediator sends the agreement to the members of the QC and the President of WLL only.

## **Resolution by the QC**

### **Article 5**

**5-1** If the dispute is not resolved by mediation, or the parties do not agree to mediation, the dispute is submitted to the QC for a recommendation by the QC. The QC may ask written questions to the parties. The QC shall not engage in any private communication with any of the parties. Each party shall receive copies of any material submitted to the QC.

**5-2** The (former) mediator does not have any involvement in the process mentioned in this Article.

**5-4** If the parties do not comply with the recommendation of the QC, the QC reports it to the Board for further consideration.

## **Costs**

### **Article 6**

The parties will each bear their own costs incurred in relation to this Dispute Resolution Process. The mediation costs are to be shared equally by the parties. The parties and the mediator must make arrangements about the costs/rates prior to the mediation. The first two hours required by the chair or QC member involved until the mediation starts are free/paid for by WLL at an hourly rate of €200 (or equivalent in another currency) ex VAT.