

ghent:

23 August 2022

Webinar Sectorial Ombudsman



Local Ombudsman Ghent

# Belgian Ombudsmen

- Federal
- 4 Regional
- 10 Local



# Regional versus local ombudsmen

- 4 regional ombudsmen can also act as local ombudsman for cities within their region who did not opt for a local ombudsman
- Civilians who live in a city without local ombudsman can turn to the ombudsman of their community
- No hierarchy amongst public ombudsmen

gent:



**Ghent, a pocket sized metropolis**

# Ghent

## facts & figures



### 4 towers

Four towers dominate the Ghent skyline. Three of them date back to the Middle Ages. The Saint Nicholas' church, the Belfry and the Cathedral form an imposing trio, while the modernist Book Tower looks over the university district.



**264.666**  
inhabitants



**77.000**  
students



**13**  
museums



3th Most authentic  
destination worldwide,  
National Geographic  
Traveler Magazine

### a festive city

including the Ghent Festivities,  
the largest street festival in Europe

### a port city

the port of Ghent employs 65,353 people  
and generates 7.4 billion euro in revenue

### a popular city

with a population of more than 250,000

### a monumental city

That counts the highest number of heritage  
buildings in Belgium

### a university city

Ghent is home to approximately 70,000 students  
and 14 skills centres

### a musical city

with the right to call itself 'UNESCO Creative City of Music'

### startup city

winner of the EU Enterprise Promotion Award 2013  
and Financial Times Best Startup Support City 2017



# Local Ombudsman Ghent – Who are we?



## Ombudsman City of Ghent

- Institution started in 1997, based on a decision by the city council of 17 September 1996
- Appointed by the city council, selection by independent HR company
- Mandate of 6 years, renewable
- Independent in line with the Venice Principles
- Yearly report in the city council
- Recommendations (not binding)
- Unrestricted access to all relevant information
- Own initiative is possible if motivated

# Local Ombudsman Ghent – What are we doing?

- We are competent for complaints about the city administration, including the local Police and social housing companies
- We investigate the complaints and try to negotiate the best possible solution
- We are not competent to judge complaints about political decisions: we refer them to college of mayor and aldermen
- A listening ear for residents





# Top 5 complaints

- Mobility
- Environment (low emission zone)
- Household waste collection and litter
- Social housing
- Social welfare/benefits



# Advantage of a local ombudsman

- Distance is not an issue
- Free access without appointment, daily
- Each month both the federal ombudsman and the ombudsman for pensions hold a consultation in our office
- We often physically investigate complaints on the spot: quick result



## Relationship with other ombudsmen

- Local ombudsman is a bridge to other ombudsmen.
- Often a complaint can be partly local competence and partly federal/regional competence.
- Regular meetings with other local ombudsmen.
- Each month, the ombudsman for pensions and the federal ombudsman hold free consultations in our office.
- Twice a year, gathering of all Belgian ombudsmen (public and private).



# Any questions?

#wijsvangent

**Thank you for your attention**

Want to know more? Visit us at [www.stad.gent/ombudsvrouw](http://www.stad.gent/ombudsvrouw)

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