



# Annual Management Plan Year 2021

25 January 2021

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# 1. Introduction

*The Ombudsman's mission statement*

**Our mission is to help to support European citizenship.**

**We do this by listening to citizens, to our stakeholders, and by working with the institutions of the EU to help to create a more accountable, transparent, ethical and effective administration.**

The Treaty on the functioning of the European Union empowers the Ombudsman to carry out inquiries into maladministration in the activities of the Union's institutions, bodies, offices and agencies, with the exception of the Court of Justice in its judicial role. Inquiries may be carried out in response to complaints, or on the Ombudsman's own initiative. The Ombudsman's independence is guaranteed by the Treaties.

The Charter of Fundamental Rights includes the right of EU citizens to complain to the Ombudsman. Companies, associations, and third country nationals resident in the EU also enjoy this right. The Ombudsman can deal with complaints about breaches of Charter rights, as well as other cases of maladministration. The Ombudsman therefore empowers citizens by helping them to realise their fundamental rights.

The Ombudsman promotes good governance and a culture of public service by helping the EU administration to work openly, effectively, and with integrity.

*The Ombudsman's Internal Charter of Good Practice* sets out the standards and principles that guide the office's activities and interactions with stakeholders. They are:

- Leadership in problem solving
- Independence and neutrality
- Innovative approaches to dispute resolution
- Systemic thinking
- External awareness and curiosity
- Responsiveness
- Empathy
- Openness and engagement

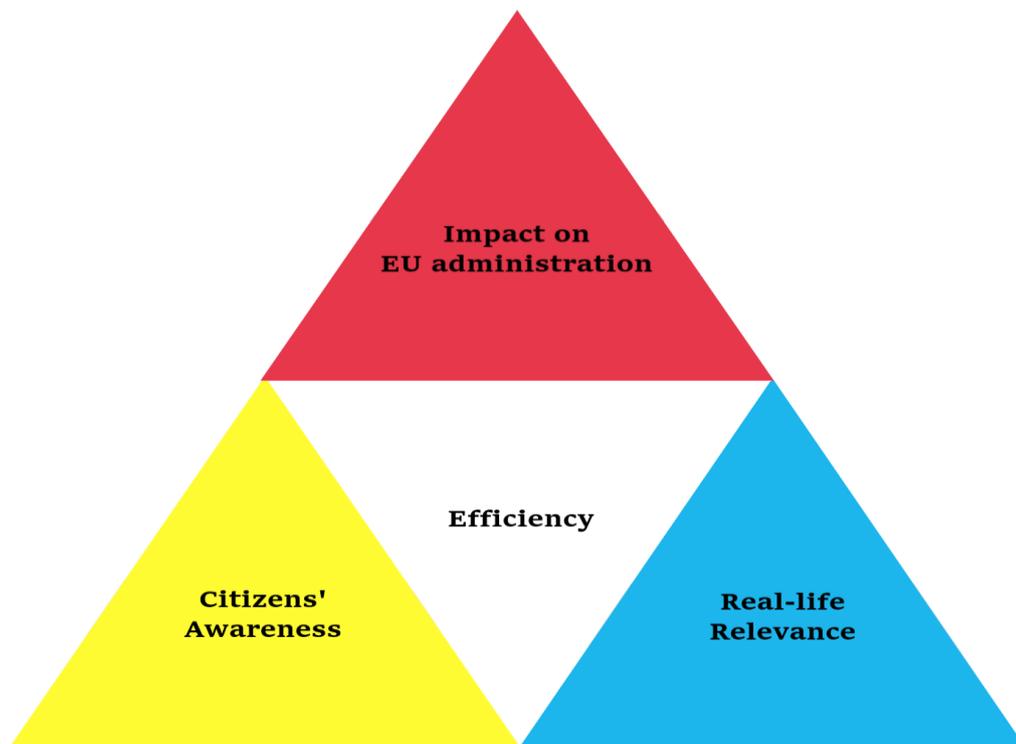
The Annual Management Plan for 2021 (AMP 2021) is the second AMP under the 2020-2024 mandate and the first based on the 'Towards 2024' strategy adopted by the Ombudsman in December 2020. It is based on an overall budget of EUR 12 501 836 and 73 posts.



## 2. Multi-Annual perspective

The Ombudsman's multi-year strategy *Towards 2024* is to combine and achieve four **mutually reinforcing** objectives.

1. We aim to achieve **lasting positive impact** on the EU administration, to the benefit of all European citizens and residents.
2. To help achieve that, our work must continue to be of **real-life relevance** to all of us.
3. To enable this impact, we must continue to increase **citizens' awareness** of our work Europe wide.
4. Given our limited resources, we have become very **efficient** in recent years. However, more can be done.





### 3. The organisation of the office

As part of the reflection on a new strategy for the 2020-2024 mandate, the Ombudsman reviewed how the office is organised. As a first step, in September 2020, the Office put in place a Directorate of Inquiries, which includes a Case Handling Unit. At the time of adoption of this Annual Management Plan, the implementation of the organisational structure in the administrative areas is still ongoing. The description of the various entities below thus reflects the situation before the completion of the reorganisation.

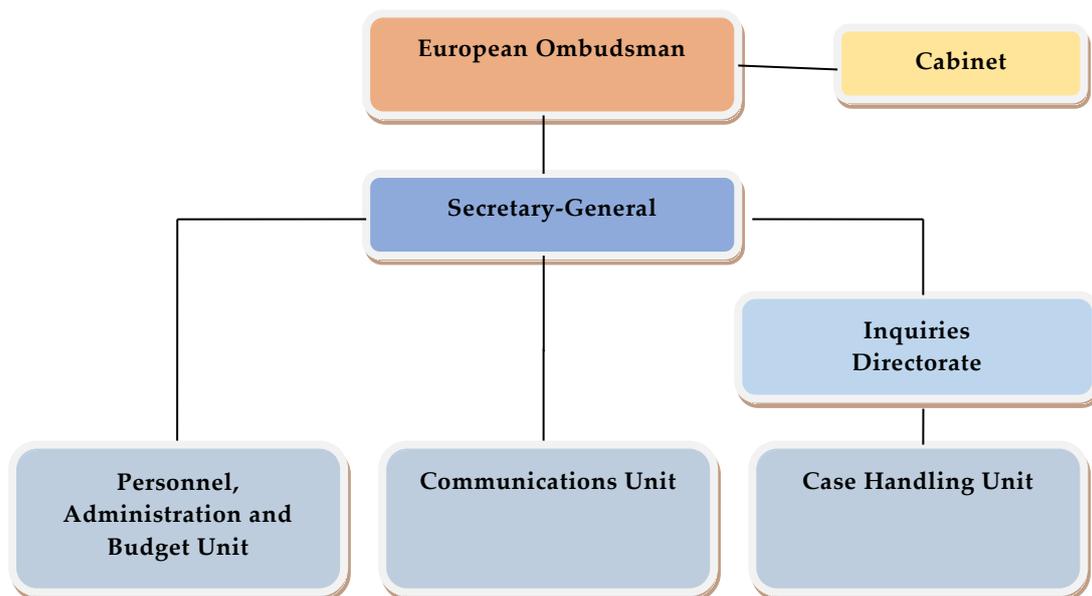
The **Cabinet (CAB)** works under the direct instruction of the Ombudsman. It advises and assists the Ombudsman to help ensure implementation of her vision, strategy and objectives. Cabinet members also liaise and represent the Ombudsman externally and draft speeches and articles on behalf of the Ombudsman.

The **Secretary-General (SG)** is responsible for the overall management of the office and for ensuring coordination and implementation of the Ombudsman's strategy. The Director, the Head of the Personnel, Administration and Budget Unit and the Head of the Communications Unit report directly to the Secretary-General.

The **Directorate of Inquiries (DIR-INQ)**, which includes the **Case-Handling Unit (CHU)** implements the Ombudsman's strategy in the area of complaints and inquiries.

The **Communications Unit (COMM)** supports the Ombudsman's objective of increasing citizens' awareness of the office and co-ordinates the Ombudsman's relations with the European Network of Ombudsmen.

The **Personnel, Administration and Budget Unit (PAB)** is responsible for all matters related to the institution's administration, human resources, budget, buildings, IT and records management. The Unit establishes and implements the appropriate internal control mechanisms and prepares information for the various budgetary control authorities.





## 4. Actions for 2021

The focus of the Annual Management Plan is mainly on new activities or changes that are needed to achieve the office's high level objectives.

The tables below are organised under six themes that the Office will focus on in 2021. They list the actions to be taken in 2021 under each theme and indicate the owner and the targeted Strategy objectives and KPIs.

This section also includes information on planned actions to strengthen or develop the internal control standards that will be prioritised in 2021.

### Theme 1 - Evaluating and increasing the impact of the Ombudsman's work

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Owner(s)</b>	<b>Targeted Strategy objectives and KPIs</b>
1 Produce a short report that describes the impact of the EO's work in recent years.	COMM	Impact Citizens' awareness KPIs 1-2-3-5-6
2 Explore with the European Parliament Research Service (EPRS) the possibility of conducting a study of a subset of our inquiries.	DIR-INQ	Impact KPIs 2-3-5-6
3 Analyse and act upon "lessons learnt" in each case area of the CHU peer review team. Define needs for relevant statistics and data and, if necessary, improve the functionalities of our Case Management System accordingly.	CHU/ IT	Impact Efficiency KPIs 3-6-7
4 Expand on ENO activities: - organise expert workshops and webinars, - identify possibilities for parallel inquiries and initiatives, and - share trends on topics that may arise in outside the mandate complaints.	DIR-INQ/ COMM/ PAB	Real-life relevance KPIs 2-4-5-6
5 Develop a methodology for gathering feedback from key stakeholders (KPI 4).	COMM/ DIR-INQ/ PAB	Real-life relevance KPI 4
6 Follow-up on the post-2020 European Disability Strategy to enhance the effectiveness of the Ombudsman's work in this area.	DIR-INQ	Impact Citizens' awareness KPIs 2-3-5-6



## Theme 2 - Strengthening the Ombudsman's role on public access to documents

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Owner(s)</b>	<b>Targeted Strategy objectives and KPIs</b>
7 Revisit the Fast-Track procedure, building on the internal review.	DIR-INQ	Impact Real-life relevance Efficiency KPIs 3-4-7
8 Enhance our effectiveness in public access cases, drawing on the main findings of the internal audit of these cases.	DIR-INQ	Impact Efficiency KPIs 3-7
9 Foster dialogue with the institutions during public access inquiries to promote acceptance of Ombudsman proposals, recommendations and suggestions.	DIR-INQ	Impact Efficiency KPIs 3-7
10 Increase awareness of the Ombudsman's mandate in this area by reaching out to practitioners, stakeholders and citizens.	COMM/ DIR-INQ	Real-life relevance Citizens awareness KPIs 1-4-5-6

## Theme 3 - Enhancing the complainants' experience

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Owner(s)</b>	<b>Targeted Strategy objectives and KPIs</b>
11 Revise the complaint submission process to optimise information and user-friendliness.	COMM/IT	Citizens awareness KPIs 1-4-5-6
12 Improve interaction between the website and CMSEO. Enable automatic import of information from the website to CMSEO and interaction with the complainant through the online account throughout the life of the complaint.	PAB/IT	Efficiency Citizens awareness KPIs 4-5-7
13 Further simplify the handling of outside the mandate complaints and information requests.	CHU/PAB/IT	Efficiency KPIs 1-7
14 Produce a report on how the case handling processes can be redesigned and start implementing the ideas stemming from the report.	DIR-INQ	Efficiency KPI 7

## Theme 4 - Ensuring dynamic and relevant communications and outreach

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Owner(s)</b>	<b>Targeted Strategy objectives and KPIs</b>
15 Identify cases or topics on which to launch targeted consultations and/or organise webinars to facilitate more stakeholder participation.	DIR-INQ/ COMM	Real-life relevance Citizens' awareness KPIs 1-5-6
16 Publish a periodical online newsletter about the EO's work (EO Express).	COMM	Citizens' awareness KPI 6
17 Optimise the Annual Report production and workflow and create a new webpage with highlights ('scrollie').	COMM	Citizens' awareness KPIs 5-6



18	Produce news summaries on key cases targeted at journalists.	COMM	Citizens' awareness KPIs 5-6
19	Organise the 2021 Award for Good Administration.	COMM/IT	Impact Citizens' awareness KPIs 2-3-4-5
20	Obtain external professional advice on how to bring the Office's visibility, influence and messaging vis-à-vis our stakeholders to the next level.	COMM/SG	Citizens' awareness KPIs 5-6

## Theme 5 - Showcasing the office as an attractive and agile place of work

Actions	Owner(s)	Targeted Strategy objectives and KPIs
21	Finalise the implementation of the new organisational structure in the administrative areas.	SG/PAB Efficiency KPI 9
22	Adopt a career development and learning policy.	PAB Efficiency KPI 9
23	Complete the mapping of all jobs/functions and identify relevant competences and skills.	PAB Efficiency KPI 9
24	Use the opportunity of the office's move to new premises in Brussels to showcase the attractiveness of working in the EO's office (office environment, flexible working conditions, staff wellbeing, digital environment, gender balance).	PAB/ COMM Efficiency KPI 9

## Theme 6 - Improving the management and the security of documents, information and data

Actions	Owner(s)	Targeted Strategy objectives and KPIs
25	Adopt rules on the handling of EU classified information and instructions on the handling of sensitive non-classified information.	SG/DIR-INQ Efficiency Impact
26	Implement the EDPS recommendations issued in November 2020 following the 2019 inspection.	PAB/DPO/ DIR-INQ Efficiency
27	Automate the implementation of retention periods in in-house IT tools.	PAB/IT Efficiency
28	Adopt historical archiving rules for complaint related documents and establish cooperation with the Historical Archives of the EU.	PAB Efficiency



## Actions to reinforce our internal control standards

<b>Internal Control Standard (ICS)</b>	<b>Effectiveness requirement</b>	<b>Planned actions to improve or develop controls</b>	<b>Owner(s)</b>
ICS 2- Ethical and organisational values	Staff must be kept aware of relevant ethical values and of any associated rules and procedures.	Organise training and information sessions to raise awareness on ethical conduct, conflict of interest and whistleblowing matters.	SG/PAB/ Ethics correspondents
ICS 3 - Staff allocation and mobility	The organisation of the structure should be fit to deliver the objectives and priorities of the Strategy.	Finalise the implementation of the new organisational structure in the administrative areas and define responsibilities and coordination between the entities in charge of core and support processes. See also action 21 above.	SG/DIR-INQ/ PAB
ICS 7 - Operational structure	Risks associated with the institution's sensitive functions are managed by means of mitigating controls and ultimately staff mobility.	Once the organisational structure is finalised, review the sensitive functions of the office and, where appropriate, ensure that effective mitigating measures are in place.	SG/PAB
ICS 10- Business continuity	To be effective, business continuity measures need to be constantly adapted to structural and operational changes in an institution.	Review and update the business continuity arrangements.	SG/PAB
ICS 11- Document Management	The EO should have rules on the handling of EU classified information that ensure a protection equivalent to that of other institutions and bodies.	Adopt rules on the handling of EU classified information and instructions on the handling of sensitive non-classified information. Also appears as action 25 above.	SG/DIR-INQ
ICS 15- Assessment of Internal Controls	The EO should have a well organised, pragmatic and value-adding self-assessment of its internal control standards.	Enhance the ICS evaluation process by putting in place a structured annual evaluation.	SG/PAB



## 5. Measuring and reporting on our performance

Progress in achieving our objectives is measured using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). They are set out below, together with targets for 2021. The KPIs and relevant targets are reviewed and, if necessary, revised on an annual basis.

### Key Performance Indicators, measurement and targets for 2021

KPI	Measurement	Targets	Strategy objectives
KPI 1	Percentage of complaints within the mandate	35%	Real-life relevance Citizens' awareness
KPI 2	Number of inquiries opened in cases of public importance (complaints, strategic inquiries and strategic initiatives)	50	Impact on EU administration Real-life relevance
KPI 3	Acceptance rate (previous year's results – composite indicator) Rate of positive follow-up to solution proposals, recommendations and suggestions 3a - Overall acceptance rate 3b - Acceptance rate in cases of public importance 3c - Acceptance rate in Covid-19 related cases (for as long as relevant)	80% 80% 80%	Impact on EU administration Real-life relevance
KPI 4	Perception of our key stakeholders (rate of positive evaluation)	To be established in 2021	Impact on EU administration Real-life relevance
KPI 5	Web activities (composite indicator) 5a - Visitors to the website 5b - Advice given through the interactive guide to contact a member of the European Network of Ombudsmen	500 000 8 000	Citizens' awareness Real-life relevance
KPI 6	Social media activities (composite indicator) 6a - Increase of followers on social media Twitter LinkedIn Instagram 6b - Number of visits to the website through links posted on our social media channels	+10% +25% +45% 1 200	Citizens' awareness Real-life relevance
KPI 7	Handling of complaints and inquiries (composite indicator) 7a - Proportion of cases in which the admissibility decision is taken in one month 7b - Average duration of inquiries 7c - Clearance rate (cases closed compared to new cases registered in the reference period)	95% 150 days 100%	Efficiency
KPI 8	Budget implementation (composite indicator) 8a - Rate of budget implementation 8b - Proportion of payments made within 30 days	94% 100%	Efficiency
KPI 9	Management of Human Resources (composite indicator) 9a - Occupation rate of establishment plan posts 9b - Percentage of workforce dedicated to core activities 9c - Average number of training days per staff member	98% 65% 5	Efficiency



## 6. Resources for the implementation of the 2021 priorities

### 6.1. Human resources

The table below shows the allocation of human resources in the various operational entities and the categories of processes of the Operating Framework each of these entities is predominantly involved with.

	<b>Allocation of resources</b>	<b>Management processes</b>	<b>Core processes</b>	<b>Supporting processes</b>
<b>Ombudsman Cabinet</b>	AD: 2 AST: 1 Contract agent: 1		X	
<b>Secretariat-General (Management and coordination)</b>	AD: 2 AST: 2	X		
<b>Directorate of Inquiries (including Complaint Handling Unit)</b>	AD: 23 AST 2 AST SC: 1 Contract agents: 2 Trainees: 7		X	
<b>Communications Unit</b>	AD: 4 AST: 3 AST/SC: 1 Contract agent: 1 Trainee: 1		X	
<b>Personnel, Administration and Budget Unit</b>	AD: 5 AST: 14 Contract agents: 4		X	X
<b>ICT</b>	AD: 1 AST: 2 AST SC: 1			X



## 6.2. Budgetary resources by operational line

<b>Budget Lines</b>	<b>Resources (EUR)</b>
A-1 6 1 2 Further training	130 000
A-1 6 3 1 Mobility	6 000
A-1 6 3 2 Social contacts between members of staff	7 000
A-1 6 5 0 European Schools	179 083
A-1 6 5 1 Crèches and childcare facilities	15 000
A-2 0 0 0 Rent	1 516 000
A-2 1 0 0 Purchase, servicing and maintenance of IT	260 000
A-2 1 2 Furniture	13 000
A-2 1 6 Vehicles	15 000
A-2 3 0 0 Stationery, office supplies and miscellaneous	7 000
A-2 3 0 1 Postage on correspondence and delivery charges	3 000
A-2 3 0 2 Telecommunications	7 000
A-2 3 0 3 Financial charges	700
A-2 3 0 4 Other expenditures	4 000
A-2 3 0 5 Legal costs and damages	1 000
A-2 3 1 Translation and interpretation	315 000
A-2 3 2 Support for activities	154 600
A-3 0 0 Staff mission expenses	135 000
A-3 0 2 Entertainment and representation expenses	2 000
A-3 0 3 Meetings in general	45 000
A-3 0 4 Internal meetings	25 000
A-3 2 0 0 Documentation and library	5 000
A-3 2 0 1 Archive resources	13 000
A-3 2 1 0 Communication & publications	124 000
A-3 3 0 0 Studies	10 000
A-3 4 0 0 Miscellaneous expenses	2 400

Emily O'Reilly

Annex: Explanation and visual representation of the key management documents



## **Annex**

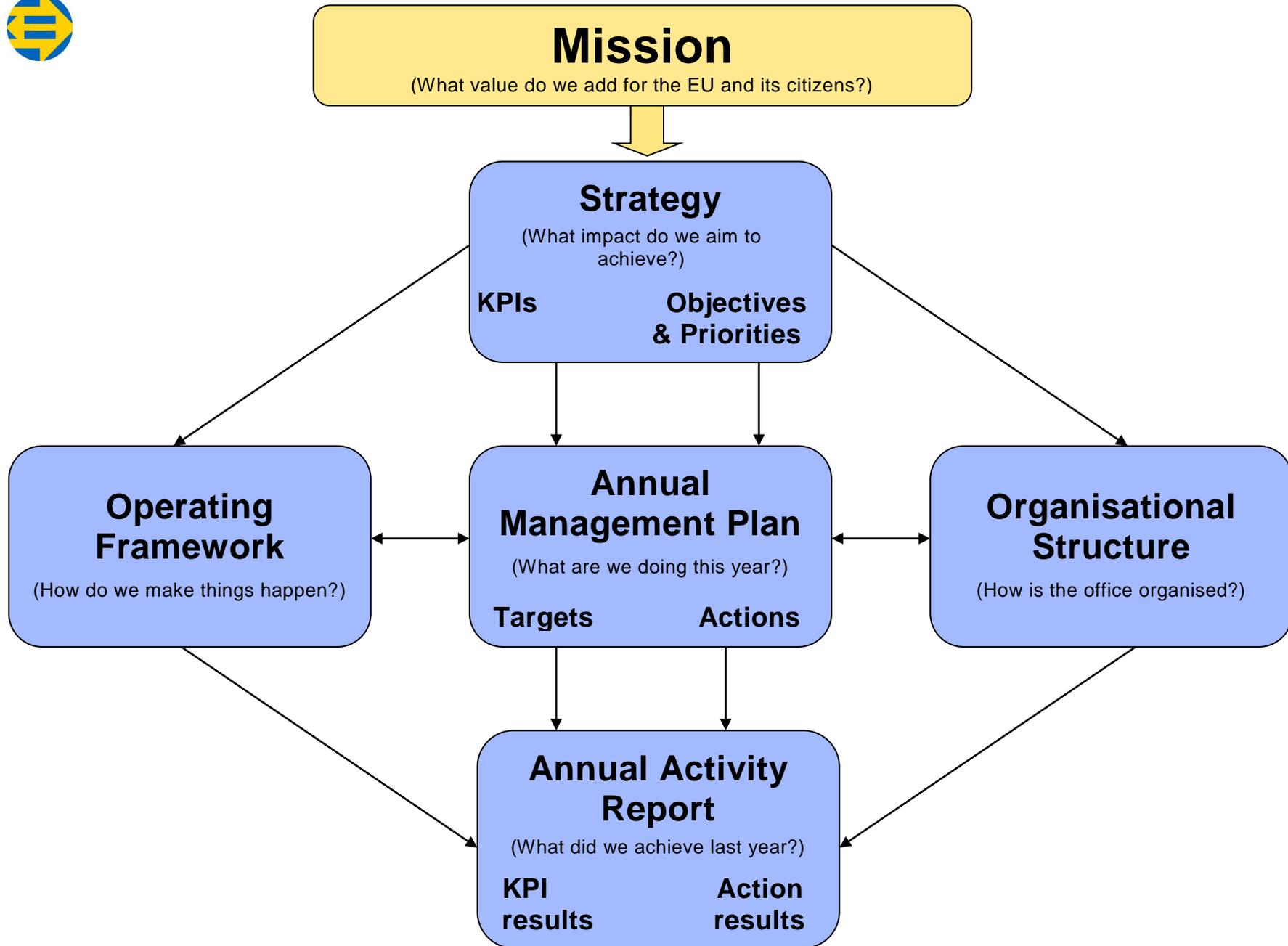
### **Explanation and visual representation of the key management documents of the Ombudsman's office**

#### **Key management documents and how they relate to one another**

We produce a number of documents that help us to guide and manage our activities in line with the mission statement.

They also contribute to the external accountability of the office and are all publicly available. Some are required by law. Others are produced voluntarily by the office.

These documents aim at answering different questions, as shown in the visual representation below.





**European Ombudsman**

1 avenue du Président Robert Schuman  
CS 30403  
F - 67001 Strasbourg Cedex

T. + 33 (0)3 88 17 23 13  
F. + 33 (0)3 88 17 90 62  
[www.ombudsman.europa.eu](http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu)  
[eo@ombudsman.europa.eu](mailto:eo@ombudsman.europa.eu)

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