

**Topic : APT Engagement at the IOI World Conference (Association for the Prevention of Torture - APT)**

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### Introduction and Background

Since the adoption of the Optional Protocol on the Convention against Torture (OPCAT) in December 2002, 35 states have chosen to designate an ombudsman institution as their National Preventive Mechanism (NPM), either as a sole body or in coordination with others. 29 of these states are in Europe or Central Asia.

Ombudsman institutions that have been designated as NPMs face a number of challenges, including: plurality and expertise necessary for NPM work; conducting preventive visits while also receiving complaints and investigating allegations of torture; interaction between the NPM unit and other departments within the institution; allocation of sufficient resources to NPM work; and the ways in which they make recommendations, follow-up on their implementation, and engage in dialogue with government and other partners.

In 2013, the IOI Secretariat approached the APT to see whether we would be interested in developing a joint training project for ombuds institutions that have been designated as NPMs. As a first step, a questionnaire was developed and sent out by the IOI to 30 of their members, in order to assess their training needs regarding OPCAT implementation. This first step was followed by two workshops for Ombuds institutions as NPMs, one on Implementing a Preventive Mandate, held in Riga in 2015, and a second on Monitoring Psychiatric Institutions, held in Vilnius in 2016. APT also held a meeting in Warsaw in 2015 for a number of heads of ombuds institutions with NPM mandates, in order to discuss shared challenges and opportunities.

It is in this context that APT will participate in the IOI World Conference in Bangkok, in November 2016. We will speak as a panellist during a session on multiple mandates, as well as chair a Lunch Break Session for ombuds institutions with an NPM mandate.

### Objectives

The overall objectives are to:

- Explore the consequences of an NPM mandate for the working methods, structure and functioning of ombuds institutions, particularly in relation to the ways in which they make and follow-up on recommendations.
- Strengthen the capacity of ombuds institutions, including by identifying specific challenges and good practices in relation to such mandates.
- By further consolidating engagement with the IOI on NPM capacity-strengthening and NPM exchange, contribute to strengthening the IOI's focus on torture prevention and NPM effectiveness and lay the groundwork for further cooperation in the future.

Specific objectives of each session are below.

Breakout Session V, Challenges due to multiple mandates. 17 Nov 2016, 13.00-14.30 The specific

objectives of this session are to:

- Discuss specific challenges and good practices of ombuds institutions as NPMs, particularly relating to: internal structure, external cooperation, and composition of the NPM unit, including based on the Maldives' experience.
- Ensure the overall effectiveness of ombuds institutions with multiple mandates, including NPMs.

NPM lunch-break session. 17 Nov 2016, 12.00-13.30

The specific objectives of this session are to:

- Improve understanding among the heads of ombuds institutions working as NPMs of the preventive approach and how it complements their existing mandates.
- Foster discussion and exchange of experiences and good practices between heads of ombuds institutions on how best to integrate an NPM mandate within their institution, particularly in relation to their interaction with authorities and implementation of recommendations.