



Red Europea de Defensores del Pueblo
Europäisches Verbindungsnetz der Bürgerbeauftragten
European Network of Ombudsmen
Réseau européen des Médiateurs
Rete europea dei difensori civici

Programme

European Network of Ombudsmen conference 2025

Upholding a rights-based Europe

European Parliament – Brussels, Belgium

Plenary room: SPAAK 5B1, interpretation (EN, FR, DE, ES, IT)
Break out rooms: SPINELLI 7F387, 8F388, 6G306. English only.

Thursday, 20 November 2025

Day 1

12.30 – 14.00 Registration and sandwich lunch (plenary room)

14.00 – 14.50 Inaugural session (plenary room)

Teresa Anjinho, European Ombudswoman - Welcome address

David Baele, President of the Belgian Network of Ombudsmen - *The Venice Principles versus the Paris Principles* (video)

Marta Hirsch-Ziemińska, Principal Adviser, European Ombudsman - Presentation of conference workshops

10 minutes for participants to move to the workshop rooms

15.00 – 17.40 Workshops 1, 2, 3 and 4

Participants attend chosen workshop

(Coffee break 16.00 to 16.15 served in every room)

Workshop 1: Practical barriers for intra-EU mobility

EU citizens can live, work, study and retire in other EU countries - rights protected by EU law and enforced by national courts and ombudsmen. This workshop will discuss problems with the implementation of EU law in these areas and the solutions found by ombudsmen from recognition of diplomas to the reimbursement of medical costs.

Room SPAAK 5B1, with interpretation (EN, FR, DE, ES, IT)

Moderator

Prof. Marcin Wiącek

Ombudsman of Poland (Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich)

**Rapporteur**

Inés Ibáñez de Maeztu Izaguirre

Acting Ombudswoman of the Basque Country, Spain (Defensor del Pueblo del País Vasco)

Workshop 2: The challenges and opportunities of monitoring EU law compliance

Ombudsmen monitor EU law compliance directly or indirectly by controlling or advising other bodies with monitoring duties. This workshop will discuss the challenges and opportunities of each model and how ombudsmen deal with their different mandates.

[Room 8F388, English only](#)

Moderator

Maija Sakslin

Deputy Parliamentary Ombudsman of Finland

Rapporteur

Tena Simonović Einwalter

Ombudswoman of the Republic of Croatia

Workshop 3: Preserving ombudsmen independence in challenging times

Amid threats to independence in various jurisdictions, it is important to reaffirm the fundamental values of ombuds institutions. Discussions will focus on issues such as independence and autonomy, security of tenure, mandate, powers of investigation, transparency, and follow-up to recommendations.

[Room 7F387, English only](#)

Moderator

Dr. Erika Leonaitė

Parliamentary Ombudsperson of Lithuania (The Seimas Ombudsperson)

Rapporteur

Prof. Renate Weber

Ombudsman of Romania (The People's Advocate)

Workshop 4: Sharing ombudsmen experience in dealing with environmental complaints

Environmental law is a central part of the EU agenda as it seeks to reach ambitious climate goals in the near future. Citizens' complaints to the European Commission and to national ombudsmen play a key role in the enforcement of that law. Discussions will focus on ombudsman experience in dealing with such complaints.

[Room 6G306, English only](#)

Moderator

Judge Emeritus Joseph Zammit McKeon

Parliamentary Ombudsman of Malta

Rapporteur

Dr. Dijana Možina Zupanc

Deputy Human Rights Ombudsman of Slovenia

18.30 – 20.00 Stand-up dinner in the European Parliament



Friday, 21 November 2025

08.15 – 08.45 Registration and welcome coffee (Plenary room).

At 08.45 participants will be directed to their chosen workshops.

09.00 – 11.30 Workshops 5, 6, 7 and 8

Participants attend chosen workshop

(10.20 – 10.40 coffee break served in the rooms)

Workshop 5: Ombudsman oversight of semi-private and semi-public administration

Ombudsman oversight of semi-private and semi-public administration is a growing issue as private companies increasingly deliver public services or manage public resources. The challenges for ombudsmen in this area are set to increase, particularly when the private sector provides AI for public administration.

Room SPAAK 5B1, with interpretation (EN, FR, DE, ES, IT)

Moderator

Velislava Delcheva

Ombudsman of the Republic of Bulgaria

Rapporteur

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Workshop 6: Preventing the fragmentation of the protection of citizens' rights

EU citizens should enjoy the same range of rights everywhere, including freedom of movement, the right to non-discrimination, and protection under the Charter of Fundamental Rights. The different mechanisms in the EU for providing rights protection should complete one another. How could the European Ombudsman act together with national ombudsmen to help protect EU citizens' rights and what is the ombudsmen's role in enforcing EU law?

Room 6G306, English only

Moderator

Ger Deering

Ombudsman of Ireland

Rapporteur

Christian Britten Lundblad

Parliamentary Ombudsman of Denmark



Workshop 7: The evolving role of ombudsmen in migration and asylum complaints

Migration remains both a top priority and divisive issue in the EU. Once the new EU Pact on migration and asylum enters into force, ombudsmen will be confronted with more tasks related to the protection of rights, while the externalisation of European refugee protection raises the issue of ombudsmen jurisdiction. How can ombudsmen better engage in the protection of the rights of migrants and refugees in the national context and in light of the shared responsibility between the EU and member states? What are the barriers for migrants complaining to ombudsmen?

Room 7F387, English only

Moderator

Daniel Agacinski

General delegate for mediation, director for territorial action (Defender of Rights, France)

Rapporteur

Vít Alexander Schorm

Deputy Deputy Public Defender of Rights of the Czech Republic

Workshop 8: Regulatory simplification - what could it mean for the protection of rights?

National ombudsmen have long dealt with the issue of over regulation in the form of laws and administrative procedures that are too complex. The recent drive for regulatory simplification can be important for competitiveness but it should not come at the expense of individual rights and due process. The Belgian Federal Ombudsman will present their Office's 2024 Annual Report 'Keep it simple', which also calls for legal recognition of the right for citizens to make unintentional mistakes in administrative procedures.

Room 8F388, English only

Moderator

Ülle Madise

Chancellor of Justice of Estonia

Rapporteur

Jérôme Aass

Federal Ombudsman of Belgium

10 minutes for the groups to move back to the plenary room



11.40 – 12.00 Group photo (Plenary room)

12.00 – 13.30 Reporting to the plenary session and wrap up (Plenary room)

Reporting from the 8 workshops (+/- 8 minutes each), wrap up.

Closing statement, Teresa Anjinho, European Ombudswoman

13.30 – 14.30 Sandwich lunch in the European Parliament