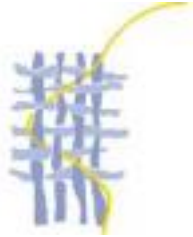


THE EUROPEAN OMBUDSMAN



The institution of the European Ombudsman was created by the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. The European Parliament elected the first Ombudsman in 1995.

The European Ombudsman investigates and reports on maladministration in the institutions and bodies of the European Community, such as the European Commission, the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament. Only the Court of Justice and the Court of First Instance acting in their judicial role do not fall within his jurisdiction. The Ombudsman usually conducts inquiries on the basis of complaints but can also launch inquiries on his own initiative.

Any citizen of the Union or any natural or legal person residing or having its registered office in a Member State can lodge a complaint with the Ombudsman by mail, fax or e-mail.

The Ombudsman has wide powers of investigation. The Community institutions and bodies must supply him with the information he requests and give him access to the files concerned. The Member States must also provide him with information that may help to clarify instances of maladministration by the Community institutions and bodies.

If the case is not resolved satisfactorily during the course of the inquiries, the Ombudsman will try to find a friendly solution which puts right the case of maladministration and satisfies the complainant. If the attempt at conciliation fails, the Ombudsman can make recommendations to solve the case. If the institution does not accept his recommendations, the Ombudsman can make a special report on the matter to the European Parliament.

Many of the complaints lodged with the European Ombudsman concern administrative delay, lack of transparency or refusal of access to information. Some concern work relations between the institutions and their agents, recruitment of staff and the running of competitions. Others are related to contractual relations between the institutions and private firms, for example in case of abrupt termination of a contract.

A brochure entitled "The European Ombudsman - Could he help you?" containing a complaint form is available from the Ombudsman's office. Every year, the Ombudsman presents his Annual Report to the European Parliament. The Annual Report is translated into all the official languages of the Union. The Ombudsman also has a Website on the Internet which provides detailed and updated information on his activities. Finally, the Ombudsman makes official visits to all the Member States, which enables him to present his work directly to the citizens.

Contact information:

The European Ombudsman

Address: 1, avenue du President Robert Schuman, B.P. 403, F-67001 Strasbourg Cedex, France

Phone: + 33 (0) 3 88 17 23 13

Fax: + 33 (0) 3 88 17 90 62

E-mail: euro-ombudsman@europarl.eu.int

Web site: <http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu>

THE EUROPEAN OMBUDSMAN

The Parliamentary Ombudsman institution in Bulgaria was established by the Law on the Ombudsman, in force since January 1, 2004. In April 2005 the National Assembly elected Mr. Ginio Ganev, MP from Coalition for Bulgaria, as the first Bulgarian Parliamentary Ombudsman, and Mr. Metin Kazak as a Deputy Ombudsman.

Contact information:

Ombudsman of the Republic of Bulgaria

Address: 155 Georgi S. Rakovski Street, 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria

Phone: (+ 359 2) 980 95 10; (+ 359 2) 810 69 55

Fax: (+ 359 2) 810 69 63

E-mail: ombudsman-bg@europe.com

Local ombudsman type institutions in Bulgaria have been established for the first time in late 1998. Due to the lack of legislation, since 2003 local ombudsmen have operated in the framework of pilot projects based on special agreements between civil society organizations and local authorities. In 2003, with the adoption of the amendments to the Law on Local Self-Government and Local Administration, municipal councils have been entitled to elect public mediators (Article 21a of the Law). Based on this legal framework many municipalities established public mediators.

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