

Annual Management Plan

Year 2024

30 January 2024



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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

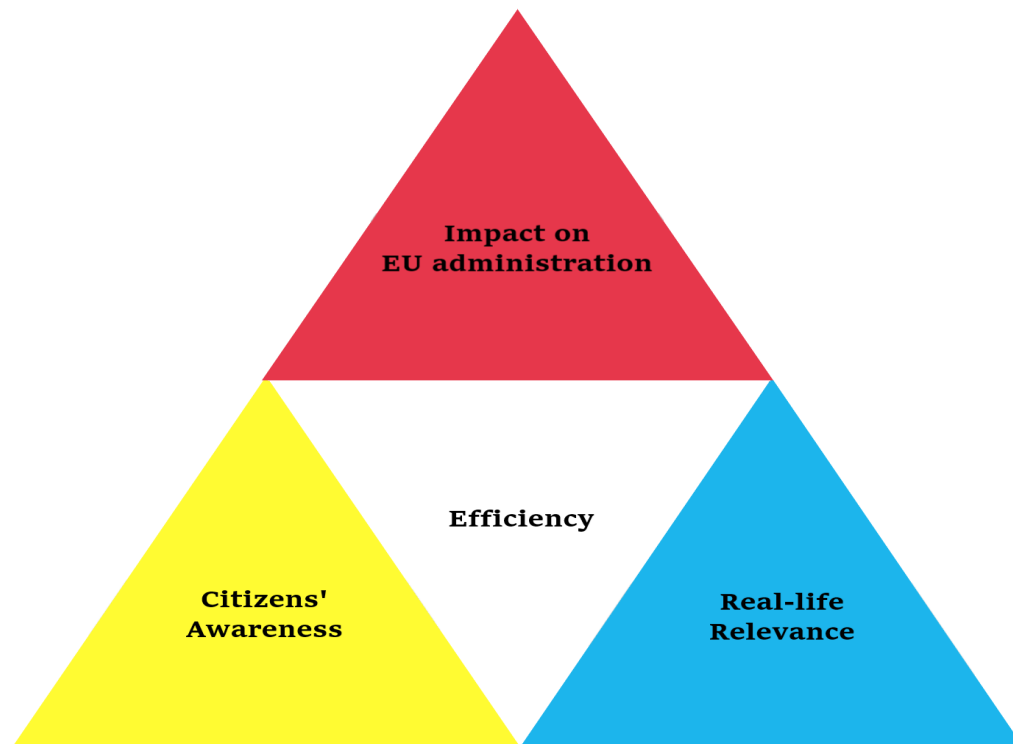
The Annual Management Plan for 2024 is the fourth and last one based on the 'Towards 2024' Strategy. It is based on an overall budget of EUR 13 843 160 and 75 posts.



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

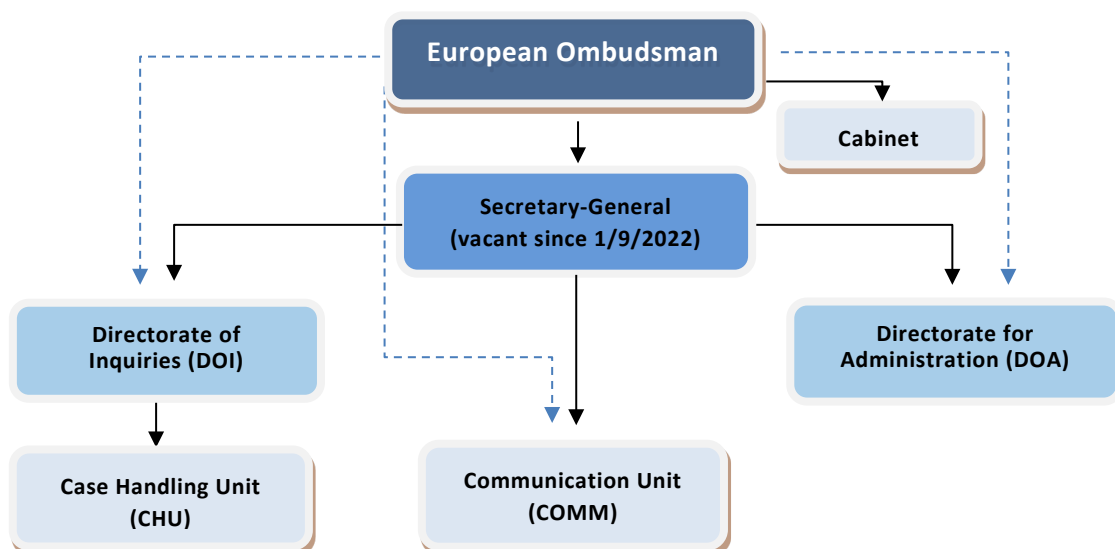
The **Cabinet (CAB)** works under the direct instruction of the Ombudsman. It advises and assists the Ombudsman to help ensure implementation of her vision, strategy and objectives. Cabinet members also liaise and represent the Ombudsman externally and draft speeches and articles on behalf of the Ombudsman.

The **Secretary-General (SG)** is responsible for the overall management of the office and for ensuring coordination and implementation of the Ombudsman's strategy. Since the retirement of the Secretary-General in September 2022, the Directors and the Head of the Communication Unit report directly to the Ombudsman. Coordination is done at the Directorates' level with the support of the Secretariat-General staff and the Ombudsman's Cabinet.

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

The **Directorate for Administration (DOA)**, is responsible for all matters related to human resources (HR), budget and finance (FIN), process management, business continuity and infrastructure (PBI). The Directorate establishes and implements the appropriate internal control mechanisms and prepares information for the various budgetary control authorities.

The **Communication 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.





4. Operational objectives and actions for 2024

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 table below is organised under the four high-level strategy objectives. It sets out the operational objectives for 2024, the corresponding outputs and indicators and targets to measure implementation.

This section also includes information on planned actions to strengthen or develop the internal control standards that will be prioritised in 2024.

ACHIEVE LASTING IMPACT ON THE EU ADMINISTRATION				
1	Operational objective: <i>Engage in debate on EU reform and key thematic areas and topical issues</i>			
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner(s)
	Monitor the momentum around reform and provide input to the debate, where relevant.	Number of meetings/events we participate in on these topics	5	DOI/ COMM/ CAB
	Organise stakeholder meetings/events with academics and other experts.	Number of meetings/events Attendance by invited participants	2	CAB/ COMM
	Follow up on strategic work linked to AI in EU IBOAs	Completion date	Q3	DOI
2	Operational objective: <i>Revisit key inquiry areas to assess impact</i>			
	Issues on which the Ombudsman plans to follow up include (i) the Commission’s approach to tobacco lobbying, (ii) the transparency and supervision of the Recovery and Resilience Facility, (iii) Commission experts groups, (iv) disclosure of environmental information by IBOAs.	Completion date	Q3	DOI
3	Operational objective: <i>Enhance the mainstreaming of disability rights in EO work and office activities</i>			
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner(s)
	Map strategic work for the review of EU institutions by the UN CRPD in March 2025.	Completion of internal document and mapping of subsequent potential strategic work	Q2/Q3	DOI



	Organise a training on disability and inclusion for EO staff	Number of staff having attended the training, quality of the training (preferably with organisation led by people with disabilities)	50%	DOI/DOA
4	Operational objective: <i>Monitor follow up to all suggestions</i>			
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner
	Put in place a system to monitor the follow up to all EO 'suggestions'.	Implementation date of tool	Q4	DOA/DOI
ENSURE REAL-LIFE RELEVANCE TO EUROPEAN CITIZENS				
5	Operational objective: <i>Deploy artificial intelligence to improve the quality and efficiency of our work</i>			
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner(s)
	Identify processes that could be either activated or improved and accelerated with AI tools. Monitor developments at the interinstitutional level; Identify possible tool(s); Build synergies; Deploy the tool(s).	Number of processes identified and/or deployed	At least 1	DOI/ DOA/ COMM
6	Operational objective: <i>Enhance the visibility of the query procedure to improve its relevance to national ombudsmen offices</i>			
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner
	Conduct an evaluation of the current query e-form and update it (or replace it) based on the results	Completion date	Q2	DOI/DOA
		Number of queries relying on new tool (usability of new e-form or tool/approach)	2	
	Research and report on the results of previous queries (e.g. through follow-up emails to national offices that submitted queries over the past 2 years)	Completion of synthesis report Rate of offices replying	Q3 50%	DOI



INCREASE CITIZENS' AWARENESS OF OUR WORK			
7	Operational objective: <i>Improve how our inquiry work is presented to the public</i>		
	Output	Indicator	Target
	Improve the website visitor experience by ensuring that non-complaint based inquiries (OIIIs) also get a timeline.	Implementation date	Q1 DOA/DOI
8	Operational objective: <i>Introduce the public to a new area of the Ombudsman's work: ethics</i>		
	Output	Indicator	Target
	Produce a scrollable web story highlighting challenges related to ethics in the EU institutions and mentioning notable cases in which the Ombudsman's work had positive impact on EU administration. Promote the story on social media.	Publication date	Q3 COMM
9	Operational Objective: <i>Enhance the communication strategies of the Office</i>		
	Output	Indicator	Target
	Drafting and presenting new social media guidelines for staff.	Approval date	Q2 COMM
10	Operational objective: <i>Achieve a better understanding of the Ombudsman's audiences, find new audiences</i>		
	Output	Indicator	Target
	Produce bi-weekly internal reports on digital communication products/actions (social media posts, speeches on medium, campaigns) performance.	Number of reports	Bi-weekly reports COMM
	Issue a set of proposals based on the reports' analysis.	Frequency	2 sets per year COMM



CONTINUE TO IMPROVE OUR EFFICIENCY

11	Operational objective: <i>Improve and develop the existing online account for complainants to allow increased interaction through this account.</i>			
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner(s)
	Add a feature that allows the Ombudsman's services to deposit correspondence with complainants directly into their online account and limit interaction through e-mail to plain notifications.	Implementation date	S2	DOA-PM
12	Operational objective: <i>Help complainants enhance the completeness of their submissions</i>			
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner(s)
	Provide complainants with tailored advice when filling-in the online complaint form.	Implementation date Reduction in number of information requests Time gained	S1	DOI/ DOA-PM
13	Operational objective: <i>Further enhance the functionalities of CMS</i>			
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner(s)
	Identify and eliminate redundant tasks in CMS. Optimise user-experience in line with feedback received	Implementation date Efficiency gains	Q3	DOI/ DOA-PM
14	Operational objective: <i>Simplify the creation of statistics about our core activity</i>			
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner(s)
	Implement an intuitive and reliable tool to enable more staff members in the EO's office to create and manage case-related statistics.	Implementation date Number of new users	Q4 5	DOA-PM
15	Operational objective: <i>Make the selection process for DOI trainees shorter and less resource intensive</i>			
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner(s)
	Adopt and implement a new selection procedure.	Adoption date Implementation date	Q1 Q2	DOI & DOA-HR



16	Operational objective: <i>Enhance staff awareness on ethical conduct</i>			
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner(s)
	Organise trainings on ethical conduct tailor-made to functions of office entities/staff.	Effective implementation Number of trainings organised	Q3 At least 3	DOA/ DOI
17	Operational objective: <i>Develop a dynamic and coherent L&D offer</i>			
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner(s)
	Create a competency framework (horizontal for all staff members & specific to functions) and draft tailor-made learning paths.	Adopt the general competency framework Adopt a competency framework for managers Learning paths for Inquiries Officers and managers completed	Q1 Q3 Q3	DOA-HR (with managers)
18	Operational objective: <i>Improve the ICT security framework</i>			
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner(s)
	Conclude a Service Level Agreement with the European Parliament in the field of ICT security.	Deadline for signing SLA	S1	DOA-PM
	Adopt an internal ICT security policy and take implementing measures.	Deadline for adopting policy	S2	DOA-PM
19	Operational objective: <i>Optimise the functionality and effective use of the CMSEO environments</i>			
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner(s)
	Ensure that the Development, Test and Production environments for our core business application are used effectively and efficiently.	Actual sustainable functioning of these three environments	Q2	DOA-PM
20	Operational objective: <i>Make green and social responsibility a priority</i>			
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner(s)
	Organise and/or participate in staff awareness raising sessions on green and socially responsible issues.	Number of sessions	Minimum 2	DOA/ COMM



Actions to reinforce our internal control standards

Internal Control Standard (ICS)	Planned actions	Owner(s)
ICS 4 - Staff appraisal and development Adequate measures are taken to develop the skills necessary to achieve the set objectives.	Create a competency framework and draft tailor-made learning paths. (See also operational objective 17 above)	DOA (with managers)
ICS 6 - Risk management process The annual activity planning includes a risk management process that is in line with applicable provisions and guidelines.	Adopt and implement an updated risk management methodology.	DOA/All
ICS 8 - Processes and procedures The European Ombudsman's processes and procedures used for the implementation and control of its activities are effective and efficient, adequately documented and compliant with applicable provisions.	Finalise the review of the financial policies to ensure alignment with the Financial Regulation. Continue the implementation of the E-invoicing system in collaboration with DG DIGIT (Commission).	DOA-FIN
ICS 10 - Business continuity Adequate measures are in place to ensure continuity of service in case of "business-as-usual" interruption. Business Continuity arrangements are in place to ensure that the European Ombudsman's office is able to continue operating to the extent possible whatever the nature of a major disruption.	Ensure effective implementation of the business continuity measures (training, tests, and alternative procedures).	DOA/All
ICS 11 - Document management Appropriate processes and procedures are in place to ensure that the European Ombudsman's document management is secure, efficient (in particular as regards retrieving appropriate information) and complies with applicable legislation.	Deposit the Ombudsman's non-complaint related paper archive fonds related to the mandates of the first and the second Ombudsman at the Historical Archives of the EU in Florence.	DOA-PM
ICS 12 - Information and communication ICT systems used and/or managed by the European Ombudsman's office are adequately protected against threats to their confidentiality and integrity.	Conclude a Service Level Agreement with the European Parliament in the field of ICT security. Adopt an internal ICT security policy and take implementing measures. (See also operational objective 18 above)	DOA-PM



5. Measuring and reporting on our performance

Progress in achieving our strategy objectives is measured using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). They are set out below, together with targets for 2024. The KPIs and relevant targets are reviewed and, if necessary, revised on an annual basis.

Key Performance Indicators, measurement and targets for 2024

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	80% 80%	Impact on EU administration Real-life relevance
KPI 4	Perception of our key stakeholders (satisfaction score based on complainant feedback survey)	> 3 out of 5	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	750 000 10 000	Citizens' awareness Real-life relevance
KPI 6	Social media activities (composite indicator) 6a - Increase of followers on social media X (ex-Twitter) LinkedIn Instagram 6b - Number of visits to the website through links posted on our social media channels	+2% +15% +15% 4 500	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	93% 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	95% 65% 5	Efficiency



6. Resources for the implementation of the 2024 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.

	Allocation of resources	Management processes	Core processes	Supporting processes
Ombudsman Cabinet	Head of Cabinet: 1 AD: 4 AST: 1	X	X	
Secretariat-General (Management & Coordination)	AD: 1 AST: 1	X		
Directorate of Inquiries (including Complaint Handling Unit)	Director: 1 Head of Unit: 1 AD: 27 AST: 1 AST SC: 1 Contract agents: 3 Trainees: 6	X	X	
Directorate for Administration	Director: 1 AST:1	X		X
HR	AD: 2 AST: 6			X
Finance	AD: 1 AST: 1 AST-SC: 2			X
Process & documents management, business continuity and infrastructure	AD: 3 AST: 8 AST-SC: 2 Contract agents: 3 Trainee: 1		X	X
Communication Unit	Head of Unit: 1 AD: 1 AST: 3 AST-SC: 1 Contract agents: 3 Trainees: 2	X	X	



6.2. Budgetary resources by operational line

Budget Lines	Resources (EUR)
A-1 6 1 2 Further training	90 000
A-2 0 0 0 Rent	1 045 620
A-2 0 0 2 Cleaning, maintenance and energy consumption	195 969
A-2 0 0 3 Security and surveillance of buildings	324 120
A-2 1 0 0 Purchase, servicing and maintenance of IT	310 000
A-2 1 2 Furniture	3 000
A-2 1 6 Vehicles	12 000
A-2 3 0 0 Stationery, office supplies and miscellaneous	3 500
A-2 3 0 1 Postage on correspondence and delivery charges	2 500
A-2 3 0 2 Telecommunications	4 500
A-2 3 0 3 Financial charges	700
A-2 3 0 4 Other expenditures	3 500
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	179 000
A-3 0 0 Staff mission expenses	100 000
A-3 0 2 Reception and representation expenses	2 000
A-3 0 3 Meetings in general	67 000
A-3 0 4 Internal meetings	25 000
A-3 2 0 0 Documentation and library	3 000
A-3 2 0 1 Archive resources	6 000
A-3 2 1 0 Communication & publications	26 000
A-3 3 0 0 Studies	10 000
A-3 4 0 0 Miscellaneous expenses	2 400

Emily O'Reilly

Annex: Visual representation of the key management documents



Annex: 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 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.





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