

How we process personal data in complaints

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Data processing

Complaints to the Ombudsman and related correspondence often contain personal data, such as names, contact details and other information relating to identifiable individuals.

Complainants have to create an account on the European Ombudsman's website if they wish to submit a complaint through the online complaint form. When creating an account, the complainants must provide personal data, including their name, email address and nationality. The Ombudsman deletes accounts that have remained inactive for two years (i.e. two years without logging in to the account). Once the account is deleted, personal data are anonymised and used for statistical purposes only. Account owners are notified by e-mail shortly before deletion.

There are rights and obligations under European law (Regulation 2018/1725) as to how personal data is handled by EU institutions, including the European Ombudsman. These include an individual's right to obtain access to his or her own information held by this Office. To exercise these rights or to find out more, please contact our [Office \[Link\]](#) or our [Data Protection Officer \[Link\]](#).

If a person considers that the Ombudsman has not handled his or her personal data properly, he or she may contact the [European Data Protection Supervisor \[Link\]](#).

Confidentiality of your complaint and information

Complainants are requested to identify clearly any document or information that they consider to be confidential immediately on sending it to the Ombudsman.

Confidentiality can only apply if there would be some adverse effect if the information were to be disclosed. It might, for example, apply to financial information, commercially sensitive information or personal information about a private individual. Confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed. In particular, if you submit to the Ombudsman documents that contain the personal data of someone other than yourself, that person will most likely be able to obtain it from the



Ombudsman, exercising their data protection rights. In any event, you should expect your complaint and any supporting documents to be shared in full with the institution or body you are complaining about, so that they can properly understand it and respond to the Ombudsman.

Statement for the processing of personal data

The statement for the processing of personal data in the context of the Ombudsman's handling of complaints and inquiries can be found **here** .