

**Draft Minutes of the European General Assembly held in Tallinn, Estonia
17 September 2014**

1. Introduction

The Regional President (Mr. Peter Tyndall) made a short welcoming address to all members in attendance.

2. Minutes of General Assembly held in Wellington, November 2012

The minutes of the previous Assembly held in Wellington in November 2012 were approved.

3. Report on Region's activities

The report on the Region's activities since the last Assembly was presented and summarized by the Regional President. The Regional President advised that, in addition to the organizations mentioned within the report, a regional Ombudsman from Austria (the Landesvolksanwalt Vorarlberg) has cancelled membership for financial reasons.

Mr. Kräuter advised that the IOI proposed to offer training on the National Preventative Mechanism in 2015. He also advised that negotiations with the World Bank regarding greater co-operation between the two organisations were at an advanced stage.

In response to a question from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, Mr. Nick Bennett, regarding the implementation of the ADR Directive, the Regional President advised that the situation was very different across Europe. Some jurisdictions already have mechanisms in place while other jurisdictions have so far made little progress on implementation. The Regional President informed the Assembly that the Secretariat will shortly be surveying the membership on this issue (implementation of the Directive) and will issue a report on the results.

In view of the Regional Board's recent decision to survey members on examples of good practice, a pilot survey on "own initiative investigations" would also issue from the Secretariat shortly.

4. Presentations on IOI-funded projects

The Northern Ireland Ombudsman, Mr. Tom Frawley presented on his Office's project on mainstreaming human rights into the daily work of the Ombudsman. He informed the Assembly that a memory stick would be made available to any interested members which contained a software package which would facilitate their Offices to test cases against human rights principles. A manual will also be made available as part of the completed project. Translation of the manual will be considered if needed. Training in the use of the software will be offered to the IOI Secretariat to enable them to support members in its use.

Ms. Ruta Silana presented on another IOI-funded project on behalf of the Ombudsman for Latvia. This project aims to develop an information campaign to combat human trafficking in order to prevent woman and girls from becoming victims of trafficking and/or to provide information on where to get help. The Regional President stated that it was very important that there was co-operation between Offices to highlight this issue.

5. Amendments to Rules

The Regional President introduced the proposed amended Regional Rules. He advised that the amendments to the Rules were necessary for a number of reasons – to incorporate changes as a result of the changes to the By-laws agreed in Wellington, to allow for an update in terminology and to incorporate the changes resulting from the recent decision to allow electronic voting. He stated that he hoped that these changes would enable more members to participate in decisions of the Region as not all members are able to attend meetings. In response to a query from the Ombudsman for Portugal, Mr. José Francisco de Faria Costa, regarding the security of electronic voting, the Regional President

stated that he was satisfied that the system is sufficiently secure and contains reasonable safeguards. The Regional President also signalled that a possible role for a Vice-President of the Region would be discussed at the next World Board Meeting in Vienna.

Following a ballot, the Assmebly voted to adopted the amended Regional Rules with 25 votes in favour and one spoiled vote.

6. Other items

Prof. Irena Lipowicz (Ombudsman, Poland) spoke briefly about the situation in Ukraine. She stated that in addition to many refugees, there were approximately 240,000 displaced persons within Ukraine. She said that the situation for these displaced persons was going to deteriorate as winter approaches. She expressed her view that members can encourage a humanitarian response even if they can't get involved in the political situation. It was agreed by the Assembly that a statement would issue on behalf of the members calling on their respective Governments to provide humanitarian assistance.

Assembly concluded.