Workplace Investigations

Contributing Editors

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25. Who can (or must) the investigation findings be disclosed to? Does that include regulators/police? Can the interview records be kept private, or are they at risk of disclosure?



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In general, investigation materials, including findings, that includes personal data should only be processed by the personnel of the organisation who are responsible for internal investigations. However, it may in some situations be required by applicable legislation that findings are disclosed to competent authorities for the performance of their duties, such as conducting investigations in connection with malpractice and violations of the law.

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The employer is generally not required to disclose the final report, or the data obtained in connection with the investigation. In particular, the employer is not obliged to file a criminal complaint with the police or the public prosecutor's office.

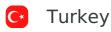
Exceptions may arise, for example, from data protection law (see question 22) or a duty to release records may arise in a subsequent state proceeding.

Data voluntarily submitted in a proceeding in connection with the internal investigation shall be considered private opinion or party assertion.[1] If the company refuses to hand over the documents upon request, coercive measures may be used under certain circumstances.[2]

[1] Oliver Thormann, Sicht der Strafverfolger – Chancen und Risiken, in: Flavio Romerio/Claudio Bazzani (Hrsg.), Interne und regulatorische Untersuchungen, Zürich/Basel/Genf 2016, p. 123.

[2] Oliver Thormann, Sicht der Strafverfolger – Chancen und Risiken, in: Flavio Romerio/Claudio Bazzani (Hrsg.), Interne und regulatorische Untersuchungen, Zürich/Basel/Genf 2016, p. 102 et seq.

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Investigation reports may be disclosed in potential lawsuits or judicial proceedings. Therefore, the investigation report must demonstrate that a detailed and objective investigation has been carried out. Courts may also request that the interview records be disclosed to them, failing which, the courts may resort to an adverse inference in civil proceedings. Criminal courts can also ask the interview records to be disclosed if this would be necessary for reaching the truth. Failure to disclose may entail criminal responsibility under certain conditions.

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