Nominations for the European Ombudsman "Award for Good Administration" 2021

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Nominations for the European Ombudsman " Award for Good Administration " in order of receipt.

Public vote is now closed. The digital award ceremony will take place on 24 June 2021 from 10-11:30.

1. EU Datathons: Making open data useful for citizens
The Publications Office (OP) is responsible for managing the EU Open Data Portal and the European Data Portal: two central points of free access to thousands of open datasets of EU institutions, agencies and bodies as well as Member States. To help the public and businesses to benefit from these datasets, the OP organised EU datathons - competitions where participating teams (start-ups, developers, students) compete to create useful applications using the data. Newly created apps include an irrigation platform, which helps to reduce water wastage from farming, and an app that helps SMEs assess their financial viability and provides advice on grants and investment options.

**Publications Office of the European Union Datathon team**

2. Demystifying the Brussels bubble
Lucia Kleštincová, a staff member in DG Grow, is bringing the human side to communication about the EU and what it does. In 2019-2020, she recorded over 50 interviews for her podcast ‘Lights on Europe’ with people in and around the EU institutions to show what the EU looks like from the inside. The interviews ranged from high-ranking EU officials who open up about prejudices they have faced, to the colleague who runs desert marathons to those outside the institutions, such as a survivor of the Brussels terrorist attack and the pioneer of the ‘good lobby’ movement. During the COVID lockdown, she complemented the podcasts with YouTube interviews, including one with Commission Executive Vice-President Vestager, who spoke about women in leadership roles.

**Lucia Kleštincová, staff member presenting a non-institutional project European Commission - DG GROW**

3. Adapting the Commission’s traineeship programme to crisis times

The EC’s Bluebook trainee programme was quickly overhauled in 2020 to allow trainees to benefit from an internship despite the restrictions imposed by COVID-19. The traineeships starting in March 2020 were extended by 5 months, trainees were allowed to telework from their home countries and the autumn 2020 traineeship went ahead, with 1 000 trainees welcomed using digital onboarding. Despite limited human resources, individual welcoming schedules were drawn up and individual support to respond to any concerns (such as cancellations and postponement). The efforts meant the successful continuation of the programme, which celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2020.

**European Commission - DG EAC Unit B.3 - Youth, Volunteer solidarity and Traineeships Office Traineeships Programme**

4. Keeping people informed of their privacy rights in a digital age
The EDPS publishes a regular report - the TechDispatch - assessing the impact of new technologies on privacy and the protection of personal data. TechDispatch, which is available free of charge, provides factual descriptions of new technology, assesses the possible impacts on privacy and the protection of personal data and gives links to further recommended reading. The report is part of the EDPS’ overall aim of making technical issues more accessible to non-experts.

European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) Technology & Privacy Unit

5. Helping people to track what happens to their private data

The EDPS in 2019 launched an open source software tool - the Website Evidence Collector -
that checks what websites do with people's private data. The tool collects evidence of personal data processing, such as cookies, or requests to third parties. The collected information allows website controllers, data protection officers and general users of websites to better understand which information is transferred and stored during their visit to a website. The Website Evidence Collector can be downloaded, free of charge, from the EDPS website.

European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) Technology & Privacy Unit

6. The Parliament's transport unit - a lesson in adapting to crisis

The EP's transport unit overhauled its working practices so it could keep both its drivers and the MEPs they transport as safe as possible in the context of the pandemic. Measures taken included reducing the number of seats in each official vehicle to ensure the physical distancing requirements, separating the driver and passenger by plexiglass, reorganising drivers' schedules, and reducing contact between drivers. In addition, drivers helped in the EP's overall approach in the first phase of dealing with the pandemic by, for example, volunteering to deliver meals and unsold food to charities.

European Parliament Directorate-General for Infrastructure and Logistics (DG INLO) - People Transport Unit

7. Turning the Parliament carbon neutral by 2030
Following an EP vote in favour of making the institution carbon neutral by 2030, a policy department and the eco-management unit worked together to produce a study setting out the current situation and making short-, medium- and long-term proposals to achieve the 2030 goal. Proposed measures include replacing visitor groups by virtual tours and investing in energy-positive buildings. The study was welcomed by the EP Vice-President in charge of EMAS and was widely picked up by European media.

**European Parliament** Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies (Poldep A); Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) Unit

8. Ensuring business continuity during the pandemic
The Security Strategy and Business Continuity Unit, part of the Secretariat General of the Council, took the lead among EU institutions and bodies when it came to ensuring business continuity with the onset of the COVID-19. It shared insight on how to tackle complex challenges related to contact tracing even before there were any strong guidelines in place; emphasized the value of communication with staff; and shared ideas on how to ensure staff wellbeing. The experience and willingness to share information was strongly appreciated by other members of the EU business continuity network, an informal network of representatives from EU institutions. This led two members of the network to nominate the Council Secretariat General for the Award for Good Administration.

Council of the European Union - General Secretariat of the Council Security Strategy and Business Continuity Unit

9. SURE thing! EU emergency money to keep people employed

The SURE fund provides Member States with financial support in the form of loans to address the negative economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak. It is meant to be used for labour market policies that keep people in jobs. Setting it up meant intense cooperation across Commission departments and between the Commission and Member States. It also involved administrative creativity and the pulling together of economic, legal and financial expertise. As an example of the speed of the response, the draft Sure Regulation was drawn up in just over four weeks.

European Commission - DG ECFIN, DG EMPL, DG BUDG SURE team (DG ECFIN, Units C.1 and A.1; DG EMPL, Unit A.3; DG BUDG Units E.1, E.3, E.4) with the help of the LS and SG, and the cooperation between the Commission and Member States

10. EUIPO: A big heart for small businesses
EUIPO put together a rapid response mechanism to help SMEs recover from the devastating effects of the pandemic. The Ideas Powered for Business initiative has helped hundreds of SMEs access free intellectual property support, including free legal consultation, and an effective dispute resolution system. EUIPO also began work on a mobile-friendly, easy filing tool for trademark registration. Launched in June 2020, the hub attracted over 34,000 visitors in less than six months and more than 230 IP law firms offering pro-bono services. Close to 360 SMEs from over 14 EU countries have benefitted from the initiative.

European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) 'Ideas Powered for Business' initiative - cross-department task force

11. From Boardroom to Broadband: the new world of online meetings
EFSA used the changes in work practices caused by COVID-19 to push ahead with a ‘digital first’ approach which has allowed it to keep fully engaged with stakeholders throughout the pandemic. The benefits of the approach, which it intends to further consolidate in the coming years, include increasing outreach to stakeholders, reduced costs (for both EFSA and meeting participants) in terms of money and time spent organising meetings, and a reduced carbon footprint. In 2019, 48% of EFSA’s 1403 meetings were digital, while in 2020, 91% of its 1,679 meetings were online.

European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Engagement and Cooperation Unit
12. Telling the EU’s story - decade by decade

Staff members from DG Regio recount the EU’s history in a fun and engaging way through a series of videos - one for each decade from 1950 to 2010. The aim is to take EU citizens on a journey through time and space to (re)discover how Europe was built and experience what the European project about. All the actors in the videos are DG REGIO staff members, meaning the audience gets to see the names and faces behind EU policies. The videos - which are available in all EU languages - proved to be an immediate hit, attracting over 600,000 views on social media during the first week of their launch.

European Commission - DG REGIO Unit A.2 - Communication
13. Fighting African swine fever: forging a united front in South-East Europe
EFSA in 2020 ran a communication campaign to raise awareness about African swine fever, a disease affecting pigs and wild boar that can have a devastating impact on farmers' livelihoods. The campaign targeted farmers and hunters in South Eastern Europe - a region where the disease is at risk of spreading. Videos, radio ads, posters, factsheets, infographics, and social media activities were used across nine countries. To make it more effective, the campaign was decentralised, using localised content and influencers. Post-campaign interviews showed that the message had been successfully transmitted.

**European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Communication Unit and Animal and Plant Health Unit**

14. **Challenges for food safety driven by climate change**
EFSA gathered information from an array of sources - including citizens - on what climate change could mean for food safety. After being analysed and presented in a meaningful way, the information was put together in a report aimed both at the general public and experts as part of an overall goal to reduce risks by identifying them early. EFSA worked with several international organisations on the project - including the IPCC. As a result of the cooperation, EFSA was invited to take part in the UN Climate Change Conference and the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021. After the report was published, EFSA organised an online information session to discuss the results of the whole project.

**European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Scientific Committee & Emerging Risks Unit - SCER Team Emerging Risk**

15. DingDongEU - Ready for the Green Challenge?

DG REGIO sent 15 influencers on green journeys in Belgium, Germany, Greece, Lithuania and Portugal - countries chosen for their low level of awareness about EU climate policies. The influencers visited – physically or virtually – more than 70 sustainable projects to raise awareness about EU support for local sustainability initiatives. The campaign involved cooperation between DG Communication and DG Environment, as well as local and regional authorities and reached almost 10 million young Europeans via social media.

**European Commission - DG REGIO Unit A.2 - Communication - Green Trip campaign team with the collaboration of DG COMM, DG ENV, local and regional authorities and EC Representations in the target countries**

16. Using artificial intelligence to serve a multilingual EU
The CdT and the EUIPO joined forces for a two-year cooperation programme (2019-2020) focusing on using artificial intelligence (AI) to respond to the multilingual communication needs of the EU institutions and bodies. The new services - including neural machine translation and speech to text technology - are now up and running. By using the most innovative language technologies based on AI, the programme has expanded the possibilities for multilingual communication with EU citizens.

**Translation Centre for the Bodies of the EU (CdT) and European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) CdT and EUIPO cooperation programme**

17. Ensuring speed and accountability in the EU’s response to COVID-19
Excellent cooperation between DGs REGIO, EMPL, MARE and AGRI helped the EU respond quickly with initiatives to alleviate the effects of the crisis. Two legislative proposals were prepared in record time for the Corona Response Investment Initiative while 18bn EUR was swiftly reallocated to sectors most in need. A rapid response team was set up to answer Member State questions about how EU money (European Structural and Investment Funds) could be used to combat the crisis, while a 'Coronavirus dashboard' provide real time information about how the money was being spent to ensure transparency and accountability.

**European Commission - DG REGIO, DG EMPL, DG MARE, DG AGRI** *Cross-DG ESIF team*

18. Watching each other’s back - helping staff deal with COVID-19

Services in the Parliament personnel directorate joined forces to implement a broad support programme to help staff deal with stress or psychological issues arising from the COVID-19 crisis. Support included a helpline with trained counsellors, professional support (such as consultations with psychologists), and guidance for managers. Aware that there can be a stigma around mental health issues, the philosophy behind the programme was ‘it’s ok not to be ok’ in these crisis times.

**European Parliament Directorate-General for Personnel - Directorate for HR Support and Social Services**

19. #yourEUright - modern communications for a young audience
DG JUST developed a campaign aimed at raising awareness among 18-35-year-olds about their consumer rights. The campaign was focused on 10 countries—chosen for the low awareness of rights among the target audience—and for each country three or four consumer rights were highlighted. The campaign, which included events and the use of influencers and which aimed to inform in an innovating and amusing way, reached 320 million people.

European Commission - DG JUST Communication Unit
20. Puntoycoma: the must-read journal by Spanish language translators

Puntoycoma, a quarterly journal by Spanish-language translators in the EU institutions, is a
well-respected forum for exchange on translation-related matters between Spanish EU translators and other actors in the field of translation, in both the public and private sector. Celebrating its 30-year anniversary in June 2021, the journal has almost 2000 digital subscribers and its articles are a mix of those written by linguists working in the EU institutions as well as external contributions from academics. Members of the editorial board represent the Commission, the Council, the Parliament, the Court of Justice and the European Committees, as well as the WTO.

Spanish-language translators in the EU institutions
21. Bringing the LGBTIQ equality strategy to new audiences

Aiming to reach a diverse audience as possible, DG JUST got in touch with national celebrities and influencers to help publicise the Commission's new LGBTIQ equality strategy. The campaign resulted in 19 celebrities and influencers (from producers to actors to top athletes) from 12 countries mentioning the strategy online. The DG JUST team made it as easy as possible by offering editable visuals and key hashtags - leading overall to a much wider reach than regular Commission initiatives and an overwhelmingly positive reception for the strategy.

European Commission - DG JUST Communication unit
22. Establishing best practices for helping pandemic-hit consumers and businesses
With businesses hard hit by the COVID-19 lockdowns throughout much of the EU, DG FISMA brought together organisations representing banks, insurers, other lenders, consumers and businesses to work on ideas to make it easier for those affected to get relief measures. The aim was to ensure that similar relief measures would be offered around the EU. The result was an agreed list of best practices - such as deferring credit payments and facilitating access to loans. Financial institutions also agreed to implement the measures as far as possible. Feedback from stakeholders in several Member States suggested the ‘best practices’ were helpful.

European Commission - DG FISMA Unit A.1 project conducted jointly with Units A.3, B.3, D.1, D.4, E.2

23. Bringing stranded EU citizens home
Travel restrictions taken to control the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic left over 600,000 EU citizens stranded abroad in early 2020. The EEAS took the lead in coordinating efforts to bring them home - including by helping to keep local airspaces open, obtaining permission for special transits when major hubs were closed, helping to get visas extended and arranging EU funding for 270 flights. In all, around 590,000 people were repatriated with a special EEAS crisis taskforce - involving a wide variety of departments and operating 24/7.

**European External Action Service** Secretary General of the EEAS; EEAS HQ and Delegations

24. Business continuity and innovation in occupational safety and health

As the agency responsible for occupational health, EU-OSHA stepped up quickly to provide
useful information for workplaces dealing with COVID-19 and to make sure its own workplace was using the most innovative and safe practices for dealing with the pandemic. Externally it provided timely information on assessing and mitigating risks (examples include multi-lingual guidance and videos on stopping COVID-19 spreading in the workplace) while internally it quickly established paperless workflows and started using videoconferencing - ensuring business continuity.

**European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA)**

25. Giving civil society a say on green transition

The Commission and European Economic and Social Committee created an online forum to allow civil society to get involved in the green transition. The European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (ECESP) brings together public authorities, businesses, academia, trade unions, and consumers to discuss policies and contribute ideas. The overall initiative includes a dynamic website (containing 46 strategies and almost 300 reports), an annual conference (bringing together the circular economy community from across Europe) and regular smaller events.

**European Economic and Social Committee and European Commission - DG ENV**

*European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (ECESP) Secretariat; DG ENV - Unit B.1*

26. eTranslation - bringing a multilingual EU to citizens
eTranslation, a neural machine translation service is now being integrated into the official EU website. An example of its use is the Re-open EU portal, which provides people with up-to-date Covid-related travel restrictions in their languages. It has also been made available for SMEs across Europe as a way of breaking down language barriers in the Single Market and lowering operational costs. e-translation started in 2010 as a statistical machine translation system primarily intended for EU translators. With advances in technology, it became a powerful neural translation service and the eTranslation team are working to see it used as much as possible to help bring the EU closer to citizens.

**European Commission - DGT and DG CNECT**

DGT - Directorate R - DGT.R.3.004; DG CNECT - Directorate G – CNECT G.3

27. Bringing citizens home during the pandemic
Over 100,000 people - stranded due to COVID-19 related travel restrictions - were brought back to the EU in an action co-financed by the Civil Protection Mechanism and coordinated by the A1 unit in DG ECHO. The Unit staffed the emergency response centre, coordinated flights and checked applications from Member States to get travel costs reimbursed. Twenty-three Member States as well as Norway, Iceland, Turkey and the UK requested repatriation assistance. The action involved over 400 flights and on average one in three passengers repatriated were European citizens of a nationality different to the country organising the flight, showcasing European cooperation and solidarity.

European Commission - DG ECHO Unit A.1 - Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC)
28. rescEU medical stockpile: protecting our first responders
In response to the pandemic, the A2 Unit in ECHO created and managed a stockpile of personal protective equipment (PPE) - such as medical masks, gloves and gowns as well as items needed for intensive care treatment - for distribution in Member States in need. It meant grant agreements with 10 partners in nine EU Member States to procure and stockpile PPE and other medical items. Some 1.3 million protective masks for first responders went to Italy, Spain, Croatia, Lithuania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo. A request from Czechia led the EU to dispatch 30 ventilators from the rescEU medical reserve. Gowns, overalls, medical gloves, goggles and foot protection were also sent to countries in need.

European Commission - DG ECHO Unit A.2 - Capacities and Operational Support
29. Humanitarian Air Bridge: Bringing relief during the coronavirus pandemic

Humanitarian Air Bridge: Bringing relief during the coronavirus pandemic

In response to the disruptions brought about by COVID-19 related travel restrictions, ECHO Unit C4 set up a ‘Humanitarian Air Bridge’- EU flights bringing aid to vulnerable people. Between May and October 2020, 67 flights transported more than 1.150 tons of vital supplies to people in need in 20 countries across the globe. Member States and aid partners identified the most critical gaps and operations were launched in cooperation with the receiving countries. Through its return flights, the initiative helped with the transport of humanitarian teams and assisted in passenger repatriation to the EU.

European Commission - DG ECHO Unit C.4 - North Africa, Iraq and Arabian Peninsula
30. Showing how the EU helps during disasters
Following the two devastating explosions at the seaport of Beirut in August 2020, ECHO Unit 01 sent two Regional Information Officers to the blast site to coordinate communication operations from Beirut. Their task was to communicate about the EU's actions on the ground, including the humanitarian flights to Lebanon. Their work resulted in reports in several European media and succeeded in getting the general message across that the EU is there to help.

**European Commission - DG ECHO Communication Unit**

31. Coordinating the response of EU agencies to the COVID-19 crisis

The EU Agencies Network (EUAN) is a voluntary initiative, bringing together the 39
decentralised EU agencies and nine ‘joint undertakings’ of the EU administration. During the COVID-19 crisis, the EUAN set up an advisory group to help coordinate EU agencies' response to the crisis and share best practices in adapting their ways of working. The initiative involved all the EUAN's members working - individually, bilaterally or via thematic clusters - to provide a coordinated and sustainable EU response to the pandemic.

**European Union Agencies Network (EUAN)**

32. Access2Markets - Helping small businesses trade their way to recovery

Access2Markets is a free, multilingual, 'one-stop-shop' website that explains to European companies, especially smaller businesses, how they can export and import beyond the EU. Easy to manage and maintain, Access2Markets combines two previous websites, thereby bringing efficiency gains for the Commission. The Access2Markets project is the successful result of a large collaborative effort of internal and external partners, leading to a product tailored to the needs and interests of SMEs. The project also involved a communication and promotion campaign to raise awareness.

**European Commission - DG TRADE** Unit R.3 - Transparency, Civil Society and Communication; Unit R.4 - Information technology and IT systems; Unit E.3 - Industry, Goods, Energy, Customs and Origin; Unit F.1 - Single entry point for enforcement, Market access and SMEs

33. B-solutions: Cross-border problem solving for border regions
Border regions often have essential interaction and interdependence with neighbouring border regions in other countries. However, there can be legal and administrative obstacles to practical daily requirements, for example public transport, students taking internships, cross-border workers or ambulances taking patients to the closest hospital across a border. B-solutions attempts to cooperate with the authorities involved to seek solutions to such interactions. Public authorities submit proposals to DG REGIO, which works with the authorities to achieve solutions. By January 2021, 43 such initiatives had been taken, with more being worked on.

European Commission - DG REGIO Unit D.2 - Cross-border cooperation
34. Video on evacuation procedures for EU buildings
What to do in case of the need to evacuate the office because of an emergency? The video provides an innovative, humorous and easy-to-understand animation, explaining the procedures for those working in the buildings of the European Parliament, Council of the EU and the European Council. The pre-existing video clip for the Parliament was expanded to include the other institutions in November 2020.

**European Parliament** Directorate-General for Innovation and Technological Support (DG ITEC) - IDEA Unit - Internal Communication and Multimedia - Multimedia Service

35. Digital justice during the pandemic

In response to the pandemic, the ‘Hearings Taskforce’ of the CJEU introduced a remote hearing system, to enable court hearings to continue in spite of the pandemic-related restrictions. The taskforce brought together different departments in the CJEU and, within two months, had put in place a videoconferencing system, by which lawyers could make depositions securely. The system also ensures respect of the multilingual obligations on the CJEU, with simultaneous interpretation. By January, over 100 court hearings had been conducted through this system, which launched on 25 May 2020.

**Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU)** Registrar of the CJEU - Task Force “Hearings”

36. Coordinating the EU response to the COVID-19 crisis
The ERCC provided coordinating and operational support to the crisis response in the EU, as well as to EU citizens. In the early stages of the emergency, the ERCC coordinated the delivery of EU assistance to China and helped repatriate EU citizens from Wuhan. Over the course of the pandemic, the ERCC also helped repatriate some 100,000 Europeans and other nationals who found themselves stranded abroad. The team helped match requests for COVID-19 medical response with offers of assistance from within the EU and beyond, and coordinated and co-financed their delivery. This involved daily coordination between the EU institutions and national authorities. The ERCC colleagues also coordinated the delivery of COVID-19 assistance offered to developing countries.

European Commission - DG ECHO Directorate A - Emergency Management and rescEU; Unit A.1 - Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC)

37. Fundraising to support the COVID-19 response
EU Staff for Climate is a ‘collective’ of staff working in the EU institutions that seeks to promote initiatives among EU staff to tackle social and environmental challenges. In April, the group launched the EU Staff COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund, which is a fund made up of donations from EU staff to provide a coordinated response to the health, social and economic emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Fund was set up with the King Baudouin Foundation (KBF), and received an enthusiastic response from staff of all EU institutions: after 8 months, over 1 200 EU staff members had contributed more than €500 000 to the fund, which supported 26 projects in nine EU countries. The numbers are still growing. After the emergency phase, the Fund aims to contribute to a green and fair recovery.

**European institutions staff members initiative** EU Staff for Climate/EU Staff COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund