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— Emily O'Reilly —

Award for Good Administration honours efforts to bring EU citizens home during COVID-19 pandemic

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The European Ombudsman Award for Good Administration 2021 honours the EU's extraordinary efforts last year to help repatriate over a half million EU citizens stranded around the world due to the pandemic.

The joint winning projects were undertaken by staff in the Commission's department for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (DG ECHO) and the European External Action Service (EEAS).

The winners were announced by Ombudsman Emily O'Reilly during a digital ceremony in Brussels on Thursday, with President von der Leyen as keynote speaker.

“COVID-19 represented an unprecedented challenge - internally and externally - to the EU administration. Many of the submitted projects showed the great lengths EU staff went to in order to help citizens during the pandemic,” said Ms O'Reilly

“In times of global crisis our first reaction is often that we want to return home. Staff in the Commission and in the EEAS worked around the clock, with the Member States, to make this happen for over a half million stranded EU citizens. Their actions demonstrated to all they helped what it means to be a citizen in the European Union.”



Background

The Award recognises actions by the EU public administration that have a visible and direct positive impact on the lives of citizens. Prizes in four categories – including excellence in communications, and excellence in innovation/transformation - were also awarded.

The Ombudsman introduced the award in 2017 to recognise excellence in EU public service and to encourage the sharing of good ideas and practice. This is the third edition of the award.

The nominations were assessed by an independent advisory board and the winners were chosen by the Ombudsman.

List of the category winners

Winner in citizen-focused services delivery category

SURE thing! EU emergency money to keep people employed - DG ECFIN, DG EMPL, DG BUDG, European Commission

Winner in communications category

Fighting African Swine Fever: forging a united front in South-East Europe - European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)

Winner in innovation/transformation category

Digital justice during the pandemic - European Court of Justice (CJEU)

Winner in crisis management category

Ensuring business continuity during the pandemic - General Secretariat of the Council



Special Award

Fundraising to support the COVID-19 response - EU staff COVID-19 Solidarity Response fund

Most popular with the public

Access2Markets - Helping small businesses trade their way to recovery - DG TRADE,
European Commission