

2025

ANNUAL REPORT



European
Ombudsman

2025

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Ombudsman

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FOREWORD

In February 2025, I started my mandate with the firm commitment that defending the rights of citizens across Europe would be at the heart of my work. One year later, in a rapidly changing Europe, this commitment remains as vital as ever before. Our shared values and democratic systems are facing significant challenges – geopolitical tensions, technological disruption, and a growing strain on public trust.

In times of uncertainty, citizens rightly expect more: more transparency, more accountability, and more meaningful engagement. At the same time, institutions and decision-makers often find themselves under pressure, navigating complex procedures while striving to deliver tangible results. The distance between expectations and actual outcomes can widen quickly.

In this defining moment, the work of the European Ombudsman proves to be not only relevant, but essential, as it stands as a fundamental safeguard – one that upholds accountability and protects citizens' rights when this is needed the most.

As an independent and impartial voice, the Ombudsman helps bridge the gap between citizens and institutions. By doing so, we strengthen the bond of trust that not only sustains our democratic institutions but also ensures that the European project remains faithful to its core values and principles.

The *Omnibus I* inquiry clearly illustrates the challenges facing European decision-making in a climate of permanent crisis management. As EU policymaking accelerates in response to geopolitical and technological pressures, urgency becomes the norm. Yet speed cannot come at the expense of legitimacy. My findings showed that swift legislative action and the respect for EU's core principles must go hand in hand. Faster laws still require firm democratic foundations.

Promoting and safeguarding good administration is central to meeting these challenges. My meetings in 2025 with the Heads of EU institutions marked an important step in strengthening a solution-oriented approach. Through constructive, trust-based dialogue, we support institutions in delivering results while upholding participation, transparency and accountability – the essential standards of sound administrative practice.



At the European Ombudsman, our determination, cooperation, and the unwavering commitment to our shared European values will be strengthened to uphold democracy – one complaint, one solution, and one decision at a time.

Transparency is another fundamental component of good administration. A significant portion of our work focuses on ensuring public access to documents, enabling citizens to follow and scrutinise decision-making processes. Here, improvements remain necessary, particularly in the timely and consistent handling of access requests. Strengthening these practices would reinforce accountability and public trust.

As our office marked three decades of service in 2025, we were also confronted with a record number of complaints. This increase may reflect greater awareness of both our role and of citizens' rights under EU law. It also mirrors broader developments of the digital era: increased accessibility to administrative processes, evolving expectations of responsiveness, and the growing impact of artificial intelligence on public administration. These dynamics bring important opportunities, but also new demands.


My predecessors often described this office as a small institution with a big mandate. That mandate is now framed by the strategy I have adopted, built on three pillars: listening carefully to citizens' complaints, using our decision-making powers with sound judgement and impact, and strengthening partnerships that enhance the quality of EU administration. Together, these priorities form the foundation of our work that is building a constructive bridge between Europeans and EU institutions.

Operational excellence is another central component of this strategy. In 2026, we will focus on adapting our internal organisation to evolving demands, strengthening our capacity in artificial intelligence, and ensuring that appropriate safeguards accompany technological developments.


Clear communication remains equally essential. We increasingly act as "qualified translators" between institutions and citizens, explaining complex administrative processes in accessible language. Promoting plain language is not a choice of style. It is a matter of accessibility and fairness.

Finally, our commitment also shapes our work within the European Network of Ombudsmen, which I am proud to coordinate. Our cooperation across Europe strengthens administrative standards and fosters shared learning. As we prepare to mark the Network's 30th anniversary in 2026, we will use this milestone to highlight our collective contribution to upholding good administration throughout Europe.

As we advance into 2026, our responsibility as guardians of fairness, transparency, and accountability is being tested by various challenges that require vigilance and leadership. We must continue to champion good administration, not as an abstract ideal, but as the bedrock of a Union that listens to its citizens. At the European Ombudsman, our determination, cooperation, and the unwavering commitment to our shared European values will be strengthened to uphold democracy – one complaint, one solution, and one decision at a time.



Teresa Anjinho, European Ombudswoman



1

STRATEGY

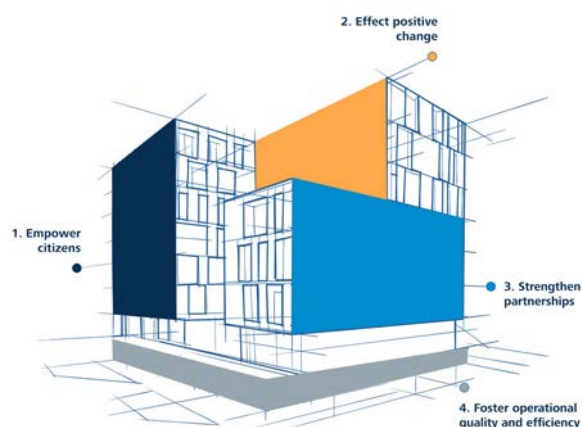
Building trust, driving change

European Ombudsman strategy for 2025-2029

The European Ombudsman published her strategy for the Office for the years 2025-2029 in November. This strategy will guide the Office's actions from its complaint-handling to its external activities, communication, and internal administration.

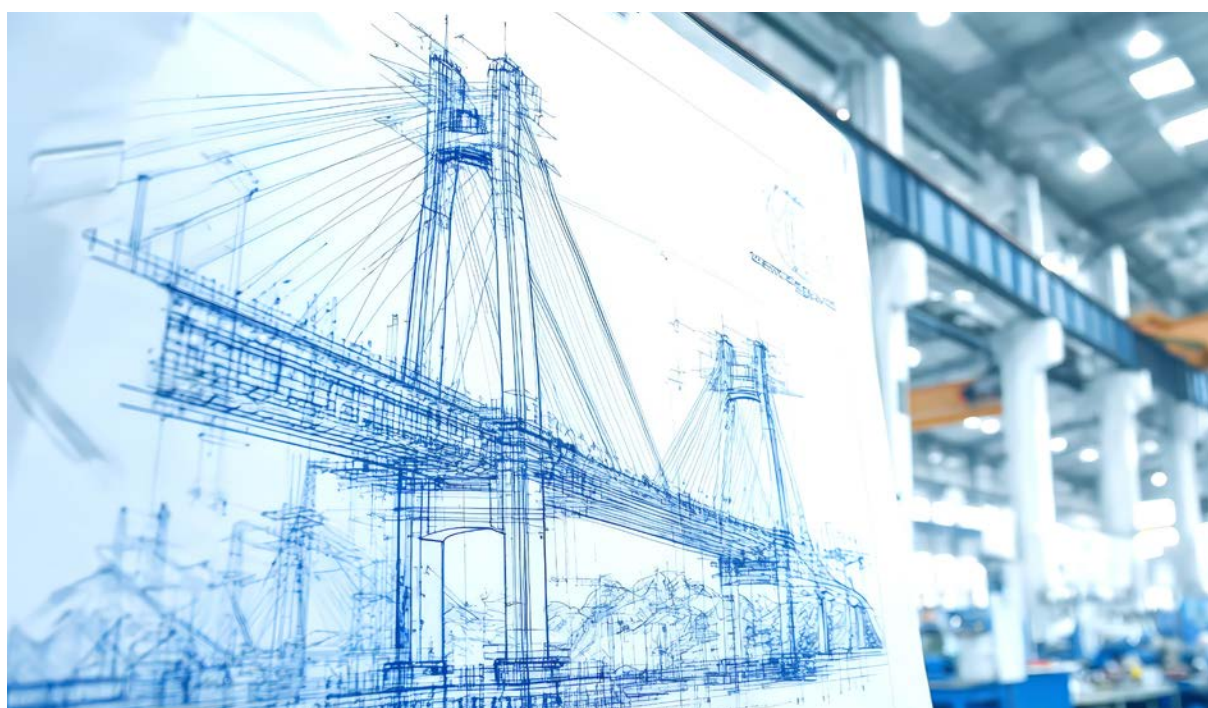
There are four overall objectives – empower citizens, effect positive change, strengthen partnerships, and foster operational quality and efficiency:

- **Empower citizens:** To raise awareness of the role of the European Ombudsman among citizens and civil society and ensure their voices are heard and rights upheld.
- **Effect positive change:** To drive institutional change and strengthen good administration by promoting fairness, integrity, transparency, and trust.
- **Strengthen partnerships:** To reach out and nurture collaborative relationships with stakeholders that can support and enhance the Ombudsman's effectiveness in protecting citizens' rights and promoting good administration.
- **Foster operational quality and efficiency:** To promote a forward looking, adaptable and service-minded Ombudsman's Office that exemplifies best practices, embraces innovation, and remains responsive to evolving trends and needs.



These are underpinned by the principles and values of the office, including treating people and organisations justly and equitably, upholding the highest standards of professional conduct, and promoting constructive dialogue and cooperation with institutions and stakeholders.

Implementation of the strategy will be monitored through an annual plan alongside measurable yearly goals to help achieve its objectives and priorities.





2025 AT A GLANCE

Key cases

Revolving doors

The first own-initiative inquiry launched by the Ombudswoman focuses on how EU agencies manage revolving doors. With agencies feeding into policies that concern issues from medicines to food safety to defence, it is important that the rules governing moves by EU staff to the private sector are implemented properly.

Urgent decision making

Among the key issues examined by the Ombudswoman in 2025 was how to ensure accountability when decisions are taken in an urgent manner. Three inquiries explored this issue, which related to legislative proposals to simplify rules for farmers, to simplify corporate sustainability rules, and to counter migrant smuggling.

Artificial Intelligence

Another key topic of inquiries in 2025 concerned AI, including how the European Commission ensures transparency, inclusiveness, and accountability in the adoption of harmonised standards for artificial intelligence.

Statistics in a nutshell



3 490

New complaints handled



492

Inquiries opened



35%

of inquiries were related to transparency issues

*compared to the year 2024

Speeches in focus

“

Ombudsmen are not merely complaint handlers or problem solvers. We are instigators and educators.

Welcome address to European Network of Ombudsmen Conference 2025

“

[...] disability rights are not special rights. They are equal rights [...]

Work of the European Ombudsman in relation to persons with disabilities

“

By working together – by insisting on transparency, fairness, and accountability – we strengthen the rule of law.

Monitoring compliance with the rule of law by the European Union

Highlights of the year



Oath of office before the Court of Justice (February)



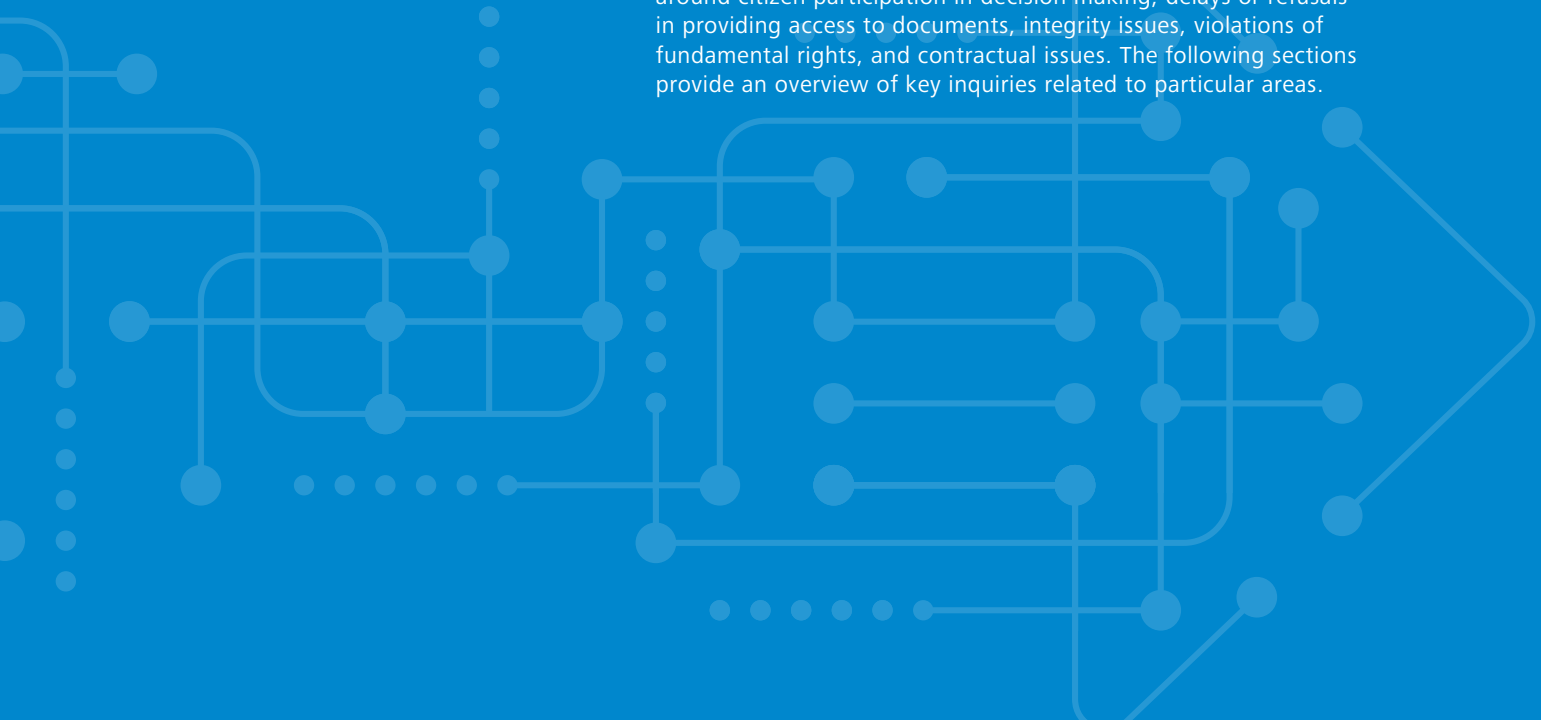
30th anniversary of the European Ombudsman (September)



Annual European Network of Ombudsmen Conference (November)

3 KEY TOPICS

The Ombudsman helps people, businesses, and organisations facing problems with the EU administration. These can include difficulties around citizen participation in decision making, delays or refusals in providing access to documents, integrity issues, violations of fundamental rights, and contractual issues. The following sections provide an overview of key inquiries related to particular areas.



3.1. Participatory decision making

Participatory decision making was a key matter for the European Ombudsman Office in 2025 as civil society organisations filed complaints about the way the European Commission simplified existing legislation or introduced new legislation to meet new policy priorities.

Recommendation on *Omnibus I*, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), and countering migrant smuggling

In November, the Ombudsman issued a finding of maladministration after having identified a number of procedural shortcomings in the way four pieces of legislation were prepared. The legislative drafts concerned corporate sustainability reporting for companies, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), and countering migrant smuggling.

The inquiry found that, in the preparation of these legislative proposals, the Commission did not comply with certain parts of its own Better Regulation rules, which are meant to ensure law-making is evidence-based, transparent, and inclusive.

The procedural shortcomings identified in the Ombudsman's inquiries included failing to fully justify the urgency of the legislative proposals to the public and failing to document reasoning for deviating from internal rules on law making. There were also other problems specific to each legislative proposal.

In two forward-looking recommendations to the Commission, the Ombudsman asked it to ensure a predictable, consistent, and non-arbitrary application of the Better Regulation rules and that future urgent preparation of legislative proposals is always transparent, evidence-based, and inclusive.

The Ombudsman also made a number of suggestions in light of the upcoming revision of the Better Regulation rules. These include clarifying minimum standards for stakeholder consultations in urgent procedures and that climate assessments should be carried out for all legislative proposals.

The Ombudsman asked the Commission to send a detailed reply to her recommendation by 25 February 2026.

🔍 Cases: [983/2025/MIK](#) – the “Omnibus” case, [2031/2024/VB](#) – the “migration” case, and [1379/2024/MIK](#) – the “CAP” case



Ombudsman welcomes EIB decision to proactively publish more environmental and social data

Following an inquiry by the Ombudsman Office, the European Investment Bank (EIB) said it would start publishing its environmental and social assessments for projects located outside the EU that are likely to have a significant impact on the environment ahead of the adoption of financing decisions by its Board of Directors. This should allow the public to more meaningfully participate in the assessment of the environmental and social aspects of projects the EIB is considering funding.

The measures were implemented after an [inquiry concerning the Bank's refusal to give public access to the environmental and social assessment of a project in Nairobi, Kenya](#) as well as its general practice of not publishing such information until after financing decisions have been taken. The Ombudsman welcomed the new measures.

🔍 Case [2252/2022/OAM](#)

3.2. Accountability in decision making

Inquiry concerning the development of EU standards for artificial intelligence



The Ombudswoman opened an inquiry into how the European Commission ensures transparency, inclusiveness, and accountability in the adoption of harmonised standards for artificial intelligence (AI). The complainant, a civil society organisation, was concerned by the fact that the standardisation bodies responsible for developing the standards for the Commission – the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) and the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardisation (CENELEC) – are not required to publicly disclose information about the individuals working on them and do not publish the minutes of their meetings. The complainant also argued that the Commission had failed to ensure a balanced representation of interests in the standardisation process. The Commission asked the standardisation bodies to create harmonised standards and ensure they will contribute to minimising the risks stemming from AI to safety and fundamental rights. The Ombudswoman asked the Commission about the composition of the group preparing the standards, the transparency rules applied by standardisation bodies, how the Commission manages and monitors the standardisation process, and how it will review its outcomes.


 Case [1974/2025/MIK](#)

Commission fails to address delays in the authorisation procedure for chemicals

The Ombudswoman closed her Office's inquiry into how the European Commission decides on applications by companies for [authorisations for particularly dangerous chemicals](#) and concluded that it had failed to address the issue of lengthy delays in the process. The Ombudsman Office had found maladministration in 2024 and asked the Commission to reduce the lengthy time it takes to prepare draft authorisation decisions under the EU Regulation on the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH).

However, the Commission's response did not address the recommendation from the Ombudsman Office to review its lengthy internal procedures, nor did it accept the recommendation that applications containing insufficient information be promptly dismissed so that those companies can no longer use the dangerous substances in the EU.

The Ombudswoman reiterated that the Commission needs to take further steps to fully implement the goals of the REACH regulation and recent case law to avoid lengthy delays in the risk management of chemical substances.

 Case [01/2/2023/MIK](#)

3.3. Transparency

Transparency issues, and particularly access to documents requests, continued to account for the greatest proportion (35%) of inquiries in 2025. The Ombudsman aims to ensure that the law governing access to EU documents (Regulation 1049/2001) is applied in a rigorous and fair manner by the EU administration. This means that those requesting documents should either get the documents they are looking for in a timely manner or receive well-reasoned justifications for access not being granted.

The European Commission's refusal to give public access to a risk assessment report by X

With the Digital Services Act being a key piece of EU legislation for establishing accountability in digital services and ensuring a safe online environment for users, the Ombudsman found maladministration in the European Commission's [refusal to analyse the risk assessment of social media platform X for disclosure](#). When a journalist requested access to X's report, the Commission refused, arguing that it could be generally presumed that disclosure could undermine the company's commercial interests as well as an ongoing investigation into its compliance with the Digital Services Act. The Ombudsman found that it was unreasonable for the Commission to apply a general presumption of non-disclosure. While X itself made the report public with redactions, the Ombudsman recommended that the Commission conduct an individual assessment of the document for disclosure. The Ombudsman asked that the assessment aim at granting the journalist the widest access possible, possibly including to the redactions made by the company.



Case [1746/2024/MIG](#)

Inquiry into how Commission handled access request for text message concerning Mercosur negotiations

The Ombudsman opened an inquiry into how the Commission handled an access to documents request [for a text message its President received from the French President](#) regarding trade negotiations with Mercosur countries. The Commission explained to the complainant, a journalist, that based on the internal rules in place, it had assessed that there was no obligation to register the text message in question. In addition, the 'disappearing messages' feature was activated on the President's phone. The Ombudsman's Office asked to review documents that detail the steps taken by the Commission in dealing with this access request. The Office also asked to review documents that explain the Commission's policies on corporate mobile phone use and the retention of text and instant messages.

Case [2482/2025/NH](#)

Delays in dealing with access to documents requests

In 2025, there continued to be inquiries concerning lengthy delays by the Commission in dealing with access requests, including a request concerning the [meeting minutes of the Network and Information Systems Cooperation Group](#), a group hosted by the Commission to discuss cybersecurity matters. Although the Commission ultimately granted wide access to the documents in question, it responded to the complainant's request for a review of its initial decision (confirmatory application) only after almost a year had passed.

Case [228/2024/NH](#)

Driving positive change

Throughout the year, several Ombudsman Office inquiries led to improved access for people and organisations that requested documents.

1. One case concerned a request for public access to documents related to the [Commission's proposal for applying the 'rule of law procedure' in Hungary](#). The Commission identified fourteen documents as falling within the scope of the request and disclosed all but parts of three documents. Following an intervention by the Ombudswoman, the Commission gave full access to the requested documents.

Case [646/2024/PVV](#)

2. An inquiry concerning the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) resulted in the agency moving from granting access to two of 76 documents related to [reception conditions in several Cypriot migration management facilities](#) to granting access to 64 of the remaining documents.

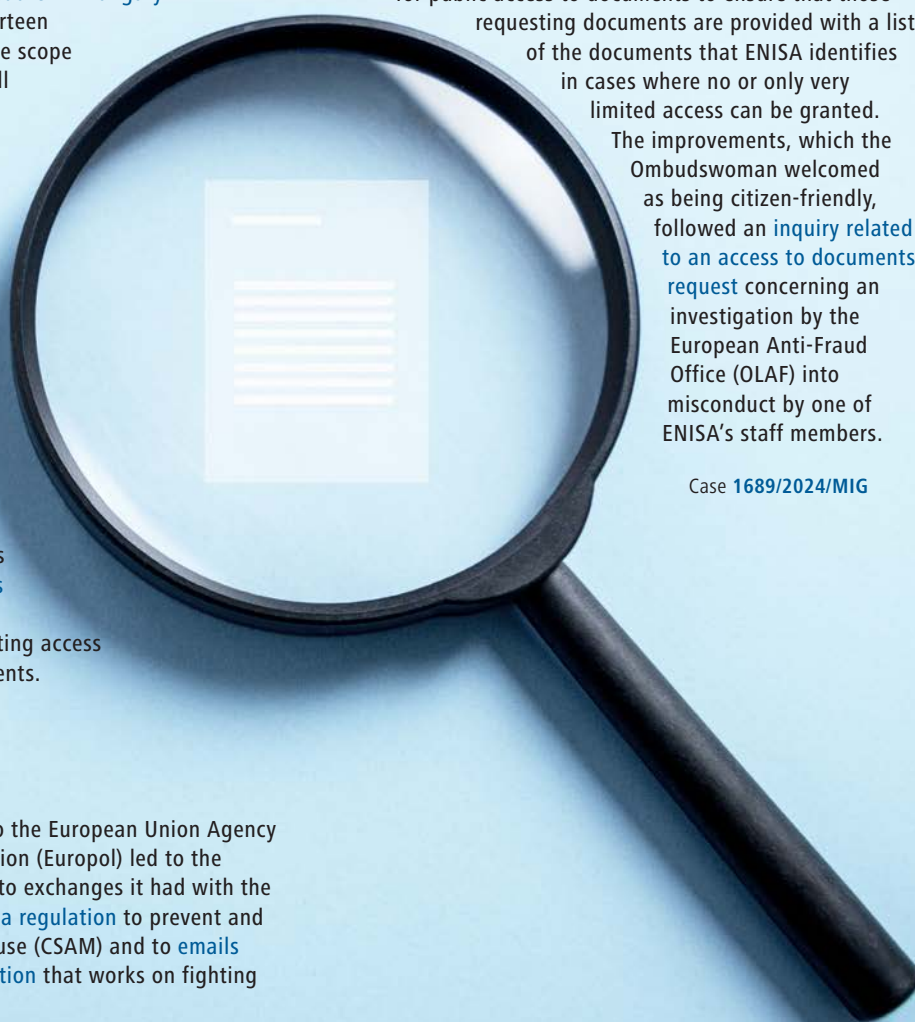
Case [724/2024/AML](#)

3. Two inquiries related to the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) led to the agency granting wider access to exchanges it had with the [Commission on a proposal for a regulation to prevent and combat online child sexual abuse \(CSAM\)](#) and to [emails it exchanged with an organisation that works on fighting online child sexual abuse](#).

Cases: [1372/2024/OAM](#) and [2219/2024/OAM](#)

4. The European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) updated its internal policy on dealing with requests for public access to documents to ensure that those requesting documents are provided with a list of the documents that ENISA identifies in cases where no or only very limited access can be granted. The improvements, which the Ombudswoman welcomed as being citizen-friendly, followed an [inquiry related to an access to documents request](#) concerning an investigation by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) into misconduct by one of ENISA's staff members.

Case [1689/2024/MIG](#)



3.4. Integrity standards

How EU agencies deal with 'revolving door' cases

The Ombudsman opened an own-initiative inquiry into the handling of revolving doors by EU agencies. These agencies contribute to the implementation of EU policies across a wide range of areas. The inquiry is focused on 15 agencies whose work involves significant contact with the private sector and is examining how they managed recent revolving doors cases concerning members of management boards and senior staff. The agencies were also asked for information on the policies they have in place for managing such cases, including rules on intended post-mandate and post-service activities, as well as the criteria and guidance used to assess post-employment restrictions.

The inquiry builds on previous own-initiative work by the Ombudsman Office into how the European Commission manages moves by EU staff to related work in the private sector. The aim is to ensure that there is a common understanding of what revolving doors are and that the rules for mitigating potential situations of conflicts of interest are applied uniformly. The results of the inquiry are expected in early 2026.

🔍 Case [OI/5/2025/KR](#)

European Commission improves conflict of interest measures for experts evaluating European Defence Fund projects

Following a separate inquiry, the Commission put in place measures to ensure that external experts who evaluate project proposals for the European Defence Fund (EDF) do not have any conflicts of interest.

The measures include asking expert candidates to list family members with links to the defence industry and to outline their direct financial investments in defence companies. Other steps included enhancing the IT tool for managing the evaluation of EDF proposals so that it can automatically search for potential conflict of interest details beyond the information already given by the experts themselves. The Ombudsman welcomed the new measures.

🔍 Case [OI/5/2023/KR](#)

Revolving doors at the European Commission



The Ombudsman Office's work on revolving doors over the years has alerted the EU institutions to the importance of managing this issue in a strong and coherent manner. In 2025, this effect was made evident when the Commission carried out a robust assessment of whether a former EU official from its competition department could work on a specific competition case dealt with by the Commission for their new employer. Following its assessment, which looked into the real, potential, and perceived conflicts of interest, the Commission concluded that the former staff member should not work on the case in question. The Ombudsman welcomed this approach in her decision closing an inquiry into this matter.

🔍 Case [2231/2024/KR](#)

European Commission implements measures for staff work trips paid for by third parties

A further inquiry led to the Commission implementing measures to ensure that staff work trips paid for by third parties do not give rise to conflicts of interest. The Commission agreed to record the nature of third parties paying for staff work trips and the costs borne by them, as well as its assessments of potential and perceived conflicts of interest. The inquiry had examined how the Commission assessed and mitigated potential conflicts of interest related to work travel following revelations that a former Commission director-general travelled to Qatar and received hospitality paid for by third parties. The Ombudsman welcomed the Commission's constructive engagement on the matter.

🔍 Case [OI/1/2024/KR](#)

3.5. Fundamental rights

Monitoring of EU funds granted in the context of border management operations




The Ombudsman Office closed an inquiry into [how the European Commission ensures fundamental rights compliance in the context of EU funds granted to Greece for border management](#) in early 2025 and made some suggestions for improvement. In particular, she urged the Commission to put in place guidelines for assessing compliance with fundamental rights throughout the course of the programme's implementation. There were also suggestions about the transparency of the monitoring process and measures to strengthen the involvement of civil society.

In response to the suggestions, the Commission said it would continue working closely with the Greek authorities to ensure a robust system for monitoring investigations concerning fundamental rights allegations and ensuring the necessary follow up. It also said that it would request the Greek authorities publish other relevant documents to ensure greater transparency and request more meaningful participation for civil society organisations.

 Case [1418/2023/VS](#)

Respect for human rights in the context of the EU-Tunisia Memorandum of Understanding

In response to an Ombudsman Office inquiry into how the Commission intends to [guarantee respect for human rights in the context of the EU-Tunisia Memorandum of Understanding](#), the Commission said it would encourage relevant EU delegations, implementing partners, and partner countries to take all steps necessary to ensure that fundamental rights are upheld, including setting up complaints mechanisms to receive allegations about breaches of human rights.

 Case [OI/2/2024/MHZ](#)

The time taken by the European Commission to conclude an infringement procedure

The Ombudswoman found maladministration in [the time taken by the Commission to conclude an infringement procedure – opened in 2016 – against Spain about its compliance with EU environmental noise rules](#). The finding followed a complaint by a group of citizens concerned by airport noise in Spain. The Ombudswoman found that there was a period of three years showing no trace of any action taken by the Commission. The Ombudswoman noted that given the major public health implications, she expected the Commission to deal with the infringement procedure as a matter of priority.

 Case [410/2025/EIS](#)

Failure to provide clear information about the applicable deadline for submitting a complaint

Following an inquiry, the Ombudswoman asked the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) in future to ensure that when it informs a person concerned of the closure of an investigation, [it provides timely and clear information on the possibility to turn to the Controller of Procedural Guarantees](#). This suggestion came after the inquiry showed that OLAF failed to provide clear information to the firm concerned about the deadline for submitting a complaint. This meant that the firm submitted the complaint after the deadline, and the Controller rejected it.

 Case [1827/2024/FA](#)

3.6. EU personnel

The Ombudsman dealt with a number of complaints concerning the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) during 2025. In several inquiries, the Ombudsman found that EPSO had acted reasonably, but in one inquiry she found [maladministration for how it handled a complaint related to technical issues](#) during remote testing in a staff selection procedure. In another inquiry, the Ombudsman suggested that EPSO in future give clear and complete replies to candidates who have requested a review. The reply should inform them whether a review has taken place and about the reasons for EPSO's decision. In a further inquiry, the Ombudsman [found maladministration for how EPSO dealt with a request from a candidate who had recently given birth](#) and wanted to reschedule an oral test.

Dealing with harassment allegations

In 2025, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) said it would implement suggestions from the Ombudsman Office on how to improve its [investigations into harassment allegations](#). This follows a decision in the previous year in which the Ombudsman Office found maladministration for the time it took OLAF – almost three years – to conclude an investigation into alleged harassment by a staff member at an EU agency. In its reply to the Ombudsman Office, OLAF said it agreed that it needs dedicated rules on investigations into harassment allegations and that it also aims to issue an internal guide on best practices and standards for these investigations.

 Case [2414/2023/PB](#)



3.7. Grants and contracts

Maladministration in the handling of a grant application and concerns regarding a potential conflict of interest

Following an inquiry, the Ombudsman asked the European Commission to in future avoid [rejecting a grant application](#) on the basis of an obvious clerical error. The findings came after the Commission turned down a grant application – rather than ask for clarifications – because the applicant sought EU funding above the maximum percentage allowed under the call. The Ombudsman also found that the Commission did not adequately assess the allegations of the complainant concerning a potential conflict of interest in the awarding of the grant in question.

 Case [1846/2023/FA](#)

Delays by the European Commission in handling payments

The Ombudsman opened an inquiry into the length of time it was taking the Commission to [process payments to a service provider](#) in the context of their work on the “Strengthening the Global Gateway Investment Agenda Development and Implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean” programme. The delay affected payment to the subcontractor who provided services until October 2024 but still had not been paid by May 2025 when he submitted a complaint to the Ombudsman Office. As a result of the Ombudsman's inquiry, the Commission resolved the matter, apologised for the delay, and paid the outstanding amount and related interest to the service provider who then paid the complainant.

 Case [01/2/2025/LA](#)



COMPLAINTS AND INQUIRIES: HOW WE HELP THE PUBLIC





The core function of the European Ombudsman is to help people and organisations that face problems with the EU administration by dealing with the complaints they submit. Through inquiries, the Ombudsman not only aims to address these problems but also seeks to promote good administrative practices within the EU institutions.

The Ombudsman Office takes a solution-oriented approach to dealing with complaints. To achieve this, the Office prioritises engagement with the EU institutions, bodies, and agencies – a method that fosters trust with the EU administration while allowing the Ombudsman to conduct its oversight tasks in a fully independent manner.

The Office's diverse team of case handlers and the multilingual website reflect the Ombudsman's commitment to helping those seeking assistance in all 24 official languages of the EU.

While the Ombudsman is not always in a position to inquire into all complaints received, the Office nonetheless tries to help those who seek assistance.

In 2025, there was a steep rise in the number of complaints handled by the Ombudsman Office – 54% more than in 2024. This is understood to be partially due to complainants learning about the Ombudsman's existence through their use of AI tools.

It is extremely positive that there is greater public awareness about citizens' rights and our work and that this heightened awareness has led to an increase of 19% in inquiries opened by the Ombudsman over the past year. At the same time, the surge in complaints and the work needed to process and analyse them has put a significant strain on the Office's resources.

This is especially challenging when the advice provided by AI is not accurate, leading – among other things – to a steep rise in inadmissible complaints (+86%). These complaints are often deemed inadmissible because the complainant has not initially turned to the institution in question. While in previous years the Office would have advised the complainant to turn to the relevant institution first, with many of these new complaints, the institution mentioned is in many instances not actually responsible for the matter at hand.

Other complaints arise because the complainant does not accept an EU institution's argument that it is not responsible for the issue raised. The complainant then turns to the Ombudsman with the Office, after having gone through the complaint and the arguments, ending up confirming that the EU body was correct.

4.1. Type and source of complaints

4.1.1. Overview of complaints and strategic inquiries

The Ombudsman may open an inquiry only into complaints that are within the mandate and have fulfilled the necessary 'admissibility criteria', such as the complainant having previously tried to resolve the matter directly with the institution involved.

The subject matter of the Ombudsman's inquiries derives from the Ombudsman's mandate and the complaints received. However, in addition to the core work on complaints, the Ombudsman may also use strategic inquiries to address broader systemic issues in the EU institutions or, under certain circumstances, open own-initiative inquiries following a complaint submitted by a complainant outside the EU.

Advice and complaints in 2025



20 182 Advice given through the Interactive Guide on the Ombudsman's website



3 490 New complaints handled



910 Requests for information replied to by the Ombudsman's services



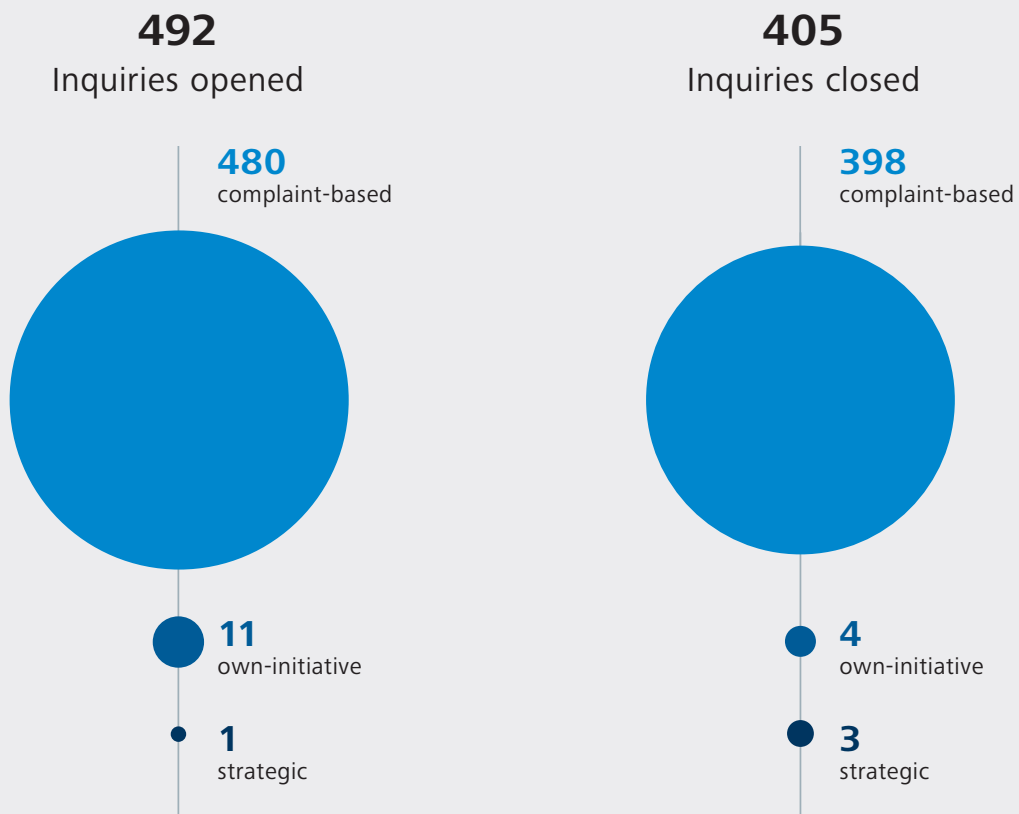
459 Email complaints redirected to the online form, with guidance on the Ombudsman's mandate

4.1.2. Strategic inquiries and strategic initiatives in 2025

Beyond inquiries into specific complaints about maladministration in the EU institutions, the European Ombudsman also has the power to proactively work on broader strategic issues. Strategic inquiries investigate wider systemic issues affecting the EU institutions while strategic initiatives are requests for clarification rather than formal inquiries.

In 2025, the Ombudswoman opened a strategic inquiry into [how EU agencies deal with 'revolving door' cases](#) and closed three strategic inquiries. Two concerned accountability matters – [how the Commission deals with third parties paying for work travel and hospitality for its staff members](#), and [how the Commission applies the rules governing the transparency of expert groups](#). The third closed strategic inquiry concerned the [Commission's risk management of dangerous chemical substances](#). The Office also closed one strategic initiative on how the Commission ensures that the revised rules governing the [Joint Sickness Insurance Scheme \(JSIS\) for EU staff guarantee comprehensive coverage for disability-related health needs](#).

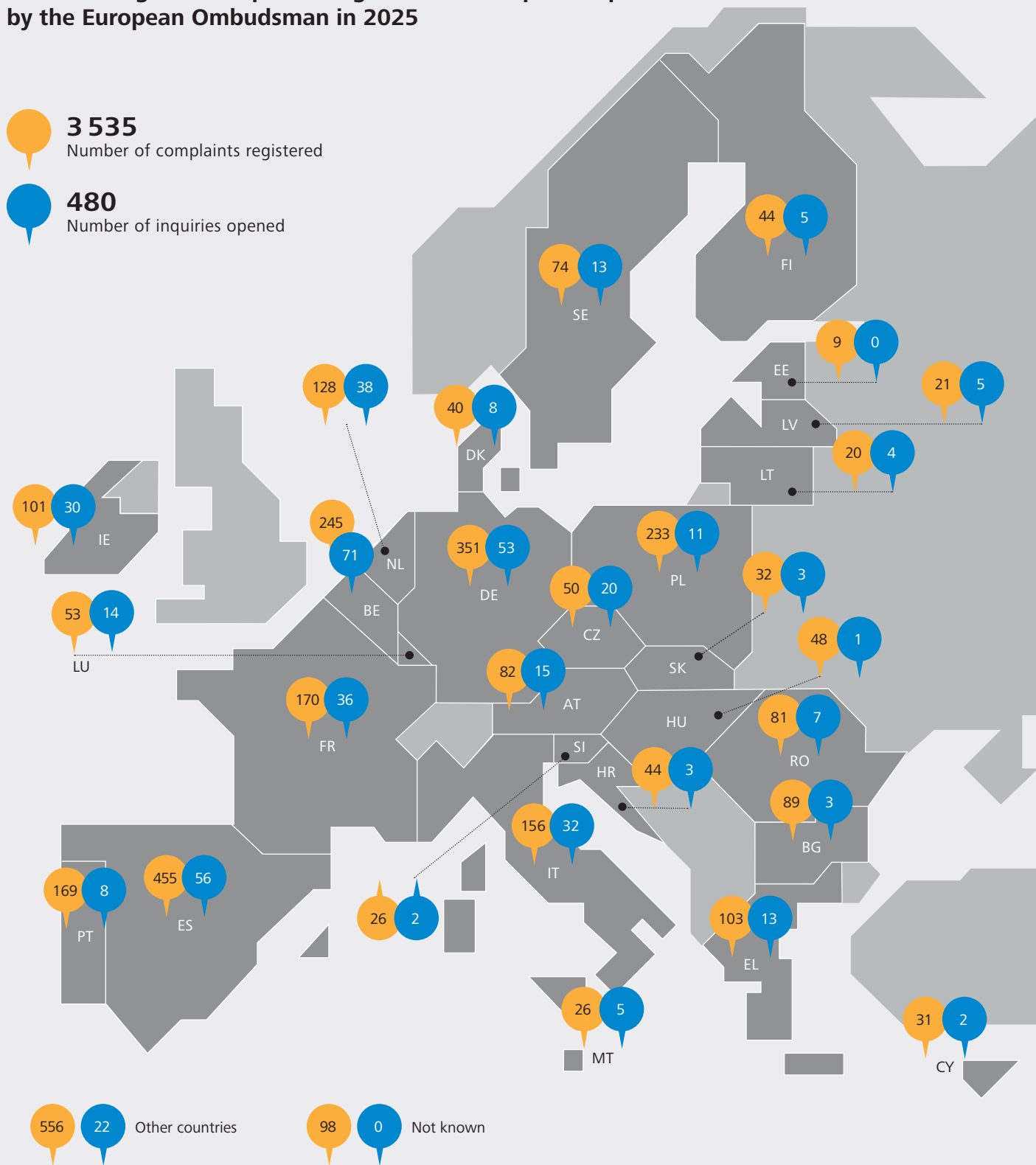
Inquiries by the European Ombudsman in 2025



National origin of complaints registered and inquiries opened by the European Ombudsman in 2025

3 535
Number of complaints registered

480
Number of inquiries opened



4.1.3. Complaints outside the Ombudsman's mandate (OMCs)

In 2025, the Office processed a record number of complaints (2 249) that did not fall within the mandate, often because they did not concern the work of the EU administration. This increase (+62% compared to 2024) appears to be in part the result of artificial intelligence being used to help formulate complaints. Out of mandate complaints from Spain, Germany, and Poland accounted for 32% of the total of such complaints. Spain accounted for 14%, with the two other countries accounting for 10% and 8% respectively.

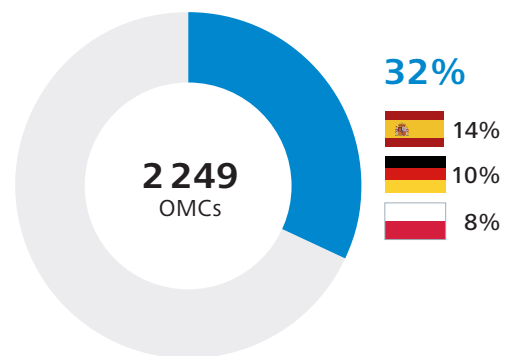
Complaints related to public services and administrative transparency were the most frequent while others were related to a range of issues and institutions including national courts, healthcare, and the free movement of people.

Other complaints the Office received did concern EU institutions, particularly the European Commission, but as they related to political work or the merits of legislation, they were outside the Ombudsman's mandate.

Besides complaints sent by a single person, business, or organisation, the Ombudsman also received several mass complaints that fell outside the mandate. These concerned the situation in the Middle East, the Readiness 2030 European defence initiative, and the annulment of the 2024 presidential elections in Romania.

The Ombudsman replied to all those seeking help in the language of their complaint or of their preference. The replies clarified the Ombudsman's mandate and, as far as possible, advised complainants to turn to other bodies that could help. While these were usually national and regional ombudsman institutions, the Ombudsman also guided complainants to national public authorities and rights and consumer protection organisations in the Member States.

Depending on the issue raised, and where suitable, the Office also advised complainants to contact EU institutions (mostly the European Commission and the European Parliament) or Europe-wide networks, such as SOLVIT and the European Consumer Centres.

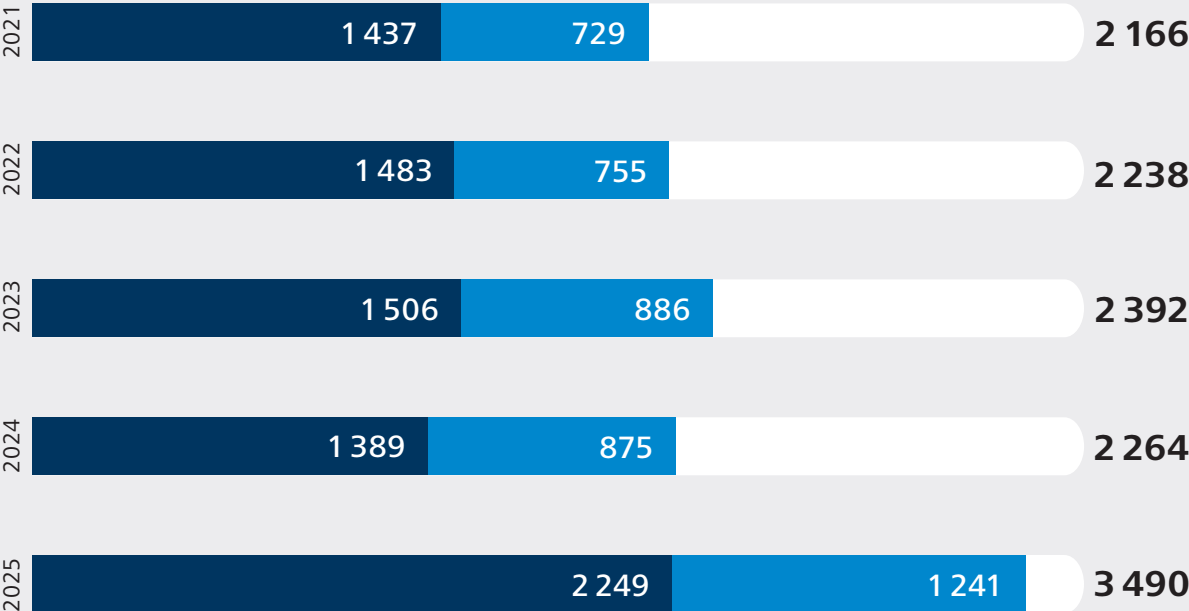


Where complainants were unhappy with specific EU legislation, the Ombudsman generally advised them to turn to the European Parliament's Committee on Petitions. Those who raised issues relating to the implementation of EU law at national level were referred to national or regional ombudsmen, or to EU services, such as Europe Direct, Your Europe, and the E-Justice Portal.

A key improvement in October 2025 was the introduction of a structured process for complaints received by email. Instead of recording them in the Office's complaint management system and processing them, the Office now responds with a standard message providing information about the Ombudsman's mandate and directing complainants to the online complaint form, which guides them through the essential elements needed to submit a complete complaint within the mandate.

This approach ensures that e-mail complaints are handled in a supportive way, while helping complainants submit all the required and relevant information. This change was decisive in reducing the proportion of out-of-mandate complaints from approximately 67% in the first ten months of the year to 47% in November and December 2025.

Number of complaints 2021-2024

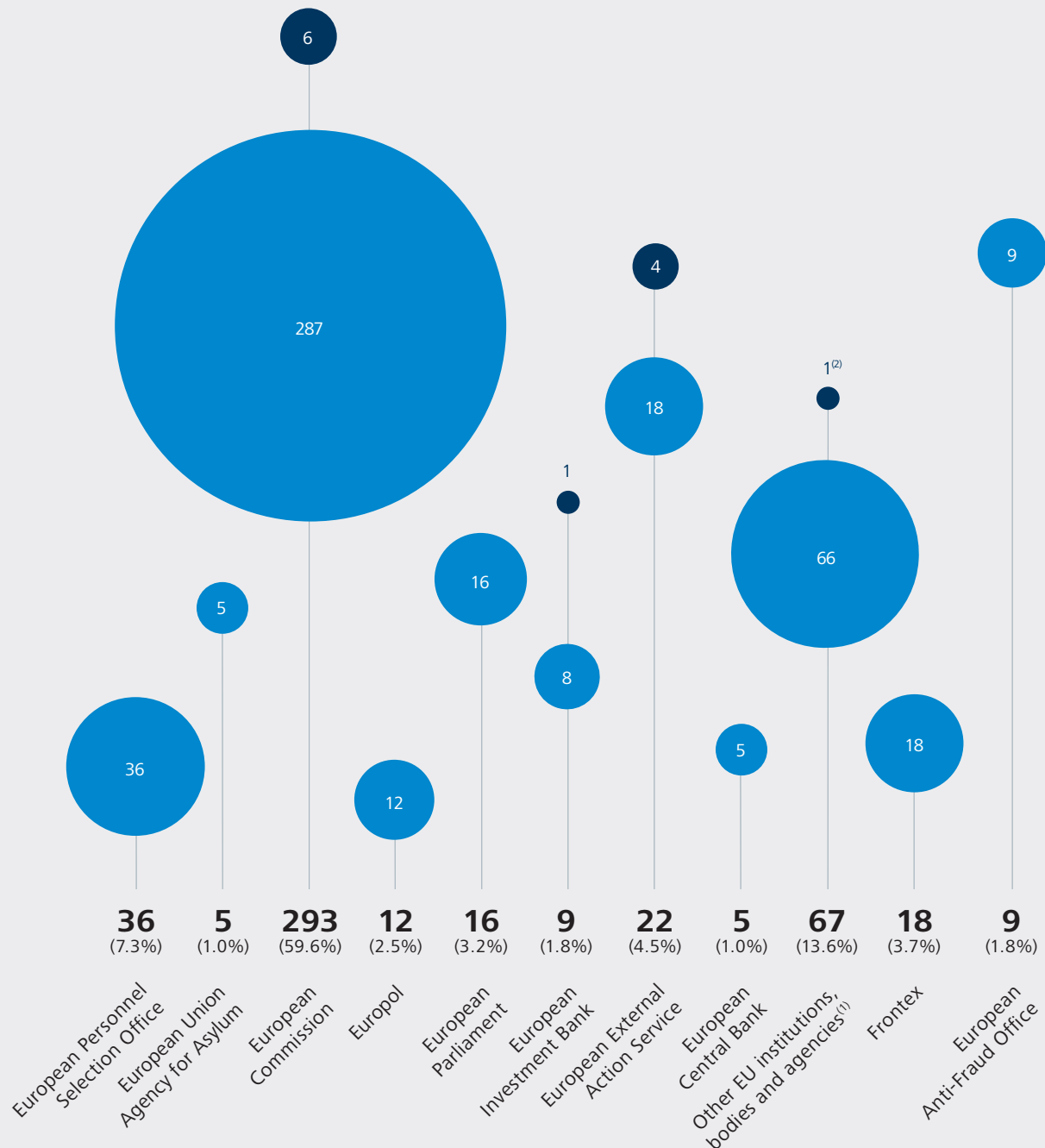


Complaints outside the mandate of the European Ombudsman

Complaints inside the mandate of the European Ombudsman

4.2. Against whom?

Inquiries conducted by the European Ombudsman in 2025 concerned the following institutions



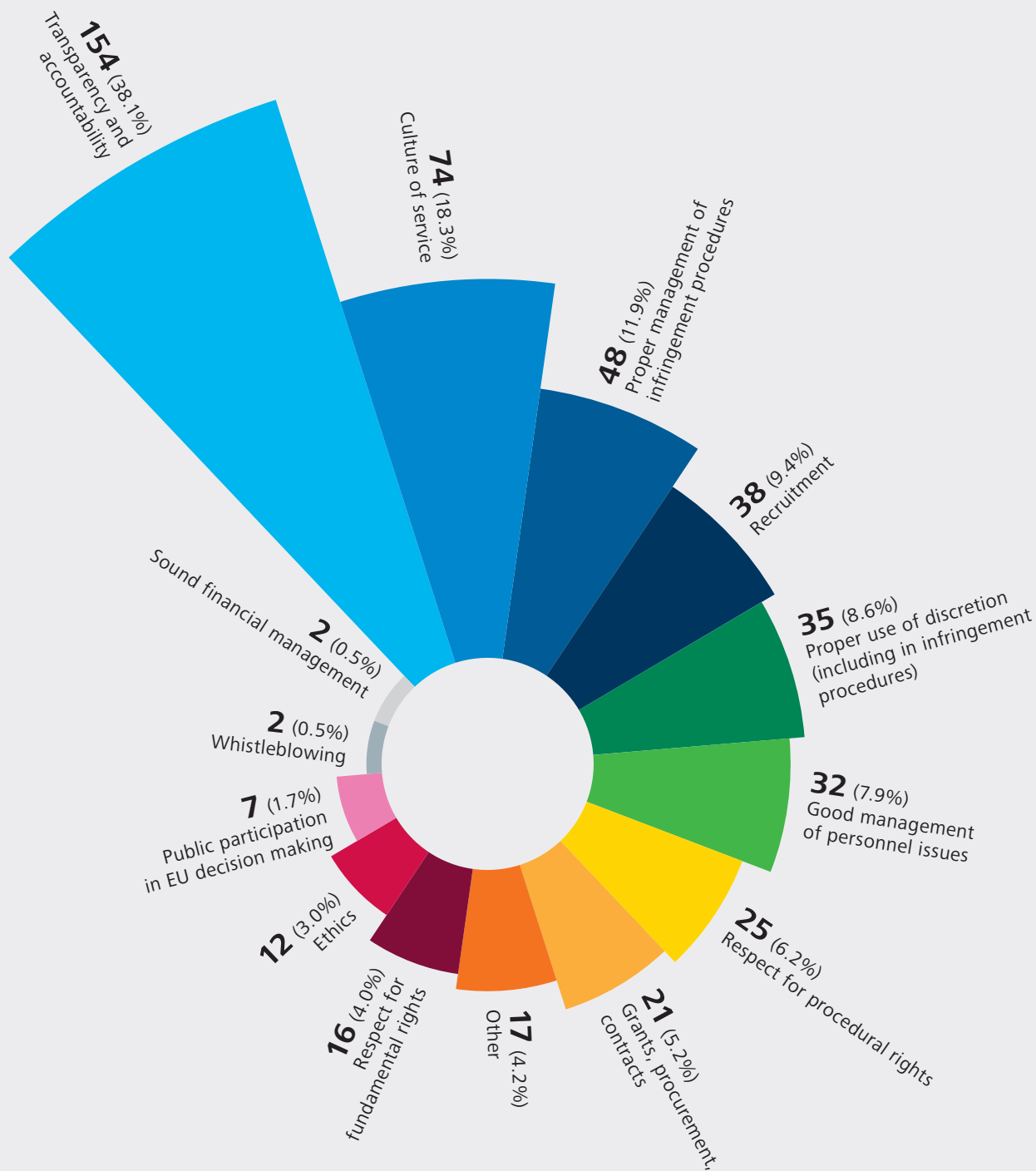
● Complaint-based inquiries ● Own-initiative inquiries

1. EIOPA (5), EMA (5), EUIPO (4), ENISA (4), EASA (4), AMLA (4), EESC (3), EPPO (3), EDPS (3), Council of the EU (3), EIT (3), EACEA (2), REA (2), EFSA (2), ESMA (2), CINEA (2), EBA (2), EUSPA (2), EDA (2), ELA (2), SRB (2), ECHA (2), APPF (2), EIF (1), BEREC (1), EEA (1), EMSA (1), Eurojust (1), eu-LISA (1), EISMEA (1), Eurofound (1), FRA (1), SatCen (1), ECA (1), OP (1), CEPOL (1), HaDEA (1) and ACER (1).

2. OI/5/2025/KR is against several EU institutions, bodies and agencies.

4.3. About what?

Subject matter of inquiries closed by the European Ombudsman in 2025



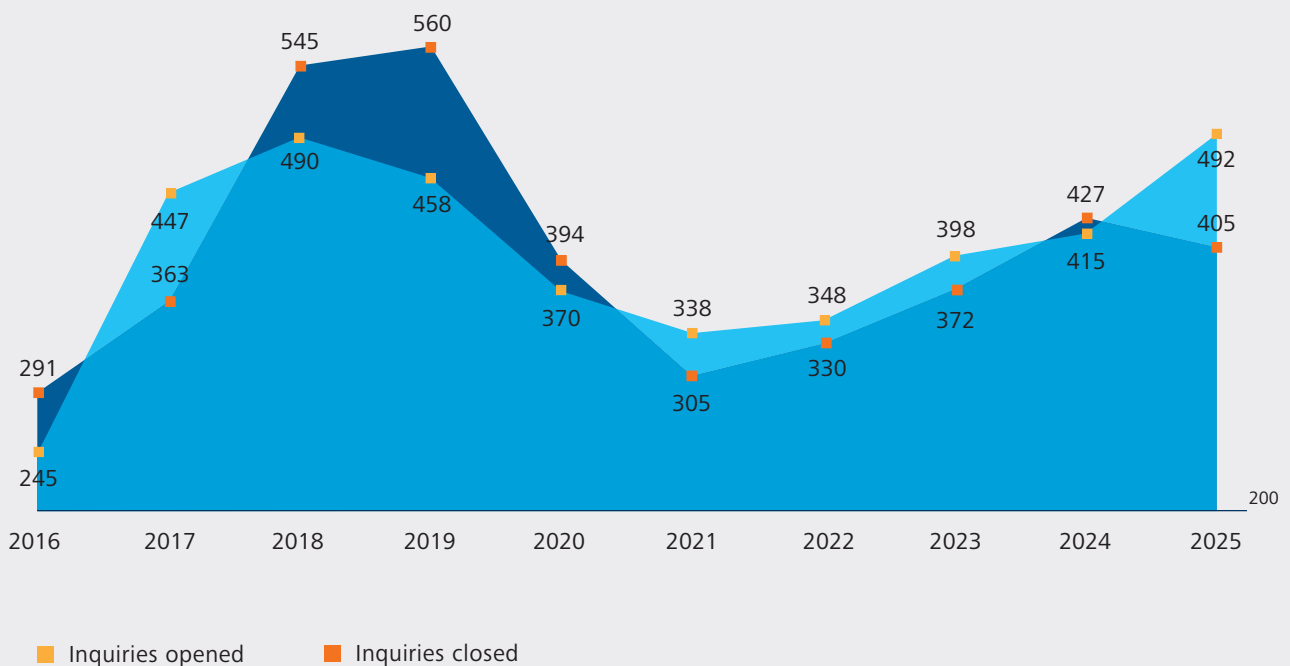
Note: In some cases, the Ombudsman closed inquiries with two or more subject matters. The above percentages therefore total more than 100%.

4.4. Results achieved?

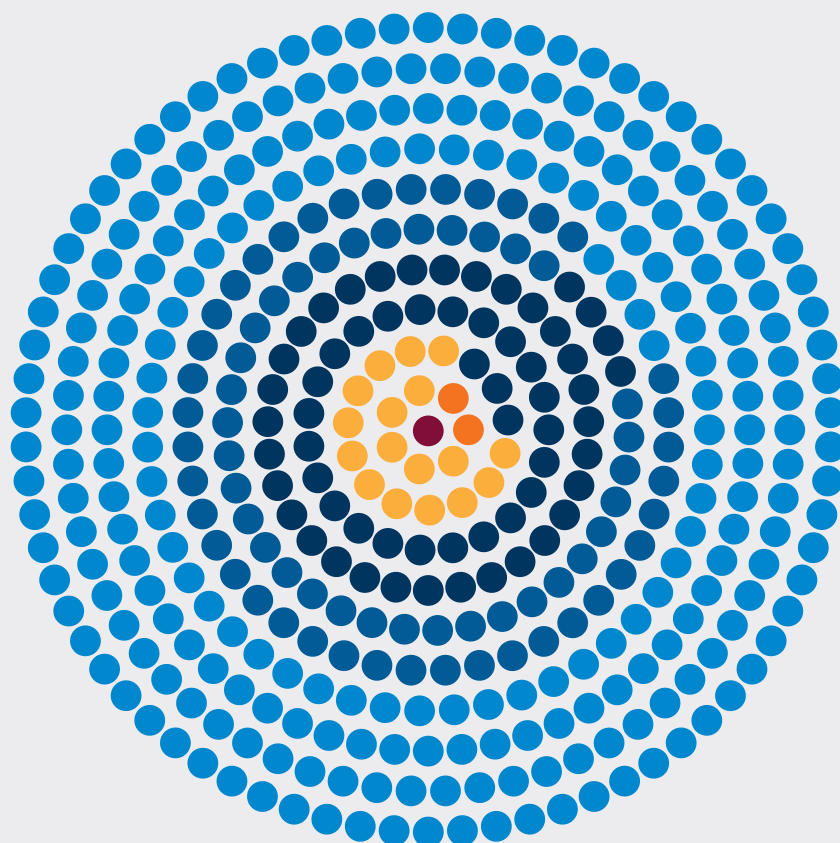
Action taken by the European Ombudsman on new complaints dealt with in 2025



Evolution in the number of complaint-based and own-initiative inquiries by the European Ombudsman



Results of inquiries closed by the European Ombudsman in 2025

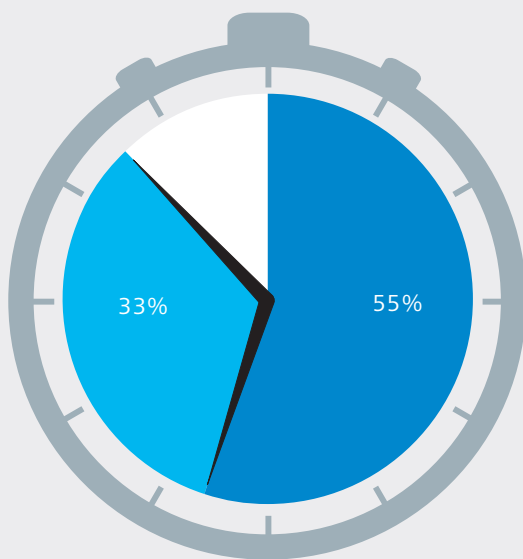


- **255** (63.0%) Settled by the institution, solutions achieved, solution partly achieved
- **74** (18.3%) No maladministration
- **61** (15.1%) No further inquiries justified
- **17** (4.2%) Maladministration found
- **2** (0.5%) Dealt with by a Court (Art. 2.7)
- **1** (0.2%) Dropped by the complainant

Note: In some cases, the Ombudsman closed inquiries with two or more grounds. The above percentages therefore total more than 100%.

Length of inquiries closed by the European Ombudsman in 2025

5 months on average



224

Cases closed within
3 months

134

Cases closed within
3 to 12 months



32

Cases closed within
12 to 18 months

15

Cases closed after
more than 18 months¹

1. Some complex cases require several rounds of consultations with the complainant and the institution concerned.

4.5. Impact and achievements

One of the overarching goals of the European Ombudsman is to achieve tangible improvements for complainants and the public in how the EU administration works. The Ombudsman does this by making proposals in the form of solutions, recommendations, and suggestions. In addition, the Ombudsman may prompt an institution to settle a matter even before a formal solution proposal or recommendation is made.

4.5.1. Acceptance rate

The acceptance rate is the percentage of positive replies to the total number of proposals (solutions, recommendations, and suggestions) made by the Ombudsman. As the Ombudsman gives institutions up to six months to follow up on suggestions made in her decisions closing inquiries, the acceptance rate for 2025 covers cases closed in 2024.

Statistics show that EU institutions have responded well to the Office's increased use of 'solution proposals' in which the Ombudsman outlines a way forward for the institution in a particular case. In 2024, 89% of solution proposals were accepted while 78% of suggestions for improvement were accepted. Overall, the EU institutions cooperated satisfactorily with the Ombudsman in 72% of instances in 2024.

The Ombudsman's renewed focus on dialogue with EU institutions, bodies, and agencies continued throughout 2025. As stated in her Strategy, the Ombudswoman is committed to actively promoting meaningful dialogue and productive collaboration with EU institutions, bodies, offices, and agencies. This is crucial for achieving better outcomes for both complainants and the institutions concerned, helping the Ombudswoman fulfill her mandate and foster a solution-based approach.

Broader Impact

The acceptance rate captures responses from the institutions to proposals at a particular point in time and may not fully capture the long-term impact of the Ombudsman's work.

For example, the Ombudsman carried out a major inquiry in 2016 related to how the Commission interacts with tobacco lobbyists and the Office has been monitoring the issue ever since. In 2025, the Ombudsman was in a position to praise the Commission for the steps it has taken including [an awareness-raising exercise to assess the risk of exposure of its management to the tobacco industry and adopting a list of measures \(toolbox\) for dealing with tobacco lobbying](#). The Ombudswoman encouraged the Commission to make full use of the measures to ensure that all of its departments and services meet the EU's commitments under the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

In response to the Ombudsman's [inquiry, opened in 2023, into how the Council of the EU and the Commission handle requests for public access to legislative documents](#), both institutions committed to improving proactive transparency. [The Ombudswoman welcomed this commitment and said that her office was encouraged to note that the Council was preparing a revised 'Transparency Guide' for all matters related to access to documents](#). The Ombudswoman also emphasized that [she intends to monitor how both institutions implement the suggestions made in the context of the inquiry](#).

The [secretariat administering the Transparency Register for the Commission, Parliament, and Council of the EU strengthened how it carries out investigations](#) into complaints concerning alleged breaches of the code of conduct. Among the improvements, which followed an Ombudsman inquiry, it said it now carries out 'thorough and meaningful' investigations and actively seeks additional information from registrants. It also updated its guidelines related to how registrants should detail their membership or affiliation with other entities.



COOPERATION WITH INSTITUTIONS

In line with the new Strategy 2025-2029 for her Office, the European Ombudswoman has focused on fostering solution-based dialogue and constructive cooperation with EU institutions and stakeholders over the past year. This approach aims to enhance her Office's effectiveness in protecting citizens' rights and promoting good administration.



5.1. Relations with the EU

5.1.1. European Parliament

The European Ombudsman's mandate is derived from the EU Treaties, and the Ombudsman is accountable to Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). In March, the newly elected Ombudsman met with the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, to discuss shared priorities for the future and both institutions' common mission to uphold the rights of European citizens. They convened again in May when the Ombudsman submitted her Office's Annual Report for 2024.



Ombudsman Anjinho hands over the Annual Report 2024 to European Parliament President Roberta Metsola.

Throughout the following months, the Ombudsman met with several MEPs, particularly the chairs of committees whose work is linked to the Office's mission. These outreach activities aimed to raise awareness of the Office's role in the EU and to discuss recent cases and conclusions, fostering strong cooperation between the two institutions in the process.

A vital aspect of this cooperation is the Ombudsman's participation in hearings and events organised by the Parliament. These gatherings provide an opportunity to present key findings from major inquiries and to reinforce the recommendations made to EU institutions.

The Ombudsman participated in a number of Parliament committee meetings throughout the year. For example, she engaged in discussions with the Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI) regarding urgent decision-making and the need for an EU administrative law. She also participated in discussions with the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) on the rule of law in the EU and with the Committee on Public Health (SANT) on citizens' access to cross-border healthcare.

These exchanges provided an excellent opportunity to strengthen trust between the Ombudsman Office and the Parliament, paving the way for continued collaboration. The Office also took part in hearings and events organised by MEPs to discuss specific topics such as the monitoring of European funds, access to documents, and the transparency of the EU legislative process.

During the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the European Ombudsman in September, held at the Strasbourg Town Hall, Parliament Vice-President Sabine Verheyen delivered the opening speech.

Additionally, the Ombudsman participated in a meeting with the Heads of the European Parliament's Liaison Offices (EPLOs) to enhance awareness of her Office's work in the Member States.

Building on the Office's commitment to clear communication, the Ombudsman delivered a speech at a conference on clear language, which was organised by the Parliament's Directorate-General for Translation (DG TRAD).

5.1.2. Committee on Petitions

The European Parliament's Committee on Petitions (PETI) is responsible for overseeing relations with the European Ombudsman and working together to ensure that citizens' concerns are addressed at the EU level. In 2025, the Ombudsman Office continued its collaboration with PETI in the interests of their shared goal of ensuring that EU institutions uphold citizens' fundamental rights.

In June, the Ombudswoman presented the Annual Report for 2024 to the members of PETI and outlined the principles behind her Strategy for 2025-2029. This presentation sparked an exchange of views with Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) regarding current and future challenges faced by citizens.

Additionally, the Ombudswoman held meetings with PETI Chair Bogdan Rzońca, several MEPs from the Committee, the Director General of the European Parliament's Directorate-General for Citizens' Rights, Justice and Institutional Affairs (IUST), and the Head of the PETI Committee Secretariat.



2 December 2025: Annual Workshop on The Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Ombudswoman listens to introductory remarks by Bogdan Rzońca, Chair of the Committee on Petitions (PETI).

5.1.3. European Commission and Council

In addition to the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council of the European Union are key interlocutors for the Ombudsman Office at EU level.

As the largest EU institution and executive branch of the EU, the Commission's work is the subject of many of the complaints that the Ombudsman Office receives. Maintaining a constructive dialogue between these two institutions is therefore crucial for finding practical solutions for citizens.

In June, the Ombudswoman met with the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, to discuss important topics such as timely access to documents and inclusive decision-making. She also met with Maros Šefčovič, the Commissioner responsible for interinstitutional relations. These meetings resulted in a clear commitment to fostering an open and continuous dialogue between the Ombudsman Office and the Commission.



Teresa Anjinho and Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission.

At staff level, the Ombudsman's Office also maintained close contact with the Commission's services to ensure an effective, solution-oriented approach for addressing inquiries.

Additionally, the Ombudswoman met with António Costa, the President of the European Council, to discuss transparency and ethics in EU administration. They also explored avenues for future cooperation to ensure that the EU institutions and agencies maintain credibility in the eyes of citizens.



Teresa Anjinho meets with António Costa, President of the European Council, in Brussels.

In December, the Ombudswoman took part in a conference to mark the 25th anniversary of the proclamation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, organised by the European Commission, the Danish Presidency of the Council, and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. The event provided an opportunity to examine how the Charter has shaped the fundamental rights culture in the EU and to reflect on future challenges and opportunities. The Ombudswoman noted that as an instrument of primary EU law that enshrines citizens' fundamental rights, the Charter has become a crucial pillar of our Union.

5.1.4. Other institutions, agencies, and organisations

Strengthening working relationships with EU institutions, bodies, offices, and agencies, as well as with important non-EU institutions, is crucial for ensuring that the role of the European Ombudsman is understood and respected. This collaboration is also essential for achieving prompt and fair resolutions to complaints, promoting positive changes for citizens and businesses, and fostering good administrative practices.

This principle guided the Ombudswoman's interactions and meetings throughout 2025 when she engaged with several heads of EU institutions and agencies, including Nadia Calviño, President of the European Investment Bank (EIB), Sirpa Rautio, Director of the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), Bernhard Url, Acting Executive Director of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), and Oliver Salles, the Director of the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO).



Teresa Anjinho and Sirpa Rautio, Director of the Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union, in Strasbourg.

Additionally, the Ombudsman participated in the plenary session of the EEAS Staff Committee to discuss staff-related cases, such as those related to harassment, and in the Bureau of the Committee of the Regions to exchange views about relevant cases.

At the beginning of her mandate, the Ombudsman met with Michael O’Flaherty, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, and Louise Holck, the Chair of the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI). The Ombudsman also took part in the high-level Conference for Ombudsman Institutions and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI) held in March at the Council of Europe.



High-level Conference at the Council of Europe (CoE): Teresa Anjinho with Claire Bazy-Malaurie (President of the Venice Commission, CoE), Michael O’Flaherty (Commissioner for Human Rights, CoE), and Bjørn Berge (Deputy Secretary General, CoE).

5.1.5. Ombudsman visits to EU Member States

As part of her regular visits to EU Member States and EU agency offices, the Ombudsman travelled to Poland, Malta, and Spain in 2025. These Member States visits involve meetings with EU agencies, NGOs, ombudsmen, national authorities and universities to raise awareness of the Ombudsman Office at the national level.

In Poland, the Ombudsman participated in a conference organised by the Polish Ministry of Justice titled ‘The Role of Civil Society in the Protection of the Rule of Law.’ During her visit, she held meetings with the Polish and Ukrainian Ombudsmen and took part in a visit to the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), where she held a meeting with its Executive Director.

In Malta, the Ombudsman’s visit coincided with the 30th anniversary of the Maltese Parliamentary Ombudsman, which included an opportunity to participate in an event focused on discussing good governance during challenging times. Alongside discussions with various ombudsmen from across Europe, the Ombudsman met with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) focused on human rights, asylum, and migration. She also visited the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) for in-depth discussions.

In Spain, the Ombudsman held a bilateral meeting with the Spanish Ombudsman, engaged in discussions with Spanish environmental NGOs, delivered a keynote speech on advancing gender equality in the European Union at an event organised by Forbes Women, and gave a lecture at Universidad Autónoma de Madrid on ‘The Role of the European Ombudsman and its Impact on Citizens.’

In addition, the Ombudsman gave a lecture to students of the European Master’s Degree in Human Rights and Democratisation (EMA) at the Global Campus of Human Rights in Venice, Italy.



Ombudsman Anjinho with students and professors at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Spain), October 2025.

5.2. UN Disability Rights Convention

The European Union is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), a binding international human rights instrument to 'promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity'.

Compliance with the UN CRPD in the EU is monitored by the EU CRPD Framework. As a member of the Framework, the European Ombudsman pays close attention to the EU administration's implementation of the UN CRPD. At the start of 2025, the Framework submitted an updated contribution, which included input from the Ombudsman Office, for the UN CRPD Committee's periodic review of the EU's compliance with the Convention.

In March 2025, the UN CRPD Committee issued its concluding observations. It highlighted several recurring problems that the Ombudsman Office also identified through complaints and own-initiative work. These include deinstitutionalisation and the use of EU funds; working conditions for persons with disabilities within the EU administration, including recruitment, benefits for carers, and reasonable accommodation; and health insurance coverage for EU staff with disabilities. The CRPD Committee also noted that the EU institutions should comply with the Ombudsman's recommendations.

The Ombudsman Office handled several complaints in 2025 related to the rights of persons with disabilities, most notably concerning EU recruitment and staff matters. For instance, one inquiry relates to how the Commission deals with complaints about discrimination based on disability as well as the implementation of reasonable accommodation.

The European Ombudsman and the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights jointly conducted a survey among EU agencies focusing on the rights of persons with disabilities, including EU staff with disabilities.

The Ombudsman Office also presented its work related to the rights of persons with disabilities at several events throughout the year, such as at the UN CRPD review of the EU. In addition, the Ombudswoman took part in the annual workshop on the rights of persons with disabilities organised by the Parliament's Petitions Committee (PETI) during Disability Rights Week.



According to Eurostat, one in four adults in the EU is a person with a disability. The EU has made meaningful progress in protecting and promoting their rights, but there is still work to be done to ensure full equality and participation. This is clear from the complaints my Office continues to receive and for sure from the petitions submitted to the PETI Committee.

In times of uncertainty, it is especially important for all EU actors to remain focused, to follow up on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Committee's concluding observations, and to continue playing our part in advancing the rights of persons with disabilities.

Excerpt from Ombudswoman Anjinho's speech at the annual workshop on the rights of persons with disabilities organised by the Parliament's Petitions Committee.

6

COMMUNICATION



Ensuring visibility is an important element of the Ombudsman Office’s work in reaching stakeholders, the EU administration, and civil society. The communication activities of the Office focus not only on inquiries, but also on the promotion of transparency, ethics, and accountability in the EU administration.

The Ombudsman presented the Annual Report for 2024 to journalists in April, providing her with an important opportunity to share her plans for her mandate and to announce her first own-initiative inquiry.

The Ombudsman also attended and gave speeches at several events hosted by EU and international institutions. These included Gender Equality Week and several panel and committee meetings hosted by the European Parliament; the European Citizen Action Service (ECAS) Day; the Association of European Journalists congress; a World Economic Forum panel on good governance; and several other presentations to stakeholders, citizens, and young audiences, including during the European Youth Event in May.



At a World Economic Forum event in Geneva, the Ombudsman speaks about trends observed in good governance from a public sector perspective.

As a way of making the work and policies of the Office more accessible to citizens, the Ombudsman’s 2025-2029 strategy as well as the thematic area of procurement and grants inquiries were presented in scrollable web stories. This method of presenting key thematic areas will continue in 2026.

In 2025, the communication activities of the Office extended further to include regular videos for social media to explain the work of the Office and the Ombudsman’s activities, as well as to highlight certain specialist topics.

These included ‘debrief’ videos where the Ombudsman gave an overview of the latest inquiry developments as well as her meetings and speaking engagements, and case explainer videos where she detailed specific key inquiry outcomes.

In addition, the Office ran a ‘Behind the Scenes’ social media campaign where colleagues from various parts of the office – inquiry officers, legal advisers, digital communications experts – explained their role and day-to-day tasks. The aim was to underline the European Ombudsman as an accessible, friendly, and professional place, while also highlighting the core values of the Office. In 2025, thanks in part to the activities mentioned, social media followers grew steadily on all platforms on which the Office is active. Overall, social media saw a growth of 13 338 followers, and an impressions/engagement ratio of 5.36% across the Office’s top three platforms (LinkedIn, Instagram, Bluesky). Visits to the website from social media content also showed good results, with 8 416 visitors coming directly from posts. Overall, the website remains a key communication tool for the office, with 1 786 995 visits throughout the year.



European Youth Event 2025 in Strasbourg: Teresa Anjinho discusses transparency and accountability and takes questions from the audience.

In terms of press coverage of the Ombudsman’s work in 2025, there were around 3 800 articles mentioning or directly reporting on inquiries.

The Ombudsman and staff members also continued their outreach activities by giving interviews to the press, attending academic conferences, and speaking to visitor groups.

6.1. Ombudsman 30 Year Anniversary

2025 marked the **30th anniversary** of the European Ombudsman's Office.

Throughout the year, most of the Ombudsman's outreach activities were designed and organised around the 30-years theme and visual identity.

A 'Did you Know?' campaign highlighted different facts about the Office, including its mission, history, and how it works.

A social media campaign, including videos starring colleagues and a video statement by the Ombudswoman, was coupled with a scrollable story featuring these elements in a format designed to appeal to the Office's broader stakeholder audience.

The anniversary was also celebrated through an event co-organised with the City of Strasbourg that coincided with the inauguration of a city tram, enabled by the Town Hall, bearing the logo and values of the Ombudsman. The tram operated in the city until the end of 2025.

A physical exhibition with panels featuring the history of the Ombudsman Office and its areas of work was displayed throughout the year in various locations. These included Strasbourg, the European Parliament during its plenary, and the European Network of Ombudsmen conference – a biennial event organised by the Ombudsman Office.



The Ombudswoman addresses representatives of institutions and civil society at the Office's 30th anniversary event, held at the Strasbourg Town Hall.

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For three decades now, this Office has worked to strengthen the bond between the European Union and its citizens. Through our unwavering commitment to fairness and the public good, we will continue to protect citizens' rights and ensure people's voices are heard in the years to come.

30th anniversary message from Teresa Anjinho.



European Parliament Quaestor Fabienne Keller, European Parliament Vice-President Sabine Verheyen, European Ombudswoman Teresa Anjinho, and Deputy Mayor of Strasbourg Véronique Bertholle inaugurating the commemorative tramway in Strasbourg.



The tram ran on different lines across the Strasbourg transport network (including the one crossing the Rhine and going to Kehl, Germany).

6.2. Award for Good Administration

In October, the Ombudswoman officially opened nominations for the fifth edition of the [European Ombudsman Award for Good Administration](#).

The Award recognises actions by the EU public administration that have a visible and direct positive impact on the lives of citizens. In addition to an overall award winner, a number of category winners will be selected.

Categories for award submissions for this edition include excellence in technological innovation and the use of AI, excellence in citizen/civil society participation, excellence in diversity and inclusion, and excellence in open administration.

An advisory committee will draw up a short-list with the European Ombudswoman selecting the winners and announcing them at a special ceremony in June 2026. There will also be an online public vote for the most popular project.



Representatives of Eurojust and the Office of the Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court receiving the 2023 European Ombudsman Award for Good Administration for their work to help document core international crimes and human rights violations.

“

The Award for Good Administration is a wonderful opportunity to show how the EU administration makes a meaningful impact on people's lives across Europe. By highlighting projects that truly make a difference in the daily lives of citizens, we reward the initiatives that can strengthen the bond between European citizens and EU institutions. I encourage anyone who knows of an inspiring project deserving recognition to consider nominating it for the Award.

[Ombudswoman launches Award for Good Administration 2026.](#)



**EUROPEAN
NETWORK OF
OMBUDSMEN**



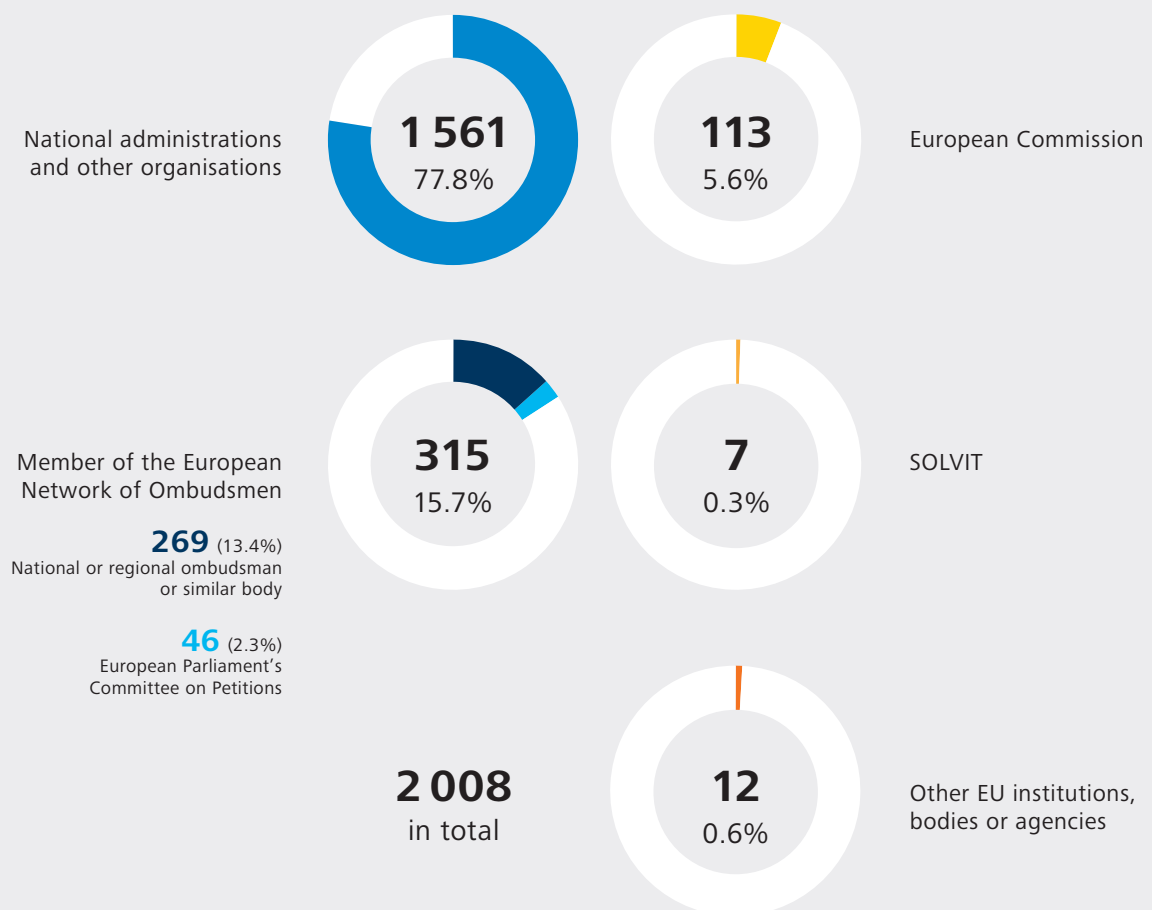
The European Network of Ombudsmen (ENO) is an informal network coordinated by the European Ombudsman, consisting of over 95 offices of ombudsmen and similar bodies from across Europe, as well as the European Parliament’s Committee on Petitions.

An important ENO tool is the queries procedure. Through this procedure, ENO members can ask questions about EU law that arise during their inquiries, with the European Ombudsman obtaining expert replies for them from the EU institutions. Query topics in 2025 concerned the [coordination of social security systems](#) with respect to child benefits, [free](#)

[movement rights for non-EU family members of EU citizens](#), and [access to health insurance for Croatian students studying in another EU country](#).

In 2025, the Ombudswoman also visited some of the offices of national ombudsmen. She met with the Polish Commissioner for Human Rights as well as the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights in Warsaw, the Ombudsman of Spain in Madrid, and the Parliamentary Ombudsman of Malta in Valletta. During these visits, the Ombudswoman discussed issues of mutual importance with the national ombudsmen and sought ways to better work together to solve citizens’ problems.

Complainants advised to contact other institutions and bodies by the European Ombudsman in 2025 and complaints transferred



7.1. European Network of Ombudsmen Conference



Ombudsmen and liaison officers of countries across Europe got together in Brussels.

The European Network of Ombudsmen held its annual conference in Brussels in November 2025. The conference provided a forum for ombudsmen from across Europe to improve cooperation, exchange ideas, and anticipate future issues that will require their attention.

The conference format was designed to encourage individual input and discussion. In addition to opening and closing plenary sessions, the conference featured eight workshops on different topics held over the course of two days. This enabled ombudsmen to focus on the subjects that are of particular interest to their country or region.

The eight workshops covered:

- Practical barriers for intra-EU mobility
- The challenges and opportunities of monitoring EU law compliance
- Preserving ombudsmen independence in challenging times
- Sharing ombudsmen experience in dealing with environmental complaints
- Ombudsman oversight of semi-private and semi-public administration
- Preventing the fragmentation of the protection of citizens' rights

- The evolving role of ombudsmen in migration and asylum complaints
- Regulatory simplification – what could it mean for the protection of rights.

Representatives from EU bodies such as the European Commission and the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency also participated in some of the workshops, sharing their knowledge and expertise.

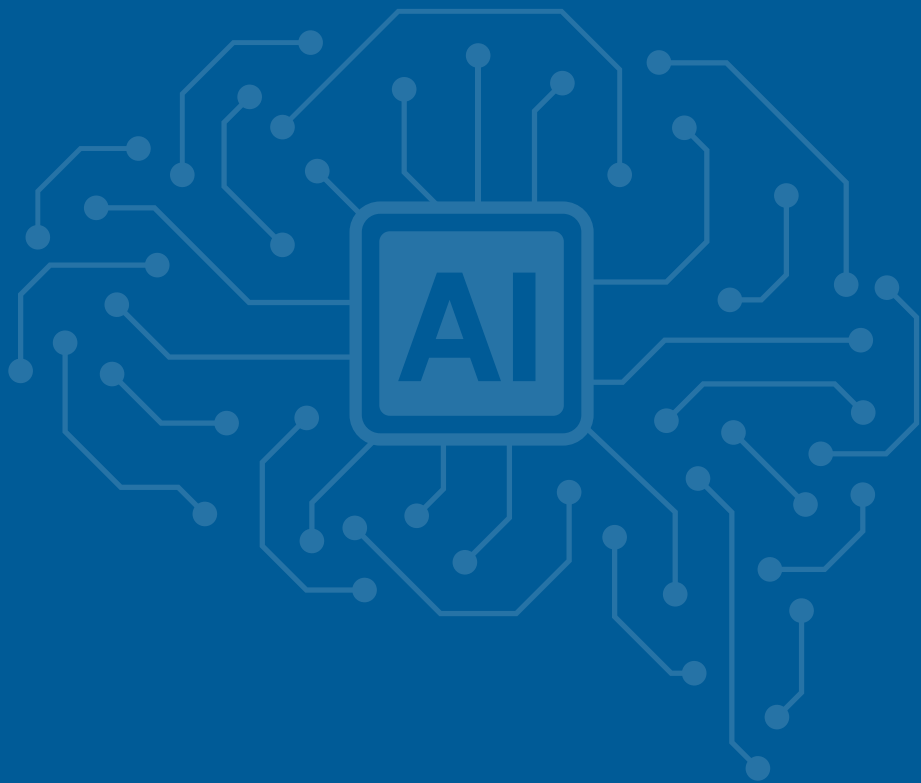
Following the conference, a liaison officers meeting was scheduled to be held in Málaga, Spain, in early 2026 to follow-up on the conclusions reached at the workshops and to reflect on potential future projects.



Teresa Anjinho and Marta Hirsch-Ziembińska (Principal Adviser on international cooperation and fundamental rights at the European Ombudsman office) opening the Annual ENO Conference.

8

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE





As digital tools reshape how public institutions serve citizens, the Ombudsman Office embraced the opportunity to harness artificial intelligence (AI) as a means to deliver a more responsive and effective service. Throughout 2025, the Office took steps toward AI adoption guided by the principles of good administration, accountability, and transparency.

To ensure AI integration aligns with these principles, the Office established a cross-department AI taskforce, which guides strategic decision-making and facilitates knowledge sharing with internal and external stakeholders. A dedicated AI officer was recruited to provide specialist oversight and coordinate all AI-related efforts, ensuring that technological advancement remains firmly anchored in the Ombudsman's mission of serving citizens. The Office also participated in the network of AI correspondents organised by the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS), a forum for voluntary exchange of best practices among EU institutions.

The Ombudsman launched a pilot project to test the use of GPT@EC, a general-purpose generative AI system using large-language models developed by the European Commission for use across the EU institutions. The pilot explores how AI can assist with ancillary tasks in case-handling, administrative work, and communication, while maintaining the independence and integrity central to the Ombudsman's mandate. The pilot assesses AI's potential to support several specific tasks: improving the clarity and style of drafts including letters, recommendations, and decisions; researching EU and national laws; summarising and analysing large documents attached to complaints or obtained during inquiries; editing drafts in administrative areas

such as human resources and finance; providing coding support for IT projects; and assisting with communication tasks such as grammar verification and document summaries.

The project was launched after robust governance measures were put in place, including risk management frameworks, data protection impact assessments, usage guidelines, and guardrails for data protection, security, copyright compliance, and human oversight. A Service Level Agreement with the European Commission ensures that the Ombudsman's drafts, working materials, case-related information, and personal data remain protected and inaccessible to Commission staff or third parties without authorisation. Data processed by the Ombudsman are not used to train or improve AI models.

The key principle guiding the pilot is human oversight. Staff members using AI remain fully responsible for all outputs, and AI is not used to take decisions, make recommendations, assess admissibility, determine outcomes, or prioritise complaints.

All AI-generated content is carefully checked for accuracy by staff before use, ensuring that the technology serves to enhance efficiency while human judgment and decision-making remain at the core of complaint resolution and inquiries.

Reflecting the Ombudsman's commitment to transparency and accountability in AI use, an AI notice was published on the Ombudsman's website, providing citizens with clear information about how AI systems are employed, which safeguards are in place, and what rights complainants have in their interactions with the Office.

RESOURCES



9.1. Budget

The European Ombudsman's budget is an independent section of the EU budget. It is divided into three titles. Title 1 covers salaries, allowances, and other expenditure related to staff. Title 2 covers buildings, furniture, equipment, and miscellaneous operating expenditure. Title 3 covers the expenditure resulting from general functions that the institution carries out. In 2025, budgeted appropriations amounted to EUR 15 558 918.

To ensure the effective management of resources, the Ombudsman's internal auditor regularly checks the internal control systems and the financial operations that the Office carries out. As is the case with other institutions, the Ombudsman is also subject to the European Court of Auditors' review, which did not identify any specific issues in the context of its external audit work.

9.2. Use of resources

Every year, the Ombudsman Office adopts an [Annual Management Plan](#), which identifies specific actions the Office expects to take to meet the objectives and priorities of the Ombudswoman's strategy. Given that 2025 was a transition year between the outgoing and newly elected Ombudswoman, the Annual Management Plan was adopted by the former Ombudswoman before the election and was based on her strategy 'Towards 2024'. In October 2025, the new Ombudswoman adopted her strategy 'Building Trust, Driving Change', which will form the basis for future Annual Management Plans.

The Ombudsman Office has a highly qualified multilingual staff. This ensures that the Office can deal with complaints in the 24 official EU languages and raise awareness about its work throughout the EU. The Office's hybrid work policy, which is results-oriented and trust-based, supports the Ombudswoman's ambition to promote a modern, digital, and flexible work environment.

In 2025, there were 75 posts in the Ombudsman's establishment plan, in addition to which, there was an average of 8 contract agents working with the Office. Over the course of 2025, 18 trainees also gained work experience at the Ombudsman's Office with the 2024/5 intake finishing in August and the 2025/6 intake starting in September.

Detailed information on the structure of the Ombudsman Office and the tasks of the various units is available on the [Ombudsman's website](#).

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