

INTERNATIONAL OMBUDSMAN INSTITUTE

Board of Directors Meeting

11 – 15 May 2025 (Rabat, Morocco)

Summary of Decisions

Present were:

Executive Committee

<i>President:</i>	Ms. Nashieli Ramírez Hernández (Mexico)
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Ms. Caroline Sokoni (Zambia)
<i>Secretary General:</i>	Mr. Bernhard Achitz (Austria)
<i>RP¹ Asia:</i>	Mr. Somsak Suwansujarit (Thailand)
<i>RP Europe:</i>	Mr. Reinier Van Zutphen (The Netherlands)
<i>RP North America:</i>	Mr. Paul Dubé (Canada)

RPs & Directors

<i>RP Africa:</i>	Ms. Kholeka Gcaleka (South Africa)
<i>RP Caribbean & Latin America:</i>	Mr. Keursly Concincion (Curaçao)
<i>Asia:</i>	Mr. Chul-Hwan Ryu (South Korea)
<i>Caribbean & Latin America:</i>	Ms. Gwendolien Mossel (Sint Maarten)
	Mr. Gabriel Savino (Argentina)
<i>Europe:</i>	Mr. Joseph Zammit McKeon (Malta)
<i>North America:</i>	Ms. Nadine Mailloux (Canada)
	Ms. Diane Welborn (USA)

Non-attendance / Apologies:

<i>RP Australasia & Pacific:</i>	Ms. Niki Rattle (Cook Islands)
<i>Australasia & Pacific:</i>	Mr. Iain Anderson (Australia)

¹ RP = Regional President

Africa: Ms. Grace Malera (Malawi)
Mr. George Robert (Seychelles)

Asia: Mr. Yong-Hak Joo (South Korea)
Mr. Mokhammad Najih (Indonesia)

Europe: Mr. Marc Bertrand (Belgium)
Mr. Marino Fardelli (Italy)
Ms. Maria Stylianou-Lottides (Cyprus)

IOI General Secretariat

Ms. Ulrike Grieshofer, IOI Executive Director, Head of IOI General Secretariat
Ms. Karin Wagenbauer, Project Management, IOI General Secretariat

Accompanying Staff

Mr. Jurgen Cassar (Office of the Ombudsman, Malta)
Mr. Randolph Duggins (Office of the Ombudsman of Sint Maarten)
Ms. Barbara Finlay (Office of the Ontario Ombudsman, Canada)
Mr. Chishala Kawesha (Office of the Public Protector, Zambia)
Mr. Keirov Kritteeranon (Office of the Ombudsman, Thailand)
Mr. Samsung Lee (Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission, South Korea)
Mr. Seokbin Lim (Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission, South Korea)
Ms. Prudence Maluleke (Office of the Public Protector, South Africa)
Mr. Alinafe Malunga (Office of the Ombudsman, Malawi)
Mr. Raymond Mathilda (Office of the Ombudsman, Curaçao)
Ms. Petita Mwanza (Office of the Public Protector, Zambia)
Mr. Sechang Oh (Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission, South Korea)
Ms. Kitiyabhorn Onchulee (Office of the Ombudsman, Thailand)
Ms. Minyoung Ro (Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission, South Korea)
Mr. Songsak Saicheua (Ombudsman, Thailand)
Mr. Stephan Sjouke (Office of the National Ombudsman, The Netherlands)
Ms. Nalinpun Waisuebkao (Office of the Ombudsman, Thailand)
Ms. Kanokkwan Wongdontri (Office of the Ombudsman, Thailand)
Mr. Youngkook Youn (Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission, South Korea)

During the annual meeting of the IOI Board of Directors, held in Rabat (Morocco) from 11 – 15 May 2025, the Board took decisions as outlined in this document.

OPENING OF THE MEETING

1. President Ramírez formally opened the meeting and welcomed all the Directors present. She also expressed the Board's gratitude to the host, the Office of the Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco, for inviting the IOI Board to Rabat and for organizing the event so successfully.
2. The President welcomed the new IOI Secretary General Bernhard Achitz, who thanked the colleagues of the Board for the warm welcome and presented himself briefly. **The Board endorsed Mr. Achitz as the new Secretary General of the IOI.**
3. The President invited all the Directors present to introduce themselves in a short round of introduction.
4. The Board **approved the agenda** for the meeting, that the **meeting will be recorded**, and the **list of participants**. The Board further approved the **Summary of Decisions of the previous meetings in The Hague** (May 2024) as circulated prior to the Rabat meeting. The Board approved **English as the working language** of the meeting, noting that simultaneous interpretation services for the Spanish-speaking Directors were made available throughout the meeting.

REPORTS

5. President Ramírez gave a brief report of the activities she carried out in the first year of her Presidency. She specifically referred to her attendance at various events in the different regions (either in person, but mainly by way of electronic means) and the monthly newsletter on Ombudsman-related events and topics she has sent out in this past year. The President's report was based on a comprehensive written report, which was tabled at the meeting. **The Board acknowledged the President's report.**
6. In his report to the Board, Secretary General Achitz referred to some key projects, such as training, the newly implemented Committees and Working Groups, and the recent changes in the IOI Board of Directors. The Secretary General's brief overview was based on a more detailed written report, which was circulated prior to the meeting and which will form the basis of the IOI's Annual Report for the membership year 2024/2025. **The Board acknowledged the Secretary General's report.**

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS

7. The Board followed a recommendation from the Executive Committee and **approved Voting membership** for the following institutions:
 - Public Independent Conciliator of the South-West Region of Cameroon (Africa)
 - Ombudsman Liberia (Africa)
 - Ombudsman and Children's Ombudsman Aruba (Caribbean & Latin America)
 - Ombudsman of San Juan, Argentina (Caribbean & Latin America)
 - Ombudsman of the State of Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany (Europe)
 - Ombudsman of Emilia-Romagna, Italy (Europe)
 - Ombudsman for Children and Youth, Luxembourg (Europe)
 - Bernese Municipal Ombudsman, Switzerland (Europe)
8. The application from the Mediator of the Republic of Gabon, which was discussed and postponed by the Board at its meeting in The Hague in May 2024, was on the agenda again in Rabat. While the new developments in the country and the additional information presented by the African RP were acknowledged, the lack of corresponding legal foundations did not suffice to grant Voting membership. However, **the Board agreed to give (non-voting) membership to the Mediator of Gabon** with an option to re-evaluate the membership status upon proof that the institution's independence is clearly set out in its legal basis.
9. The Board followed a recommendation from the Executive Committee and **approved (non-voting) membership for the National Student Ombudsman of Quebec**, Canada (North America).
10. The Board followed a recommendation of the European RP and **did not accept the membership application of the Credit Ombudsman Portugal**, considering that the Credit Ombudsman is a consumer protection institution rather than an Ombudsman handling complaints regarding public administration. Despite the fact that several financial Ombudsman institutions are already (Voting) members of the IOI, these types of institutions should not be encouraged to seek IOI membership.
11. In relation to the high number of applications for (non-voting) membership from individuals and their different backgrounds, which are often not related to Ombudsman matters, **the Board decided that the General Secretariat, in cooperation with the respective RPs, should analyse the status of current individual members and their engagement with the IOI. The Board also agreed to refer the matter of non-voting individual**

membership to the Standing By-laws Committee, with a view to looking into this specific membership category in general and present the Board with a recommendation on whether to keep this membership category or not.

12. **The Board agreed to reject all the applications from individuals tabled in Rabat.**
13. Regarding the application from **Dr. Mader**, who is a scholar working on Ombudsman and human rights matters, the Board agreed to **inform him about a possible change in membership categories and that the Board therefore also decided to reject his application until this matter has been discussed and solved internally.**
14. The Secretary General requested the Board's approval to reject applications from individuals right away – i.e. without presenting them to the Executive Committee or Board – if they seem fake and no additional information can be found on the respective applicant in an online research by the General Secretariat. **The Board approved that the General Secretariat can immediately reject such 'fake' applications from individuals in the future, provided that it presents a list of these rejections to the Board on an annual basis.**

FINANCES

15. IOI Treasurer Caroline Sokoni presented the IOI's budget, assets, revenues and liabilities to the Board, indicating the issue of pending payments, which are especially evident in the African and the Caribbean & Latin American Region. **The Board acknowledged the report from the Treasurer.**
16. At its meeting in Vienna in 2023, the Board allocated an amount of 50,000.00 EUR to support a **project by the OECD**. In Rabat, the President reported that the OECD had ended the contract and commitment with the office of the Western Australian Ombudsman in December 2024, due to the investigation into former IOI President and Western Australian Ombudsman Chris Field. **The Board acknowledged the President's report and noted that the amount of 50,000.00 EUR can return to the IOI's overall budget**, since there was no formalized commitment between the OECD and the IOI regarding this project.
17. The Board discussed the matter of outstanding membership fees. While the Board was aware that this meant an additional administrative workload for the Secretariat, it **did not approve the option of a general fee waiver**, as this would send a wrong message and

be perceived as unfair to those who regularly pay their fees or request individual fee waivers in case of financial hardship.

18. Regarding the situation of prolonged non-payment of membership fees, **the Board decided to set up a working group consisting of the Treasurer, the Secretary General and the RPs to analyse the situation of members who have outstanding fee payments of more than one year.** These members will then receive a final reminder including information about the possibility of requesting a fee waiver. The working group will report to the Executive Committee and discuss next steps and possible consequences if members continue to be non-responsive.
19. The Treasurer gave a brief summary of the audit report of the previous membership year, which confirmed that the IOI recorded all significant transactions properly, that the IOI has used its funds according to the IOI By-laws, and that no unusual income or expenditure did occur. **The Board approved the audit report 2023/2024.**
20. The Treasurer explained the auditing process carried out by the IOI over the past years, in which two auditors from one auditing firm annually audit the IOI's financial conduct. **The Board agreed to continue with this auditing approach and adopted that *Forvis Mazars Audit GmbH* will audit the IOI's books until 2028.**
21. The Board noted an explanation from the Treasurer regarding the possibility to open a fixed term deposit account with *UniCredit Bank Austria AG* with a view to earn interests. The deposit account will have a commitment period of one year, i.e. the money will remain in the fixed term deposit account until the end of this term. **The Board approved opening up a fixed term deposit account without withdrawal option for one year with *UniCredit Bank Austria AG* and transferring 200,000.00 EUR into this account.**
22. Referring to the budget overview presented to the Board in Rabat, the Secretary General explained that the Secretariat will provide an updated budget overview with the Summary of Decisions of the Rabat meeting, to reflect the financial implications of the decisions made by the Board in Rabat.

REGIONAL SUBSIDIES

23. Secretary General Achitz presented proposals for amendments to the Audit Guidelines for IOI Regional Subsidies, which were circulated prior to the meeting. These included that: (a) only members in good standing are eligible to receive regional subsidies; (b) applicant institutions should not have received regional subsidies or IOI funding in the last three

periods; (c) the limitation of subsidies per region is increased from 2 to 3; (d) the subsidy contract is signed by the Secretary General on behalf of the IOI Executive Committee. **The Board unanimously adopted these amendments to the Regional Subsidies Audit Guidelines.**

24. Regarding a request from the Australasian & Pacific Region on a possibility of advanced payment of a large or the entire amount of the approved subsidies for institutions with limited financial resources, the Board noted that the current guidelines strike an appropriate balance in supporting members and managing risks. **The Board did not approve including an option for advance payment of the total subsidies amount in the Audit Guidelines, noting that exceptions can be discussed on a case-by-case basis.**
25. **The Board agreed to continue the Regional Subsidy Program in 2025/2026 and approved a total amount of 42,000.00 EUR** for this purpose, to be distributed equally among the six IOI Regions (i.e. 7,000.00 EUR per region). The General Secretariat will issue a call as usual, inviting members to submit project proposals.

COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

26. The Chair of the [UN WORKING GROUP](#), Ombudsman Songsak Saicheua, asked the Board to approve that the group be renamed to 'IOI Working Group for UN and International Cooperation' to reflect the group's broader approach to other organizations. He presented the key priorities of the group, which include: developing an engagement document to highlight the IOI's mission and values for possible partner organizations; renewing the MoU with UNITAR and re-negotiating SDG training for IOI members; exploring areas of collaboration with GANHRI and the OECD; strengthening the cooperation with the Council of Europe and its Venice Commission, with a view to establishing a peer review process to evaluate members' compliance with the Venice Principles; deepening the contact with ECOSOC and focusing on SDG-related activities to increase Ombudsman presence at the UN level; surveying members' understanding of the UN Resolution and raising awareness about it among the wider IOI membership; and looking into how the UN and other partner organizations can help Ombudsman under threat. The different topics will be implemented by sub-groups and help enhance the IOI's visibility at the international level. **The Board acknowledged the progress report of the UN Working Group.**
27. The Chair of the [STANDING BY-LAWS COMMITTEE](#), Ombudsman Jack Chan, presented the current members of the Standing By-laws Committee and refreshed the Board's mind about the pending proposal from the last General Assembly in The Hague. He informed about some first proposals, such as clarifying the provisions regarding General Assemblies

or reviewing the current system of membership fees. He expressed his hope that new members will join the Committee to ensure that all six IOI Regions are represented. The Committee is looking forward to receiving information from the Board on topical issues regarding the By-laws, which should be looked into. The Committee will report to the Board on a regular basis with the aim of presenting proposals for By-laws amendments to the next General Assembly in 2028. **The Board acknowledged the progress report of the Standing By-laws Committee.**

28. European RP Reinier van Zutphen reported on the first meetings of the [IOI TRAVEL POLICY WORKING GROUP](#), which resulted in main elements to be considered in a revised travel policy. The group calls upon Directors to inform the General Secretariat about planned or confirmed attendance of international events to ensure better coordination of IOI representation. The group furthermore works towards a procedure to decide who will represent the IOI, with a clear preference for the President and – in case he/she is not able to attend – the RP closest to the event. Regarding IOI funding for Directors' travels in representation of the IOI, the policy will give clearer rules on what can be funded (flight costs, accommodation costs etc., only in exceptional cases if a Director cannot afford it and host does not cover it). The group will continue its work in this direction and present a revised version of the IOI Travel Policy to the Board for its approval. **The Board acknowledged the progress report of the IOI Travel Policy Working Group.**

29. Caribbean and Latin American RP Keursly Concincion presented the results of the first meetings of the [IOI EDITORIAL BOARD](#), which were circulated prior to the meeting. The main elements considered by the Editorial Board include that IOI statements should generally be politically neutral, reflect the IOI's values and support its unity and credibility. While public statements of the IOI should be agreed to by a majority of the Officers, the first suggestions from the Editorial Board also include a certain flexibility by establishing different levels of statements. The Editorial Board will continue its work in this direction and present final proposals to the Board for its approval. **The Board acknowledged the progress report of the IOI Editorial Board.**

30. European RP Reinier van Zutphen reported that the meetings of the [CODE OF ETHICS WORKING GROUP](#) discussed the ethics guidelines, which were approved by the IOI's European Region last year and circulated prior to the meeting in Rabat. The group agreed that such guidelines should be phrased in a positive rather than a restrictive way (e.g. 'Ombudsman shall' instead of 'Ombudsman shall not'). As a way forward, the group proposes a consultation process that will involve all IOI Regions to make sure the group's work results is an instrument that includes input from the wider membership and upholds the Ombudsman standards around the world. The group intends to start this outreach

within the next three months and to present a revised paper to the Board by the end of October 2025. **The Board acknowledged the progress report of the Code of Ethics Working Group.**

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

31. President Ramírez presented a first draft for guidelines to award Honorary Life Membership (HLM) as developed by the **HLM Committee** and circulated prior to the meeting. The Board discussed the proposed guidelines at length and agreed to the following amendments and safeguards.
32. HLM candidates must be nominated by at least three Voting members in good standing deriving from at least two different IOI Regions. HLM candidates must – in their letter of consent – express their commitment to uphold the values and principles of the IOI. HLM candidates may not have the right to vote, they may not participate in working groups or be considered for membership on the IOI Board or Executive Committee.
33. Regarding the evaluation criteria, the Board agreed to add that HLM candidates shall have had an exceptional impact on the Ombudsman profession, whether through sustained excellence in Ombudsman practice or through singular acts of distinction.
34. Nominations for HLM will be reviewed by the Executive Committee with a recommendation to the IOI Board to take a well-informed final decision.
35. **Subject to the above listed amendments, the Board approved the Guidelines for Awarding IOI Honorary Life Membership as tabled prior to the meeting in Rabat.**
36. In relation to the **existing nominations** for Honorary Life Membership for Mr. Peter Boshier (New Zealand) and Ms. Florence Kajuju (Kenya), **the Board agreed that the newly adopted guidelines should be applied to these nominations.** The General Secretariat will inform the people who nominated the two candidates about the new requirements for HLM nominations. Once the relevant requirements are met, the nominations will be presented to the Board at its next meeting.

DECISION WITHOUT MEETINGS

37. The Secretary General explained that the process of making decisions without meeting according to Article 17 of the IOI By-laws can be very time consuming and often results in no decision at all, simply because the two-third majority to consent to a decision being

made without a meeting is not met. To counter this, he asked the Board to give a general consent at the meeting in Rabat, so that Article 17 decisions will then only need a simple majority on the matter itself. Unfortunately, not all the Directors were present in Rabat, which is why **the Board agreed that a general consent should be obtained from the entire Board by electronic means (i.e. by way of the next Article 17 decision), and if approved will be active until the next meeting in 2026.**

OMBUDSMAN UNDER THREAT

38. The Secretary General explained that the IOI Guidelines for Ombudsman under Threat, which were adopted by the Board in 2016, may no longer reflect the existing challenges and situations and may therefore need updating.

39. Latin American Director Gabriel Savino took the opportunity to ask the Board to adopt a Rabat Declaration, which should not only reaffirm the importance of internationally recognized standards for independent Ombudsman institutions (i.e. the UN Resolution and the Venice Principles), but also include the challenging situation of Human Rights Defenders, which cannot count on institutionalized support, such as Ombudsman offices. He furthermore argued that such a statement could be in line with the work of UN bodies supporting Human Rights Defenders and thus be perceived as a positive signal and raise the visibility of the IOI within the United Nations.

40. The Board noted Mr. Savino's proposal and acknowledged the importance of the matter. The Board, however, also underlined the need to clarify who the IOI would support with such a declaration, i.e. how Human Rights Defenders are defined in such a document.

41. Mr. Savino offered to provide the Board with a more detailed draft of such a declaration, which can then serve as a basis for the Board's further deliberations.

IOI STRATEGIC PLAN

42. The Secretary General presented the draft of the IOI Strategic Plan for the period 2024-2028 as circulated prior to the meeting and explained some of the amendments, which have been made in close consultation with the President.

43. The thematically related matters from the previous strategic plan have been merged to four main goals: (1) promote the Ombudsman concept; (2) support and strengthen Ombudsman institutions; (3) unite Ombudsman to collaborate and exchange expertise; (4) ensure efficient and well-governed operations of the IOI. The Secretary General specifically

referred to a new sub-item on 'regional coherence', which puts a focus on the IOI Regions, and the newly added annex, which shows the main goals and activities to move them forward in a table format.

44. **The Board approved the IOI Strategic Plan 2024-2028 without any additional amendments.**

14TH IOI WORLD CONFERENCE

45. The office of the Authorized Person of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights (Ombudsman) was invited to give an online presentation of its proposal to host the next IOI World Conference and General Assembly in 2028. The presentation included mainly the information provided by the institution prior to the meeting and tabled at the Rabat meeting.
46. The office of the Ombudsman of Peru had also submitted an application to host the next IOI World Conference and General Assembly in 2028, which was also tabled at the meeting in Rabat. In addition to this written application, Ombudsman Gutiérrez joined the Board meeting online to answer questions and to assure the Board that his office and the City of Lima have the necessary capacities, resources and infrastructure to organize an event of this magnitude.
47. After the online presentations from the two candidates, the Board agreed that more information is needed to take a well-informed decision. The Secretariat – in close collaboration with the Executive Committee – will develop a list of 10-12 evaluation criteria and ask the candidates to submit evidence to meet these criteria. The Executive Committee will then assess the information received from the candidates against these criteria and present a recommendation to the Board. **The Board will discuss this specific agenda item in an online meeting in autumn (September 2025) and take its final decision on the host of the 14th IOI World Conference and General Assembly.**

TRAINING

48. IOI Executive Director Ulrike Grieshofer informed the Board about the possibility to continue the webinar cooperation with the African Ombudsman Research Centre (AORC) in 2025/2026 by proposing IOI speakers for the webinar topics circulated prior to the meeting and by covering the costs for the Spanish interpretation services during these webinars. **The Board agreed to continue the webinar cooperation with AORC. The Board further approved the list of webinar topics, as well as allocating a maximum**

amount of 2,000.00 EUR to fund Spanish interpretation of up to eight (8) webinars in the coming membership year.

49. Regarding the IOI's long cooperation with the Geneva-based Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT) that has resulted in numerous NPM-training events, IOI Executive Director Ulrike Grieshofer explained that training on mental health in detention, monitoring protest, interviewing in police custody, or creating change for institutions with long monitoring experience would align with the APT's strategic plan and thus be preferred for an APT-IOI training cooperation. She further asked that the Board approved a lump sum of 25,000.00 EUR for such a training initiative, as this would cover the fees and travel expenses of the trainers, and at the same time ensure that scholarships could be offered to institutions with limited financial resources. **The Board approved a maximum amount of 25,000.00 EUR for the next training cooperation with the APT and entrusted the General Secretariat with the further negotiations of this training within this budget.**
50. IOI Executive Director Ulrike Grieshofer presented a proposal for media training from the UK-based company *MediaFirst*, which was circulated prior to the meeting. The IOI has carried out online courses with *MediaFirst*, which all resulted in very positive feedback from the participants. This next training would be held in French and the trainer would be assisted by an AI coach, which could be utilized by participants up to 30 days after the course for additional interview practice. **The Board approved offering an online media training to the French-speaking members as proposed by *MediaFirst*. The Board further approved a maximum amount of 15,000.00 EUR for this training, underlining that smaller offices with limited financial resources be listed first as participants.**
51. In relation to a UNITAR training, the Secretary General referred to the fact that the Board did not take a decision in The Hague because it considered the proposed budget of 60,000.00 EUR as too high. He informed the Board that – in line with what had been discussed in the UN Working Group – the IOI will resume negotiations with UNITAR to see if a reduction of the costs will be possible. Given these circumstances, the Secretary General proposed reducing the amount allocated to this project in the IOI's budget to a maximum of 30,000.00 EUR. **The Board endorsed the Secretary General's proposal and agreed to reduce the amount earmarked in the IOI budget for a UNITAR training to 30,000.00 EUR.**

BEST PRACTICE PAPERS

52. Following a decision of the Board in 2023, some of the IOI Best Practice Papers (BPPs) were updated by their respective authors. The updated versions of the BPP on ‘Developing and Reforming Ombudsman Institutions’ and of the BPP on ‘Dealing with Challenging Behavior’ were provided by Peter Tyndall and Deborah Glass and circulated prior to the meeting. **The Board approved the updated versions of these BPPs and that they are published on the IOI website.**
53. An updated version of the BPP on ‘Peer Review’ was provided by the Office of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman UK and circulated prior to the meeting. Taking into account that this version still leaves questions regarding the peer review process and the different areas of responsibility, and considering that no peer review has been undertaken in the past two years, the Secretary General recommended evaluating the peer review project in a more general way before publishing an updated version of the corresponding Best Practice Paper. European RP Reinier van Zutphen confirmed that the region will look into the matter of Peer Review – also in line with what has been discussed in the UN Working Group – and to see if and in what way the BPP on ‘Peer Review’ should be updated. **The Board agreed to put the publication of the updated version of the BPP on ‘Peer Review’ on hold and accepted the offer of the European RP to look into the matter of Peer Review and report to the Board on any updates.**
54. The European RP briefly presented the BPP on ‘Ombudsman Outreach Practices’, which is a result of the exchange of experiences and practices during the IOI World Conference in The Hague. He invited the Board and members from each region to add outreach practices to the paper and confirmed his intention to update the paper with more experiences and practices. **The Board acknowledged the presentation of the BPP on ‘Ombudsman Outreach Practices’ and welcomed the effort to update the paper with new experiences and practices from members.**
55. The office of the Ombudsman of Barcelona (*Sindicatura de Greuges de Barcelona*) indicated its interest to develop an IOI Best Practice Paper, with a view to presenting its work in the area of restorative justice to address sexual abuse in children through a Reparation Commission. **The Board congratulated the Ombudsman of Barcelona on such an important topic and approved that the institution develops the next issue of the IOI’s BPP series around this matter.**

AFRICAN COMPARATIVE STUDY

56. Regarding the African Comparative Study and the still pending contribution from Professor Ayeni to this project, African RP Kholeka Gcaleka informed the Board about talks she and IOI Treasurer Caroline Sokoni had with Prof. Ayeni. She confirmed Mr. Ayeni's intention to refund the IOI the money paid so far by July 2025. Should he not do that, Directors suggested sending out a letter from a lawyer to remind him of his duty.
57. Directors showed their concern about Prof. Ayeni's business conduct and practices and spoke out in favor of informing the wider IOI membership by disseminating this information in the regions through the respective RPs, with a view to protecting IOI members and partner organizations alike.
- 58. The Board appreciated the RP's initiative in this matter and endorsed refraining from legal action against Prof. Ayeni, as this would very likely cost more than the money spent.**
- 59. The Board further agreed to allow Prof. Ayeni the opportunity to pay off his debt by July 2025 and to issue a letter from a lawyer should that not be the case. Should this letter not yield any results, the Board agreed that IOI members should be informed about the misconduct of Prof. Ayeni.**
60. The African RP underlined, that the Region still wants to pursue the comparative study. She therefore pleaded that – should Prof. Ayeni in fact return the money – that it goes back to the comparative study. She informed the Board that preliminary talks have shown that the University of KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa) would be interested in pursuing this project.

REPORTS FROM THE REGIONS

61. The RPs of Africa, Asia, the Caribbean & Latin America, Europe and North America presented the most important developments, projects and achievements from their respective regions. These reports were based on the written reports circulated prior to the meeting and will be included in the IOI Annual Report 2024/2025. **The Board acknowledged the reports from the African, Asian, Caribbean & Latin American, European, and North American Region.**

NEXT MEETING OF THE BOARD

62. Caribbean & Latin American RP Keursly Concincion expressed his interest in hosting the next annual meeting of the IOI Board. **The Board gladly accepted Mr. Concincion's offer to host the annual meeting of the IOI Board in Curaçao in May 2026.**

63. Secretary General Achitz informed the Board about the 50th anniversary of the Austrian Ombudsman Board, which will be celebrated in 2027. He therefore invited the Board to hold its annual meeting in Vienna that year. **The Board gladly accepted the Secretary General's offer to host the meeting of the IOI Board in Vienna in May 2027.**

MINUTE OF SILENCE

64. The Board closed the meeting with a minute of silence to remember the late Dr. Peter Kostelka, former Ombudsman of Austria and Secretary General of the IOI.

ANNEX: Financial Summary

PROJECTS	approved expenditures in EUR
Audit 2025/2026 by Mazars Austria Ltd.	4,620.00
IOI fixed term deposit account	200,000.00
Regional subsidies 2025/2026	42,000.00
Spanish interpretation for webinar cooperation with African Ombudsman Research Centre (AORC)	2,000.00
Online media training for French-speaking members provided by <i>MediaFirst</i>	15,000.00
NPM Training provided by the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT)	25,000.00
TOTAL (if max. amounts apply)	288,620.00

PROJECTS	amount returned to IOI budget in EUR
IOI funding earmarked for OECD project	50,000.00
Reduce amount earmarked for UNITAR training	30,000.00
TOTAL (if max. amounts apply)	80,000.00