

Annual Activity Report

of the Authorising Officer by Delegation

Year 2025

27 March 2026



Contents

Introduction	2
Highlights of the year	3
1. The structure and organisation of the Office	4
2. Our activities in 2025	4
2.1 Implementation of AMP 2025 actions	5
2.2 Scoreboard 2025	9
2.3 Core activities	15
2.4 Management Processes	18
2.5 Supporting processes	20
3. Financial management and internal control	28
3.1 Efficiency and economy	28
3.2 Management and follow-up of controls	29
3.3 Control results	32
3.4 Whistleblowing and investigations by OLAF	34
4. Reservations and impact on the statement	35
4.1 Materiality criteria	35
4.2 Reservation	36
4.3 Conclusion	36
5. Declaration of assurance	37
Annexes	39
Annex 1: Human resources and professional training charts	39
Annex 2: The Ombudsman's Operating Framework (PowerPoint Presentation)	43
Annex 3: Report on budgetary and financial management for the financial year 2025	43
Annex 4: Draft Annual Report 2025 of the European Ombudsman	43



Introduction

The Ombudsman in brief

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 who reside 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 European Parliament elected Ms Teresa Anjinho as European Ombudsman for the 2024-2029 mandate. She took up her functions on 27 February 2025, after having been elected in December 2024.

The Ombudswoman adopted a Strategy for her mandate in October 2025, which includes the following mission statement.

The Ombudsman's mission statement

Our mission is to help resolve complaints and ensure that the EU administration applies the highest standards of integrity, transparency, accountability and responsiveness. We do this by putting citizens and their rights at the heart of our actions and by fostering constructive dialogue with the EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies as well as engaging with other relevant stakeholders.

Scope of the Annual Activity Report

The Annual Activity Report (AAR) of the authorising officer by delegation (AOD) of the European Ombudsman is prepared in accordance with Article 74(9) of the Financial Regulation. The Secretary-General of the European Ombudsman, appointed on 01/01/2026, is the European Ombudsman's AOD from that date. As the Director for Administration acted as AOD throughout 2025, this AAR is submitted to the Ombudswoman by her.

This AAR reports on the implementation of the Ombudsman's Annual Management Plan (AMP) for 2025 and focuses on the organisational, administrative, budgetary and financial aspects of the Office's activities in 2025. Annex 1 contains detailed information on the breakdown and allocation of human resources available to the Ombudsman. The Operating Framework, which sets out our main processes is attached as annex 2. The detailed report on the implementation of the budget in 2025 is attached as annex 3.

Outcomes of inquiries and efforts to improve good administration in the EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies, including events and outreach activities, are recorded in the Annual Report of the Ombudsman, which the Ombudswoman will submit to Parliament first half of the year. For ease of reference, the draft Annual Report for 2025 is annexed to this report (annex 4).



Highlights of the year

Main achievements:

1. Organised events and information campaigns to mark the European Ombudsman's 30th Anniversary;
2. Ensured a smooth transition between the outgoing and incoming Ombudswomen;
3. Adopted a Strategy for the 2025-2029 mandate and published communication materials, such as a dedicated interactive web page, to present it to the public;
4. Saw a considerable increase of 56% in the number of complaints received compared to 2024;
5. Dealt with a record number of complaints within the mandate, which increased by 42%;
6. Opened 480 inquiries based on complaints and closed 398 such inquiries;
7. Launched the new Ombudswoman's first own-initiative inquiry on how EU agencies manage revolving doors;
8. Implemented a feature enabling complainants to securely access Ombudsman decisions in their online space;
9. Organised the annual ENO conference, including workshops on subjects relevant to specific countries or regions;
10. Publicised information and updates on key inquiries on the website;
11. Produced videos for social media to explain the work of the Office;
12. Published a scrollable web story presenting the Ombudsman's work in the area of procurement and grants inquiries;
13. Launched the process for the 2026 Award for Good Administration;
14. Saw a significant rise of visitors to the website and a further rise of followers on all social media platforms;
15. Made AI a strategic priority with a post created specifically to monitor developments and develop an AI governance framework;
16. Made further improvements to the case management system;
17. Managed to close inquiries within 150 days on average;
18. Reached a 96.3% occupation rate of establishment plan posts;
19. Achieved a budget implementation rate of almost 95%;
20. Developed a new set of key performance indicators aligned with the Ombudswoman's Strategy.



1. The structure and organisation of the Office

The description and organigram below reflect the organisation of the Office in 2025 and at the time of adoption of this report. As mentioned in the Annual Management Plan for 2026, a review of the organisational structure to tackle the increased workload and ensure effective implementation of the Ombudswoman's Strategy is planned in the course of 2026.

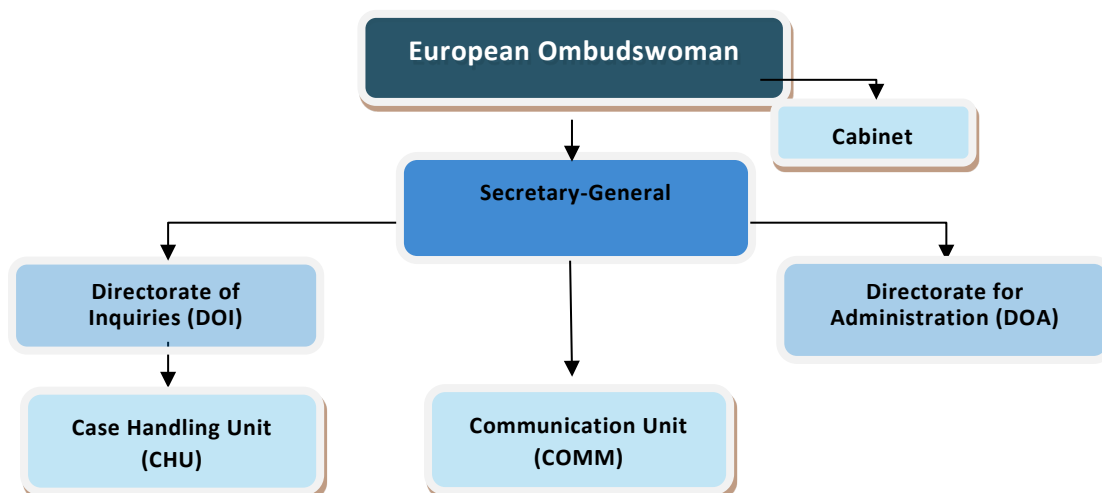
The **Cabinet (CAB)** works under the direct instruction of the Ombudswoman. It advises and assists the Ombudswoman on matters related to the exercise of her mandate and the work of the Office, to help ensure implementation of her vision, strategy and objectives. Cabinet members also liaise and represent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

The **Secretary-General (SG)** is responsible for the overall management of the Office and for ensuring coordination and implementation of the Ombudswoman's strategy. After having been vacant for more than 3 years, the post of Secretary-General was filled effective 01/01/2026. Throughout 2025, the Directors and the Head of the Communication Unit reported directly to the Ombudswoman. Coordination was done at the Directorates' level with the support of the SG staff and the Ombudswoman's Cabinet.

The **Directorate of Inquiries (DOI)**, which includes the **Case-handling Unit (CHU)** implements the Ombudswoman's strategy in the area of complaints and inquiries, by uncovering maladministration and promoting good administration across the EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies.

The **Directorate for Administration (DOA)** is responsible for all matters related to human resources (THR), budget and finance (TFIN), process management, business continuity and infrastructure (TPBI). The Directorate establishes and implements the appropriate internal control mechanisms and prepares information for the various budgetary control authorities. From 1 September 2022, following the previous SG's retirement, to 31 December 2025, the Director for Administration had the role of authorising officer by delegation.

The **Communication Unit (COMM)** supports the Ombudswoman's objective of increasing awareness of the Office among citizens and civil society. This includes media and other stakeholder relations, digital communications, event organisation, publications, and supporting the European Network of Ombudsmen cooperation.





2. Our activities in 2025

The table and the scoreboard below show the results achieved in 2025 based on the priorities, actions and Key Performance Indicator (KPI) targets set out in the Annual Management Plan (AMP) for 2025.

The following sections provide further information on the activities carried out with reference to the main processes of the Operating Framework.

2.1 Implementation of AMP 2025 actions

The AMP 2025 was adopted by the outgoing Ombudswoman and the actions organised under the four high-level objectives of the previous Strategy. For the sake of consistency, the table below, which describes the state of implementation of each action, is organised in the same way.

ACHIEVE LASTING IMPACT ON THE EU ADMINISTRATION					
1	Operational objective: <i>Revisit key inquiry areas to assess impact</i>				
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner	State of play
	Identify areas to be assessed, such as delays in dealing with requests for public access to documents and artificial intelligence in the EU Administration, and propose follow-up actions.	Completion date	Q3/Q4	DOI	Revised approach to dealing with delayed public access cases concerning the Commission, which seems to be the institution most affected by delays. We continue to assess the impact to determine how to tackle this systemic issue for those seeking access to Commission documents. The EO opened an OII into revolving doors in EU agencies, thus allowing us to assess the adoption and implementation of new rules and practices in this area.
2	Operational objective: <i>Further enhance the mainstreaming of disability rights in EO work and office activities</i>				
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner	State of play
	As part of the Article 33(2) Framework, help determine EU follow-up after the review of EU	Completion of internal document and mapping of	Q2	DOI	DOI has engaged in relevant meetings/events/interviews and submitted a paper in June 2025 to the EO/CAB on how to follow up. Further meetings



	institutions by the UN CRPD in March 2025.	subsequent potential inquiry work			took place in the second half of 2025 and potential inquiry work is included in the AMP 2026.
3	Operational objective: <i>Recognise and encourage examples of good administration</i>				
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner	State of play
	Launch the European Ombudsman's Award for Good Administration.	Deadline for sending invitations to EU institutions to participate	Q3	COMM	The Award was launched on 15 October 2025.
4	Operational objective: <i>Celebrate the European Ombudsman's 30th anniversary</i>				
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner	State of play
	Produce an online web story and video to highlight key cases, impact, achievements and facts about the Office and the Ombudsman's work.	Publication date	Q2	COMM	In March, COMM published a web story for the Office's 30th anniversary, highlighting the Office's work, key areas of work, impact and history through text and videos.
5	Operational objective: <i>Assess the follow-up of the full range of European Ombudsman suggestions</i>				
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner	State of play
	Produce a short report on the follow-up of suggestions.	Completion date KPI 3	Q4	DOI/ DOA- TPBI	A report is being finalised.



ENSURE REAL-LIFE RELEVANCE TO EUROPEAN CITIZENS					
6	Operational objective: Engage in discussion with key stakeholders on important thematic areas and topical issues				
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner	State of play
	Organise an ENO seminar/conference on a topic of relevance to EU citizens.	Implementation date	Q4	COMM	The ENO conference took place on 20-21 November 2025 in Brussels.
7	Operational objective: Help citizens exercise their right to access EU documents				
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner	State of play
	Put in place a process to update the online guide on public access to EU documents.	Completion date KPI 1	Q2	DOI	The team within DOI responsible for updating the guide published the latest update on the EO website in early 2025 and devised a process to update the guide on a more regular basis.
8	Operational objective: Enhance the use of AI in our case handling processes				
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner	State of play
	Identify processes and tools where AI could assist and produce an internal document that maps these and matches them with AI tools.	Completion date	Q3/4	DOI/ DOA- TBPI	This issue is regularly on the agenda of the AI task force. The EO acquired GPT@EC and launched a pilot phase. The mapping is ongoing.
	Integrate the Ombudsman's decisions to GPT@JRC.	Completion date	Q1	DOA- TPBI	This objective could not be attained presumably due to a lack of resources of the JRC to make progress on the project. In 2026, the JRC decided to limit the use of GPT@JRC to internal use.
	Set up a tool to regularly update GPT@JRC.	Completion date	Q2	DOA- TPBI	Abandoned by the JRC



INCREASE CITIZENS' AWARENESS OF OUR WORK					
9	Operational objective: <i>Introduce the public to the new European Ombudsman's priorities</i>				
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner	State of play
	Organise a press conference to introduce the new European Ombudsman and her priorities to the media.	Completion date	Q1/2	COMM	The press conference took place on 9 April 2025 in Brussels. 15 journalists attended in person and online.
	Organise an in-house event to introduce the European Ombudsman to relevant stakeholders.	Completion date	Q2	COMM/ CAB	Instead of one event, the Ombudswoman had several meetings and events with stakeholders, including with civil society organisations, interest representations and transparency NGOs.
Produce social media campaigns to publicise the European Ombudsman's priorities.	Publication date KPI 6	Q2	COMM	In March, COMM ran a social media campaign around the Office's 30th anniversary, including priorities and areas of work. In April, the Unit publicised the Annual Report on social media with posts on impact and priorities of the Office.	
10	Operational Objective: <i>Showcase our work on Instagram</i>				
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner	State of play
	Produce Instagram reels showing behind the scenes at the European Ombudsman.	Publication date	Q3	COMM/ All	The Office produced and published three reels highlighting the work of colleagues in the Inquiries Directorate and Communication Unit.



11	Operational objective: <i>Enhance the thematic presentation of cases on the website</i>				
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner	State of play
	Analyse the effectiveness of filters 'by topic'.	Completion date	Q1/2	DOI/COMM	This action is ongoing. COMM kick-started a user-focused website review project in June. The project includes a review of the 'areas of work' section of the website, as well as the 'inquiries' section.
	Adapt the filters or keywords to satisfy the need.	Completion date	Q2	DOI/DOA-TPBI	This action was completed, notably for infringement cases. The need for further adaptations will be considered based on the conclusions of the above review.
CONTINUE TO IMPROVE OUR EFFICIENCY					
12	Operational objective: <i>Enhance internal communications</i>				
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner	State of play
	Improve the user-friendliness of the EO's Intranet 'SISTEO'.	Completion date	Q3	COMM/DOA-TBPI	A staff survey about the EO's internal communication tools, including SISTEO, was carried out between 30 June and 18 July 2025. A working group was created, and its recommendations are regularly implemented by IT directly in SISTEO.
	Make an overview document of how the Communication Unit can help promote the Office's work available to all staff.	Completion date	Q3	COMM	The Communication Unit demonstrated how it promotes the work of the Office through a number of publications on SISTEO, including a stakeholder list that staff can follow on social media; a daily media digest highlighting mentions of our work and articles relevant to our work; the social media and press reviews; and the weekly 'post of the week'.



	Consolidate the existing knowledge management information on SISTEO by area of expertise.	Completion date	Q1	DOI-thematic teams	This action was completed.
13	Operational objective: <i>Ensure high levels of ethical awareness</i>				
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner	State of play
	Carry out a staff survey on ethical matters.	Completion date	Q3/4	DOA-THR/SG	The survey was carried out between 23 June and 11 July 2025. The report on the survey results, which showed very high levels of awareness on ethical matters, was published on the Office's Intranet.
14	Operational objective: <i>Enhance the office's Learning & Development offer</i>				
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner	State of play
	Prepare learning paths for the main job profiles.	Draft learning paths for inquiries officers, managers, HR and Finance assistants KPI 9	Q3	DOA-THR/All managers	This action is ongoing and will be completed in 2026.
15	Operational objective: <i>Upgrade and review the office's Human Resources corporate tools and policies</i>				
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner	State of play
	Keep abreast with the European Commission's Human Resources Transformation (HRT) project, which replaces SYSPER, identify priority modules, and prepare their introduction to our office.	Attendance of meetings on HRT progress Identification of priority modules Training of HR staff on the use of the new modules	4 meetings 2 modules 3 staff members	DOA-THR & TBPI	This action is ongoing. The Office participated in 4 Commission meetings on the modules about ethics related requests, the handling of Article 90 complaints and the general progress of the HRT project. Implementation will continue in 2026 as it depends on the progress of the Commission's HRT project and the pace at which EUIBOAs are integrated into it.



	Review the HR policies and update them as appropriate	Number of policies reviewed Implementation date	5 Q4	DOA-THR	Five policies have been reviewed. Two ethics-related policies have been adopted (see ICS 2 - Ethical and organisational values point below). The other three (Learning & Development, Engagement of Temporary Agents and Cabinet Composition) should be adopted in early 2026.
16	Operational objective: <i>Improve analysis of EO website visits</i>				
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner	State of play
	Implement the use of <i>Europa Webanalytics for analysis.</i>	Implementation date	Q1	DOA-TPBI/COMM	This action was implemented.
17	Operational objective: <i>Improve the full-text search of documents stored in the office's Case Management System (CMSEO) to improve knowledge management</i>				
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner	State of play
	Indexation of the documents.	% of indexation	100%	DOA-TPBI	This action is closed - Two obstacles identified: (1) some documents cannot properly be searched due to the format (see action "Identification and correction of documents that are not or only partly searchable") (2) the documents do not contain the appropriate metadata due to faulty routine operations in CMSEO. The insertion of metadata in the documents was entirely reviewed and corrected gradually starting with newer to older documents.
	Identification and correction of documents that are not or only partly searchable.	% of fully searchable documents	100%	DOA-TPBI	This action is ongoing.



18	Operational objective: <i>Improve the efficiency and usability of CMSEO</i>				
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner	State of play
	Continue work to optimise and enhance CMSEO, notably DOI priorities. Identify issues and work with ICT and registry to improve.	Implementation date	Q3/4	DOI/DOA-TPBI	Continuous improvement of CMSEO remains a priority, with a subset of DOI-priorities now in place and further work ongoing to optimise the system for the users' needs.
	Improve the tool to implement the retention periods of personal data of complainants in CMSEO.	Implementation date	Q4	DOA-TPBI/DOI	The complainant anonymisation mechanism is pending implementation in the system. Next steps include automating data selection and batch anonymising historical data in 2026.
19	Operational objective: <i>Enhance interaction with complainants via their online account</i>				
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner	State of play
	Implement a feature that allows depositing correspondence with complainants directly into their online account.	IT feature installation date KPI 4	Q3	DOA-TPBI	Decisions in inquiries, while sent by e-mail to the complainants, are now also deposited in their online account. Complainants are informed simultaneously by a standard message sent by the Website. In 2026, additional types of documents sent to complainants will be deposited in the complainant's account.
	Discontinue sending of deposited documents by e-mail.	Implementation date	Q4	DOA-TPBI	Implementation of this action is planned in early 2026.



20	Operational objective: <i>Implement an intuitive and reliable tool to enable more staff members in the EO's office to create and manage case-related statistics</i>				
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner	State of play
	Set up the tool for existing data.	Implementation date	Q3	DOA-TPBI	The implementation of a new tool has not yet started but simplified access to a broader range of updated statistics has been developed. This project had to be stopped due to the workload of the Registry in 2025.
	Train staff in the use of the tool.	Number of staff trained	5	DOA-TPBI/COMM	Subject to successful completion of the previous item.
21	Operational objective: <i>Enhance the inventory management</i>				
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner	State of play
	Review the inventory rules.	Implementation date	Q4	DOA-TFIN & TPBI	The review is ongoing and will be completed in 2026.
22	Operational objective: <i>Replace financial system</i>				
	Output	Indicator	Target	Owner	State of play
	Go-live with SUMMA, the next generation-corporate financial system, replacing ABAC.	Implementation date KPI 8	Q3	DOA-TFIN	The 'Business Partners' module of Summa (replacing ABAC's Legal entities and Bank account files modules) was rolled out in January 2025. SUMMA will be fully deployed as from January 2027.
	Re-train staff currently working with ABAC.	Implementation date	Q3	DOA-TFIN	This will be implemented in 2026 in view of the deployment of SUMMA in January 2027.



2.2 Scoreboard 2025

KPI	Measurement	Targets 2025	Results 2025	Results 2024
KPI 1	Percentage of complaints within the mandate	35%	36% (1241 out of 3490)	39% (870 out of 2260)
KPI 2	Number of inquiries opened in case of public importance (complaints, strategic inquiries and strategic initiatives)	50	31 (30+1+0)	49 (40+3+6)
KPI 3	Acceptance rate (previous year's results – composite indicator)			
	3a - Overall acceptance rate	80%	72%	82%
	3b - Acceptance rate in cases of public importance	80%	67%	83%
KPI 4	Perception of our key stakeholders (rate of positive evaluation)	> 3 out of 5	3.27 (inquiries only) 2.84 (inquiries and no grounds)	3.57 (inquiries only) 2.93 (inquiries and no grounds)
KPI 5	Web activities (composite indicator)			
	5a - Visitors to the website	750 000	1 786 995	1 079 272
	5b - Advice given through the interactive guide to contact a member of the ENO	10 000	13 246	9 795
KPI 6	Social media activities (composite indicator)			
	6a* - Impressions engagement rate across the top three social media platforms	+2.5%	+5.36%	N/A (new in 2025)
	6b* - Followers' growth across all social media platforms	+5 000	+13 338	N/A (new in 2025)
	6c - Number of visits to the website through links posted on our social media channels	4 500	8 416	12 394
	<small>*KPIs introduced in 2025</small>			
KPI 7	Handling of complaints and inquiries (composite indicator)			
	7a - Proportion of cases in which the admissibility decision is taken in one month	95%	94%	98%
	7b - Average duration of inquiries	150 days	150 days	168 days
	7c - Clearance rate (cases closed compared to new cases registered in the reference period)	100%	97%	101%



KPI	Measurement	Targets 2025	Results 2025	Results 2024
KPI 8	Budget implementation (composite indicator)			
	8a - Rate of budget implementation	93%	94.8%	97.6%
	8b - Proportion of payments made within 30 days	100%	99.9%	100%
KPI 9	Management of Human Resources (composite indicator)			
	9a - Occupation rate of establishment plan posts	95%	96.3%	97%
	9b - Percentage of workforce dedicated to core activities	65%	69.3%	68.2%
	9c - Average number of training days per staff member	5	8.12 (w/ language training) 5.43 (w/o language training)	5.7 (w/ language training) 3.9 (w/o language training)

2.3 Core activities

The Ombudsman's work and achievements regarding the core activities, including statistical data on complaints and inquiries, are described in detail in the Annual Report to the European Parliament for the year 2025, a draft version of which is enclosed with this report as annex 4. This section therefore gives only a brief overview of key developments and achievements, an analysis of the results in terms of the KPIs and cross-references to relevant sections of the draft Annual Report.

2.3.1 Complaint handling

(i) Caseload and KPI results

The overall number of complaints registered in 2025 was 3 535 (compared to 2 267 in 2024, i.e. +56%). The overall number of new complaints dealt with in 2025 was 3 490, of which 1 241 were within the mandate. This compares to 2 264 complaints dealt with in 2024, of which 875 were within the mandate.

With a score of 36%, the result of KPI 1, proportion of complaints within the mandate, surpassed the target of 35%.

In 2025, the Ombudsman opened a record number of 480 inquiries based on complaints (411 in 2024) and closed 398 such inquiries (421 in 2024). The number of cases categorised as of public importance (KPI 2) was 31, thus below the target of 50. Given the heightened awareness of the Office, as shown in the steep rise in complaints received, this metric was deemed less of a priority in 2025 and no longer features as a KPI from 2026.

Despite the sharp increase in workload, the results of the three components of KPI 7 (composite indicator for the handling of complaints and inquiries) were either on or close to the set targets. While the proportion of admissibility decisions taken within one month



reached 94% (just below the target of 95%) and the clearance rate 97% (the target is 100%), the average duration of inquiries was exactly on target at 150 days.

However, the surge in complaints has placed substantial strain on the Office's resources and, if sustained, will present growing challenges to the achievement of the performance objectives.

Information on the work on complaints and the outcome of inquiries is available in section 4 of the Ombudsman's draft Annual Report for 2025 (annex 4). Relevant statistical data can be found in section 5.

(ii) Complaints in the area of public access to documents and the Fast-Track procedure

In 2025, the Office registered 214 (2024: 212) complaints in the area of public access to documents, showing again a slight increase from the previous year and setting a record in terms of number of public access complaints for the fourth year running. The Ombudsman opened inquiries into 153 (2024: 160) complaints¹, out of which 28 (2024: 34) were dealt with under the Fast-Track procedure. It closed 139 (2024: 143) inquiries², out of which 30 (2024: 29) were Fast-Track inquiries. The average duration of these 139 inquiries was 139 working days. The Office closed a total of 199 cases, including inadmissible cases and cases where the Ombudsman found no grounds to open an inquiry. The average duration of all public access cases was 104 working days.

The share of Fast-Track inquiries was 18% of all public access to documents inquiries, compared to 21% in 2024, 14% in 2023 and 28% in 2022. The share of Fast-Track cases thus remained low. This is because, in many cases, the institution concerned had not yet adopted a confirmatory decision when the complaint to the Ombudsman was made, meaning its final position was unknown. In such cases, the Ombudsman cannot deal with the case through the Fast-Track procedure.

Under the Fast-Track procedure, the Ombudsman endeavours to open inquiries within five working days and have a decision or outcome (such as a solution proposal or recommendation) within 40 working days. In 60% of the inquiries opened in 2025 through the Fast-Track procedure, the admissibility decision was taken within the indicative timeline, the average being of six working days. The Office issued an assessment within 40 working days in 29% of Fast-Track cases that were opened in 2025 and in which the assessment was finalised, and within 60 working days in 52% of those cases. The more time needed on these cases resulted mainly from the significant increase (56%) in complaints that were received overall in 2025, along with complex and novel issues arising in some of the cases that required longer processing time.

As regards findings, in 2025, the Office made a proposal for a solution in 12 cases and recommendations in three cases concerning public access to documents. The Office made suggestions for improvement in 12 cases.

(iii) Impact, acceptance and follow-up

Information on the impact and achievements of the Ombudsman's work is included in Section 5.5 of the Ombudsman's draft Annual Report for 2025 (annex 4). This includes information on the acceptance rate of the Ombudsman's proposals to improve the EU

¹ Out of the 153 inquiries opened in 2025, three inquiries were based on complaints received at the end of 2024 and 150 inquiries were based on complaints received in 2025.

² Out of the 199 inquiries closed in 2025, 5 were opened in 2023, 64 were opened in 2024 and 130 were opened in 2025.



administration. These proposals take the form of solutions, recommendations, and suggestions made by the Ombudsman. The acceptance rate is the percentage of positive replies to the total number of proposals and helps measure the extent to which, on an annual basis, the institutions follow up satisfactorily to the Ombudsman proposals. As the Ombudsman gives institutions up to six months to follow up on suggestions made in her decisions closing inquiries, the acceptance rate for 2025 covers cases closed in 2024.

The analysis of how the EU institutions responded to the Ombudsman in cases closed in 2024 shows that the acceptance rate was 72% overall compared to 82% in the previous year (target for KPI 3 is 80%). The institutions reacted positively to 70 out of the 97 proposals that the Ombudsman made to correct or improve their behaviour in cases closed in 2024. The acceptance rate in cases of public importance reached 67% (83% for cases closed in 2023).

A closer look at these statistics shows that EU institutions tend to appreciate the Office's increased use of 'solution proposals' in which the Ombudsman outlines a way forward for the institution in a particular case. In 2024, 89% of solution proposals were accepted while 78% of suggestions for improvement were accepted. The responses to recommendations were disappointing suggesting that by the time a case requires a public finding of maladministration it can be difficult to obtain a constructive and positive reply from the institution in question. The Ombudsman's renewed focus on dialogue with EU institutions and solving cases early on is therefore essential.

The acceptance rate captures responses from the institutions at a particular point in time. It does not reflect all the efforts made by institutions over time to improve their administration and to address issues raised in Ombudsman inquiries. The Ombudsman attempts to recognise some of these good administrative practices through the 'Award for Good Administration', which is held every two years.

2.3.2 Proactive work

(i) Strategic inquiries and initiatives

The Ombudsman has the power to conduct strategic (own-initiative) inquiries aimed at addressing systemic issues within the EU administration. The Ombudsman can also contact an institution, through a strategic initiative, to gather information that could form the basis for future strategic inquiries or to encourage the EU administration to be as open, accountable, ethical and responsive to citizens as possible.

In 2025, the Ombudswoman used her own-initiative power to focus on how EU agencies manage revolving doors. Further information on this own-initiative inquiry can be found in section 4.4 of the Ombudsman's draft Annual Report for 2025 (annex 4).

(ii) The European Network of Ombudsmen (ENO)

The ENO allows the European Ombudsman to have a positive impact on the ability of large numbers of European citizens to enjoy their rights under EU law, including fundamental rights under the Charter.

In practice and, where appropriate, the European Ombudsman advises complainants whose complaints are not within her mandate to contact the member of the ENO best placed to deal with them.



Furthermore, the query procedure allows members of the ENO to send questions to the Ombudsman about EU law-related issues. In 2025, the Ombudsman received two queries, one concerning the rights of family members of EU citizens under Directive 2004/38/EC and the other concerning health insurance for Croatian students studying in other countries. The Ombudsman also closed a query about social security for migrant workers after the Commission clarified which Member State should pay family benefits to a family that resided in Belgium but where the parents worked or received unemployment benefits in different countries. Finally, based on the result of a survey conducted in 2024, the Ombudsman was able to reflect and report on the use of this procedure by ENO members. The Ombudsman found that in recent years, the information received as part of the procedure had contributed to clarifying and remedying possible infringements of EU law at national level in a swift and flexible manner.

The European Network of Ombudsmen held its annual conference in Brussels in November 2025.

Detailed information on the ENO-related work is available in section 8 of the Ombudsman's draft Annual Report 2025 (annex 4).

2.3.3 Communication and outreach

The Office continued to promote Ombudsman work to the widest possible audience in 2025 with communication activities focusing on key inquiries as well as the promotion of transparency, ethics, and accountability in the EU administration.

(i) Outreach activities and events

Throughout the year, most of the Ombudsman's outreach activities were designed to celebrate and highlight the 30th anniversary of the Office.

A 'Did you Know?' campaign presented different facts about the Office, including its mission, history, and how it works. There was also a social media campaign, including videos featuring colleagues and a video statement by the Ombudswoman, as well as a scrollable story. A physical exhibition with panels featuring the history of the Ombudsman Office and its areas of work was displayed throughout the year in various locations. Following cooperation with the City of Strasbourg, a city tram was inaugurated featuring the logo and values of the European Ombudsman.

A press conference in April allowed the Ombudswoman to present the Annual Report for 2024, share her plans for her mandate, and announce her first own-initiative inquiry. The Office also took part in the EU Open Day, as well as several other events important for citizen engagement including the European Citizen Action Service (ECAS) Day, and the European Youth Event in May.

Throughout 2025, the Ombudswoman and staff members also continued their outreach activities by giving interviews to the press, speaking at academic and legal conferences and speaking to visitor groups.

As mentioned in 2.3.2 above, in November, the Office organised the European Network of Ombudsmen (ENO) conference, bringing together national and regional ombudsmen from across the EU to discuss issues that have a direct impact on EU citizens. These included monitoring EU law compliance in Member States, preserving the independence of ombudsmen offices, and dealing with environmental complaints.



(ii) Media and social media activities

In terms of press coverage of the Ombudsman's work in 2025, there were around 3 800 articles mentioning or directly reporting on inquiries.

The Ombudswoman's 2025-2029 strategy as well as the thematic area of procurement and grants inquiries were presented in scrollable web stories. The communication activities of the Office were extended further to include regular videos for social media to explain the work of the Office and the Ombudswoman's activities, as well as to highlight certain specialist topics.

These included 'debrief' videos where the Ombudswoman gave an overview of the latest inquiry developments as well as her meetings and speaking engagements, and case explainer videos where she detailed specific key inquiry outcomes.

In addition, the Office ran a 'Behind the Scenes' social media campaign where colleagues from various parts of the office – inquiry officers, legal advisers, digital communications experts – explained their role and day-to-day tasks.

Social media saw a growth of 13 338 followers, and an impressions/engagement ratio of +5.36% across the Office's top three platforms (LinkedIn, Instagram, Bluesky). Visits to the website from social media content also showed good results, with 8 416 visitors coming directly from posts. Overall, the website remained a key communication tool for the Office, with 1 786 995 visits throughout the year.

2.4 Management Processes

On 9 January 2025, the previous Ombudswoman issued the 2025 Annual Management Plan.

Throughout the year, the Ombudswoman or her Head of Cabinet chaired regular meetings of the management team.

Management monitored the implementation of the AMP actions, the casework statistics and the results in terms of the KPI targets.

Management also ensured business continuity and implementation of the institution's duty of care, including through cooperation and coordination with the European Parliament and other institutions.

In the absence of a Secretary-General, the Director for Administration continued to exercise the function of authorising officer by delegation throughout 2025. In this capacity, she represented the Office in its relations with the budgetary and control bodies.

Throughout the year, the Director for Administration also had exchanges with the Data Protection Officers and held regular meetings with the Staff Committee.

In October 2025, following extensive internal consultation, the Ombudswoman adopted a Strategy for her mandate entitled 'Building Trust, Driving Change'. A set of key performance indicators to help measure implementation of the Strategy was developed subsequently and included in the Annual Management Plan for 2026.



A new Secretary-General was appointed following a selection procedure initiated in June 2025 and concluded in October 2025 and took up his duties, including the function of authorising officer by delegation, on 1 January 2026.

2.5 Supporting processes

2.5.1 Information management

Information management is a collaborative task.

The Secretariat-General gathers and coordinates information related to overall management objectives (such as for the implementation of the annual management plan and key performance indicators), audits and various reports to supervisory bodies.

Information management related to the objective of ensuring consistent and rigorous assessments in the Ombudsman's case handling is supervised by the Director of Inquiries and the Ombudswoman's Cabinet.

Promoting good records management and practices within the Office and information management relating to administration, human resources and finance are under the responsibility of the Director for Administration.

Access to documents and 'freedom of information' requests

In 2025, the Transparency team demonstrated the Ombudsman's strong commitment to openness and accountability by handling 28 requests for public access to documents and requests for statistics not readily available ('freedom of information' requests). These requests included 13 access requests related to specific cases dealt with by the Office; 11 access requests were about the Ombudsman's administrative work; and four 'freedom of information' requests pertained to statistics on case-handling and staff.

The team ensured a high level of transparency, granting wide partial access in most cases applying a balanced and legally robust approach to disclosure. In five cases, the applicant sought to review the initial decision (by making a 'confirmatory application').

In parallel, the Transparency team responded to three consultation requests from other EU institutions concerning the potential disclosure of documents originating from the Office. The Transparency Team engaged proactively with the institutional counterparts to ensure full compliance with the statutory deadlines.

Data protection

In 2025, the Data Protection Officer (DPO) and the Deputy DPO continued to play an essential role in supporting the Office's compliance with Regulation (EU) 1725/2018. Throughout the year, the DPO team provided advice and guidance to controllers and colleagues across the Office. This support covered a wide range of matters, from day-to-day questions to the design and review of processing operations, including when developing new processes or updating existing ones, with a view to ensuring effective application of Regulation (EU) 1725/2018 and the protection of personal data in practice.

In addition, the DPO team contributed to the Office's work on emerging developments, by advising on the use of AI-related tools and supporting the assessment of data protection risks and safeguards, in line with the Office's governance approach.



Furthermore, the DPO was consulted in relation to four events qualifying as personal data breaches. None of these breaches required notification to the European Data Protection Supervisor, as they were assessed as not likely to result in a risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

The DPO team also maintained regular contacts with the EDPS and continued to cooperate closely, through exchanges of information and participation in relevant interinstitutional discussions, with a view to ensuring consistent and effective application of data protection rules across the EU institutions.

2.5.2. Process management, business continuity, infrastructure and ICT

(i) Process management

In 2025, the Office phased out the acceptance of complaints submitted by e-mail, directing complainants to the online complaint form. This form offers clear guidance on the European Ombudsman's mandate and helps people prepare complete submissions. Alternative arrangements and assistance remain available for those unable to use the online form. Internal monitoring indicates a 60% increase, compared to the period preceding the implementation, in the share of complaints that fall within the European Ombudsman's mandate. This shift has reduced resource intensive manual processing of large volumes of e-mail complaints (categorisation and registration), enabling the registry and inquiries officers to focus on more complex and substantive matters.

To further improve the complaints process, the Office enhanced the complainants' online space by making Ombudsman decisions securely available there. These improvements have lowered the risk of human error, strengthened data-protection controls and improved data quality. In the longer term, they are expected to save working time on administrative tasks and increase overall efficiency.

The Office also continued to improve the services provided to staff through its core case-management application (CMSEO). Phased enhancements included the automated registration of correspondence and streamlined workflows, resulting in fewer manual steps and more consistent and efficient handling of cases across the Office.

(ii) Document management

The European Ombudsman is a depositing institution at the European Union Historical Archives in Florence. The Office sent a second batch of documents to Florence in December 2025.

Although the Ombudsman does not hold EU Classified Information, staff members may still need to handle and inspect such documents during an inquiry. To do so, they require a personal security clearance, which is granted by the Ombudsman after a thorough review by the Member State of origin of the relevant staff members. In 2025 a total of 16 staff members held a Personal Security Clearance from the Ombudsman and 18 additional staff members were trained and acknowledged their obligations in relation to EU Classified Information.

(iii) Efforts to reduce the environmental footprint

The European Ombudsman rents office space in buildings of the European Parliament and uses its infrastructure, including IT, security, facilities management and canteens. As a



result, the Ombudsman's environmental management is linked directly to, and benefits from, the efforts made by Parliament in this area.

The Office promotes sustainable modes of transport by offering a flat-rate contribution to staff who commute to and from their place of work, with 63% of eligible staff members receiving the contribution. Additionally, the Office provides an annual bicycle maintenance session. Car parking spaces remain limited whereas the bicycle infrastructure is continuously improving. The Office also actively promotes digitalisation to reduce the use of paper and facilitate the exchange and storage of documents; extensively uses the videoconference systems available in the two places of work to limit missions; and encourages Green Public Procurement practices in all purchases and in organising events.

(iv) ICT activities

In relation to ICT matters, the Office relies on, and collaborates closely with, the European Parliament, including on cybersecurity. In 2025, cybersecurity cooperation was further formalised through a Service Level Agreement with Parliament. The Office maintained regular communication with oversight bodies such as CERT-EU and undertook maturity and risk assessments to inform its security posture. Furthermore, the Office continues to rely on the European Commission for the integration and maintenance of all EU corporate tools used by the European Ombudsman and collaborates with both institutions for the use of inter-institutional IT framework contracts.

ICT activities in 2025 included a comprehensive lifecycle replacement of all office computers to move to more secure operating systems or environments for both PC and Mac environments. This programme delivered efficiency gains for users and strengthened cybersecurity through standardised configurations, modernised platforms, and decommissioning of legacy components. The year also saw the maintenance and enhancement of internal tools, including the Case Management System, the Recruitment System, the website, extranet, and intranet. Building on previous infrastructure work, the Case Management System environment was further improved for reliability and scalability. The Recruitment System was upgraded to streamline the organisation of interviews, easing scheduling and coordination burdens. Europa Web Analytics was actively used to provide insights into user behaviour and support data-driven improvements to the online presence. The Office uses and promotes corporate applications or open-source software whenever possible; the European Ombudsman's website, for example, continues to use only open-source software.

(v) Artificial Intelligence

Throughout 2025, particular attention was devoted to developments in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The Ombudsman appointed an AI officer who took over the chair of the internal task force on AI and participated in conferences and training, enabling the provision of informed advice on appropriate AI choices for operational needs. In addition to the ongoing use of AI for translating the website and complaints material, the Office secured approval to adopt GPT@EC, following financial and risk analyses to ensure compliance and responsible deployment.

Reflecting the Ombudsman's commitment to transparency and accountability in AI use, an AI notice was published on the Ombudsman's website, providing citizens with clear information about how AI systems are employed, which safeguards are in place, and what rights complainants have in their interactions with the Office. Further information on the deployment of AI is available in Section 9 of the Draft Annual Report for 2025 (annex 4).



2.5.3 Human Resources

(i) Personnel and office organisation

The Office has a highly qualified and multilingual staff that can deal directly with complaints about maladministration in most official EU languages and raise awareness about the Ombudsman's work throughout the EU. The recruitment policy follows the general principles and employment conditions of the EU institutions and seeks to respond with agility to emerging needs.

In 2025, the Ombudsman's establishment plan comprised 75 posts, in addition to which, there was an average of six contract agents working with the Office. Furthermore, a total of eighteen trainees (in two cohorts) gained work experience at the Ombudsman's Office during the year. Two of these trainees were selected following a call specifically aimed at candidates with disabilities, an EO initiative already in its fourth year.

Considering its small size, the Office continued to achieve a balanced geographical distribution in 2025, with 18 EU nationalities represented among staff and five nationalities represented among the five managers (see details in annex 1).

The Office's project to upskill assistants and involve them in core business activities continues to bear fruits. Assistants handled a large proportion of complaints outside the Ombudsman's mandate (about 65%) and continue playing a central role in implementing a leaner and speedier procedure for handling simple complaints about EU institutions' failure to reply to citizens' requests. This leads to important performance improvements, giving inquiry officers greater capacity to focus on inquiries and offering assistants a more rewarding role.

The Office continued introducing SYSPER modules with a view to streamlining administrative procedures and using its resources efficiently. In this context, it obtained and implemented SYSPER's module on transfer-in requests and requests to work beyond the pensionable age.

(ii) Ethics and good conduct

Ensuring that staff conduct is in line with the highest ethical standards is a constant and top priority for the Ombudsman's Office. To this end, the Office further reinforced its ethics framework by adopting two new ethics-related decisions on (i) outside activities, assignments and occupational activities after leaving the office and (ii) ethics and good conduct for the European Ombudsman's staff. These decisions further clarified existing ethics rules. The annual survey -an internal auditor's recommendation- to test staff's awareness on ethical matters showed very good results.

To maintain staff awareness of conflict of interest matters at a high level, all staff are asked annually to revise, if necessary, their declarations of their spouses/partners' professional activities as well as their own conflict of interest declarations using SYSPER's ethics module.

Informing staff of their obligations during and after their time in the Office remains a priority: new staff and trainees are asked to declare their interests before starting, thus allowing the Office to take these into consideration in the assignment of cases/files; they also attend ethics-related induction trainings provided by the HR team and the confidential counsellors.



In line with the Ombudsman's priority to raise staff awareness on harassment, conflict resolution and communication matters thus ensuring staff's well-being, two trainings focusing on unconscious bias, managing anxiety as well as preventing burnout and strengthening resilience in the workplace were organised on 23 and 24 October 2025 in Strasbourg and Brussels, respectively. Staff's participation in these types of training is mandatory.

The Office organised tailor made trainings for the office's confidential counsellors and conciliation committee members to support them in carrying out their functions in the context of the office's anti-harassment policy (informal procedure).

Along with the administration, the two confidential counsellors assist staff in finding solutions to potential work-related problems and conflicts. They advise and support colleagues to identify the best reporting channel and relevant procedure. They also play an important role in familiarising new staff and trainees with the Office's ethical standards.

(iii) Working conditions and well-being

The Office's hybrid work policy supports the Ombudsman's ambition to promote a modern, digital and flexible work environment that enhances professional and private life balance and staff well-being. The policy, which is results-oriented and trust-based, provides for 40% average presence in the office per month and allows flexibility as regards daily working arrangements. It includes the right to disconnect and allows staff to work from outside the place of employment 15 days per year.

Following up on the trainings on giving and receiving feedback organised for all administrators in 2024, the Office organised the same training for its assistants with a view to empowering them, improving internal communication and collaboration and thus ensuring high quality working conditions.

While flexibility and remote work contribute to professional and private life balance, the need for social interaction and the sense of belonging to a team are equally important for the well-being of staff and an organisation. In 2025, the Office therefore brought staff and teams together in person to reinforce team spirit, facilitate the integration of recently recruited staff and improve communication. This happened through trainings and events, including an all-staff retreat in Brussels in September.

2.5.4 Budget and Finance

(i) Implementation of the 2025 budget

The appropriations available in the Ombudsman's initial budget for 2025 amounted to EUR 15 558 918 and included 75 establishment plan posts. Title 1 (Expenditure relating to persons working for the institution) amounted to EUR 12 854 988. Title 2 (Buildings, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure) amounted to EUR 2 450 530 and Title 3 (Expenditure resulting from special functions carried out by the institution) to EUR 253 400.

The detailed report on the implementation of the budget is enclosed (see annex 3).

The following table shows expenditure in 2025 in terms of appropriations committed and paid (in Euros).



Title	Initial budget 2025	Final budget 2025³	Committed	Paid
Title 1	12 854 988	12 757 988	12 024 348.77	11 965 827.28
Title 2	2 450 530	2 465 530	2 448 090.84	2 249 582.41
Title 3	253 400	254 400	195 442.46	152 872.95
Total	15 558 918	15 477 918	14 667 882.07	14 368 282.64

The implementation rate (including appropriations carried over from 2024 to 2025) is 94.77% (compared to 97.55% in 2024). Of the total appropriations, 92.83% were paid (compared to 94.70% in 2024).

The appropriations carried over from 2025 to 2026 amount to EUR 299 599.43, i.e. 1.93% of the 2025 budget (compared to EUR 394 667.18 carried over from 2024 to 2025, i.e. 2.85% of the 2024 budget).

Furthermore, 85.46% of the appropriations carried over to 2025 from 2024 were used (compared to 76.59 % in 2023).

In the following table, all totals are cumulative.

Indicators	Target 2025	Q1	Q1+Q2	Q1-Q3 2025	(2024)
F1: Percentage of budget implementation	Total: 93%	21.3%	51.7%	76.8%	94.77% (97.55%)
F2: Proportion of payments made within 30 days	Total: 100%	99.5%	99.7%	99.8%	99.9% (100%)

The average time for payment of invoices from private providers of goods and services was 10.2 days (13.2 days in 2024).

(ii) Transfers

During 2025, five transfers between budget lines were necessary. These modifications of the initial budget are presented in detail in the annexed 'Report on budgetary and financial management for the financial year' (annex 3). The total amount transferred was EUR 262 500 (1.7% of the total appropriations for 2025).

(iii) Procurement

Six very low-value contracts not exceeding EUR 15 000 were awarded following procurement procedures launched in 2025.

³ After transfers and amending budget.



(iv) The 2026 Estimates

The estimates for the year 2026 were sent to the Commission, Parliament and the Council on 28 March 2025.

Total appropriations for 2026 are EUR 16 680 800, which represents an increase of EUR 1 121 882 or 7.2 % compared to the budget for 2025. Title 1 (Expenditure relating to persons working with the institution) amounts to EUR 13 623 000. Title 2 (Buildings, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure) amounts to EUR 2 778 500. Title 3 (Expenditure resulting from general functions carried out by the institution) amounts to EUR 279 300.



(v) Detailed list of the Ombudswoman's missions in 2025 (as published on the website)

Start date	End date	Destination	Purpose	Accompanying Persons	Daily Allowance	Accommodation	Transport	TOTAL
14/01/2025	16/01/2025	BRUSSELS	Meetings in Brussels	n/a	€254,36	€500,00	€396,00	€1.150,36
21/01/2025	22/01/2025	BRUSSELS	Meetings with staff and new Ombudsman.	n/a	€160,65	€250,00	€555,00	€965,65
04/02/2025	06/02/2025	BRUSSELS	Poidar workshop with national Ombudsmen.	n/a	€227,59	€500,00	€396,00	€1.123,59
19/02/2025	21/02/2025	BRUSSELS	Final mission to Brussels	n/a	€232,05	€500,00	€555,00	€1.287,05
26/02/2025	27/02/2025	LUXEMBOURG	Mission to Luxembourg to be present at the Oath ceremony of the New Ombudsman.	n/a	€111,47	€165,00	n/a	€276,47
27/02/2025	27/02/2025	LUXEMBOURG	Oath Ceremony	n/a	€38,59	n/a	n/a	€38,59
03/03/2025	06/03/2025	BRUSSELS	Rencontre avec le personnel de Bruxelles	n/a	€0,00	€444,00	€417,09	€861,09
17/03/2025	20/03/2025	BRUSSELS	Travail au bureau de Bruxelles	n/a	€0,00	€819,00	€344,30	€1.163,30
07/04/2025	10/04/2025	BRUSSELS	EO press conference and Meetings with EC, ECAS, EFSA	n/a	€0,00	€819,00	€315,76	€1.134,76
22/04/2025	24/04/2025	WARSAW	Speech to High-Level International Conference "The Role of Civil Society in Protecting the Rule of Law"	Head of Cabinet and Principal Adviser	€105,53	€308,68	€355,39	€769,60
12/05/2025	14/05/2025	BRUSSELS, PORTO	Meetings with EP President and Access Info Europe on 12 & 13 May Brussels Speaker at the conference European Institutions and the New World Order in Porto on 14 May	n/a	€103,17	€293,24	€265,63	€662,04
21/05/2025	24/05/2025	BRUSSELS	Meetings, Keynote speaker at EPACA General Assembly, Roundtable discussion at Data Harvest Conference	n/a	€0,00	€440,01	€367,59	€807,60
02/06/2025	05/06/2025	BRUSSELS	Meetings with EC and European Council presidents, with Committee of Staff Committees Presidents, speaker at the event How can European Citizens' Initiatives Make a Difference for Civil Society?	n/a	€0,00	€888,00	€433,79	€1.321,79
23/06/2025	26/06/2025	BRUSSELS	Participation at ECAS Day 2025, video message to the Ombudsman Institution of Albania	n/a	€0,00	€819,00	€236,89	€1.055,89
01/07/2025	04/07/2025	BRUSSELS	Meeting with Public Protector of South Africa, speech at the European School of Administration (EuSA)	n/a	€0,00	€567,72	€409,10	€976,82
01/07/2025	04/07/2025	BRUSSELS	Meeting with Public Protector of South Africa, speech at the European School of Administration (EuSA)	n/a	€0,00	€567,72	€409,10	€976,82
16/09/2025	17/09/2025	BRUSSELS	Work in Brussels office	n/a	€0,00	€189,24	€446,05	€635,29
22/09/2025	25/09/2025	BRUSSELS	Work in Brussels office	n/a	€0,00	€567,72	€232,56	€800,28
29/09/2025	01/10/2025	BRUSSELS	Meetings and work in the Brussels office	n/a	€0,00	€378,48	€351,00	€729,48
06/10/2025	08/10/2025	BRUSSELS	Work at Brussels office	n/a	€0,00	€458,48	€283,94	€742,42
14/10/2025	16/10/2025	MALTA	Malta 30th Anniversary Conference - EO opening speaker	Principal Adviser	€204,10	€371,00	€376,66	€951,76
20/10/2025	23/10/2025	BRUSSELS, MADRID	Work in Brussels office 20 and 21 October Events in Madrid 21-23 October (Forbes Women of Influence Summit; Meeting with environmental NGOs; Meeting with the Defensor del Pueblo; Lecture at Universidad Autónoma.)	Deputy Head of Communication	€220,33	€639,24	€414,87	€1.274,44
27/10/2025	28/10/2025	GENEVA	World Economic Forum Good Governance Community Gathering in Geneva	n/a	€81,90	€0,00	€540,20	€622,10
04/11/2025	07/11/2025	BRUSSELS	Work at Brussels office, Main keynote speaker for the roundtable entitled "Restoring Trust in EU Politics: Can the New Rules Deliver on Transparency and Accountability?" and Keynote speaker at the Clear Language Conference	n/a	€0,00	€567,72	€274,00	€841,72
12/11/2025	14/11/2025	BRUSSELS	Presentation at EEAS and speaker at Association of European Journalists congress, Working in BRU office.	n/a	€0,00	€422,00	€339,19	€761,19
19/11/2025	21/11/2025	BRUSSELS	ENO Conference	n/a	€0,00	€458,48	€314,10	€772,58
27/11/2025	29/11/2025	VENICE	Attending an event organised and hosted by Global Campus of Human Rights in Venice	n/a	€83,23	€0,00	€267,89	€351,19
01/12/2025	03/12/2025	BRUSSELS	PETI Workshop, Presentation at Committee on Public Health of the European Parliament (SANT Committee), Meetings in Brussels	n/a	€0,00	€486,50	€389,76	€876,26
09/12/2025	11/12/2025	BRUSSELS	EU Charter Conference, Meeting with SEAPAC and work in Brussels office	n/a	€0,00	€421,98	€439,20	€861,18
					Total Daily Allowance	Total Accommodation	Total Transport	Total
					€1.822,97	€12.842,21	€10.126,06	€24.791,30



3. Financial management and internal control

3.1 Efficiency and economy

Whenever possible, the Office seeks to make savings to guarantee that the budgetary resources are used in the most economical and efficient way while ensuring effective implementation of the work programme and of additional needs identified for the year. In 2025, compared to 2024, the Ombudsman managed to make savings amounting to EUR 73 950. Costs were cut, namely on the appropriations for translations (from EUR 315 000 to 245 000, i.e. -22%).

The 2026 budget, prepared in 2025, makes reductions for an overall amount of EUR 102 000 in discretionary expenditure under Titles I and II of the Ombudsman's budget. The Ombudsman's Office has successfully integrated Artificial Intelligence (AI) into the translation processes for the European Ombudsman's website, which has resulted in reduced expenditure on translations in 2023 and 2024. This is why, in preparing its 2026 budget estimates, the Ombudsman has once again decided, as it did for 2025, as a matter of sound financial management, to reduce its appropriations for translations and reinvest the funds into upgrading the IT infrastructure and advancing AI projects.

The following table shows the budget lines where reductions were made:

Title I	Budget 2025	DB 2026	+/- in €/2025	+/- in %/2025
A- 1 6 3 1 Mobility	18 000	17 000	-1000	-5.56%
Total A-1	18 000	17 000	-1000	-5.56%
Title II	Budget 2025	DB 2026	+/- in €/2025	+/- in %/2025
A- 2 3 0 2 Telecommunication	4 500	3 500	-1 000	-22.22%
A- 2 3 1 Translation and interpretation	245 000	145 000	-100 000	-40.82%
Total A-2	249 500	148 500	-101 000	-40.48%



3.2 Management and follow-up of controls

3.2.1 Recommendations from the Internal Auditor in 2025

Internal Audit Report 25/01 - The Internal Auditor's Annual Report for 2024

The Internal Auditor's annual report concluded that, based on the assurance and consulting work carried out and subject to adequate follow-up on the remaining open actions, there is nothing which came to the attention of the Internal Auditor that would impair the effectiveness and efficiency of the Institution's risk management, control and governance systems as well as its ability to attain its control objectives on a consistent basis.

Internal Audit Report 25/02 - Transversal follow-up of open actions from internal audit reports

The Internal auditor was able to close nine of the twelve actions covered by the follow-up. The three remaining actions (concerning the review of ICT security) will be subject to further assessment in the 2026 transversal follow-up.

3.2.2 Observations from the Court of Auditors

In the framework of the Statement of Assurance audits (SoA) 2024, the Court of Auditors indicated in its annual report that it did not identify any specific issues concerning the European Ombudsman.

The Office continued following up on the observations made by the Court of Auditors following its 2021 in-depth assessment of supervisory and control systems. Actions taken in 2025 include the adoption of the Charters of tasks and responsibilities for the authorising officer by delegation and authorising officer by sub-delegation. The revision of the internal rules and procedures to align them to the latest update of the Financial Regulation is ongoing and will be finalised following the Internal Auditor's consulting assignment on this matter.

3.2.3 Follow-up to the European Parliament's discharge resolution

(i) 2023 discharge

On 7 May 2025, the European Parliament adopted the [discharge decision](#) for the 2023 budget. The Ombudsman sent its detailed follow-up report to Parliament on 10 July 2025.

(ii) 2024 discharge

On 3 October 2025, the Ombudsman sent its replies to the 2024 discharge questionnaire. The related hearing took place at the European Parliament on 6 November 2025.

At the time of writing this report, the decision on the discharge procedure for the 2024 budget has not been finalised. The Ombudsman will provide its detailed feedback to Parliament in a follow-up report.



3.2.4 Management of the internal control systems

The AMP for 2025 identified several actions to reinforce the effectiveness of our internal control standards. These actions and their state of implementation are reflected in the table below.

ICS and related actions	Owner(s)	State of play
ICS 1 - Mission Review the Office's mission statement based on the newly elected Ombudsman's vision and priorities for the mandate.	CAB/All	A new mission statement was developed and included in the EO's Strategy 'Building Trust, Driving Change' adopted in October 2025.
ICS 2 - Ethical and organisational values Adopt the new ethics decision and organise info sessions for all staff. Carry out an ethics awareness survey.	DOA-THR	The Ombudsman's decision on internal rules concerning outside activities, assignments and occupational activities after leaving the office was adopted on 18 July 2025. The one on ethics and good conduct for the European Ombudsman's staff on 19 August 2025. The ethics survey was carried out between 23 June and 11 July 2025. The report on its results was published on the Office's intranet.
ICS 5 - Objectives and performance indicators Define the objectives for the new mandate and review the KPIs to ensure alignment with these objectives.	CAB/SG/All	The Ombudswoman's Strategy for the 2025-2029 mandate includes high level objectives and priorities. KPIs and targets to measure implementation were developed in time for inclusion in the 2026 AMP.
ICS 8 - Processes and procedures Finalise the review of the financial policies to ensure alignment with the Financial Regulation.	DOA-TFIN	This action is ongoing, also as part of the Internal Auditor's ongoing consulting work on the internal rules on budget implementation, which should be completed in the first semester of 2026.
ICS 10 - Business continuity Ensure effective implementation of the business continuity measures (training, tests, and alternative procedures).	DOA/All	While no actions were taken in 2025 to test specific hypothetical situations, business continuity was ensured throughout the year including through training, management supervision and ensuring back-ups for staff as well as continued cooperation and reliance on service level agreements for the provision of services and the security of systems.



<p>ICS 11 - Document management Delete or archive complaints that have exceeded the retention period.</p>	<p>DOA-TPBI</p>	<p>A mechanism for anonymising profiles and deleting complaints is nearing completion. Initially, this will enable complainants to request deletion of their profile and complaint. The tool will then be adapted to automatically anonymise and delete complaints based on criteria such as complaint type, retention period, and archiving requirements.</p>
<p>ICS 12 - Information and communication Adopt an internal ICT security policy and take implementing measures.</p>	<p>DOA-TPBI</p>	<p>The ICT security decision was adopted by the EO. Part of the implementation is carried over to 2026.</p>

3.2.5 Management of risks

Risk management is part of the Office's annual management cycle. Throughout 2025, the Office monitored the implementation of actions aimed at mitigating risks identified in the 2024 risk assessment exercise.

In the context of the Internal Auditor's 2023 review of the Ombudsman's Risk Management Framework, the Office reviewed how it assesses and manages risks and adopted a new methodology in January 2024.

A risk assessment exercise based on the new methodology was carried out in December 2025 prior to the adoption of the AMP for 2026. The exercise focused on a selection of operational objectives included in the draft AMP. The results of the assessment and of agreed follow-up actions are recorded in the risk register. Implementation of these actions is ongoing and will be monitored periodically. None of the potential risks analysed was ranked as critical.

There are thus no unmitigated risks that could have a significant impact on the implementation of the Ombudswoman's Strategy or on assurance on the achievement of the internal control objectives.



3.3 Control results

This section further reports on, and assesses, the elements identified by management that support the assurance on the achievement of the internal control objectives⁴.

3.3.1 Effectiveness: the control results and benefits

The Ombudsman’s Office uses internal control processes to ensure adequate management of the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions it is responsible for, considering the nature of the payments concerned.

The control objective is considered to be achieved if (a) no significant internal control weaknesses were reported/detected; (b) no significant and/or repetitive errors occurred.

The table below shows the indicators which were put in place to monitor the effectiveness of controls for financial operations: (i) number and percentage of errors prevented (ex-ante control)⁵, (ii) number of errors corrected (ex-post control) and (iii) number of errors prevented for procurement procedures. The evolution of these indicators should be analysed over time.

Type of controls	Indicator	2023	2024	2025
Ex-ante and ex-post controls on financial operations and procurement procedures	Number of errors prevented (ex-ante)	27	30	36
	% of errors (ex-ante)	3.42%	4.1%	4.87%
	Number of errors corrected (ex-post)	0	0	0
	Number of errors prevented in procurement procedures (ex-ante)	0	0	0

Ex-ante controls are performed on 100% of payments, in order to detect and correct any procedural errors with or without financial impact. Errors detected were of a technical nature (encoding errors in ABAC, missing supporting documents) and were corrected before the payment was made. This confirms the strong deterrence effect that ex-ante controls have on financial transactions.

The ex-ante controls in the procurement procedures carried out in 2025 did not reveal any mistakes of a substantial nature but rather clerical ones, such as typos.

With a view to aligning our practice with that of the other EU Institutions, the 2025 ex post control was carried out based on a new methodology. The sample of transactions subject to the ex-post control was selected based on the statistical sampling method, the so called «Monetary Unit Sampling» (MUS), to provide reasonable assurance on the budget management and on an estimated level of error rate for the reference population. Since the selected methodology for running the exercise was based on MUS, the sample can be

⁴ Art 36.2 FR: a) effectiveness, efficiency and economy of operations; b) reliability of reporting; c) safeguarding of assets and information; d) prevention, detection, correction and follow-up of irregularities; and e) adequate management of risks relating to the legality and regularity of underlying transactions.

⁵ Number of errors prevented divided by the number of authorised payments.



considered statistically representative and the results can therefore be extrapolated to the entire population of payments.

The standard budget area covered invoices, mission-related expenses and individual salary payments, which were treated as separate strata for sampling purposes. Ex-post controls in 2025 resulted in no financial errors detected. The ex-post controller recalled that the internal rules on implementation of the Ombudsman's budget still need to be updated to be in line with the Financial Regulation.

The analysis of the registry of overrides and non-compliance events in 2025 revealed two requests for exception. The finance team continues to make staff members aware of the importance of financial procedures, namely to ensure availability of the budget before making an expense.

In conclusion, the analysis of the available control results and the assessment of the weaknesses identified has not unveiled any significant weakness that could have a material impact as regards the legality and regularity of the financial operations. It is possible to conclude, therefore, that the control objective as regards legality and regularity has been achieved.

In 2025 and over the past years, the implementation of ex-ante and ex-post controls has not resulted in any financial correction/recovery order after payment. This is because no financial error was detected and administrative errors were corrected before payments were made. These results are expected to continue, resulting in no estimated future financial corrections (0%).

Benefits of these controls have also been identified. While it is possible to estimate the costs of the control processes, it is more difficult to quantify all the benefits from the prevention and detection of errors. Financial benefits mainly consist in ex-ante detection of errors in financial operations.

The benefits of controls are mostly non-financial. They help ensure compliance with legal obligations (article 74(5) of the Financial Regulation), have a deterrent effect and help improve procedures. Extensive ex-ante controls ensure the respect of the "four eyes" principle and add an element of *security* to decisions taken by the authorising officer. The ex-ante verifier also monitors new developments in regulations and plays an advisory role to the financial team.

For procurement procedures, considering the complexity of these activities and the limited number of contracts awarded each year by the Ombudsman, systematic operational and financial verifications are necessary to prevent the risk of reputational damage and avoid litigation.

3.3.2 Efficiency: time indicators and other efficiency indicators

The principle of efficiency concerns the best relationship between resources employed and results achieved.

During 2025, a total of 706 payments amounting to EUR 14.7 million were made. Out of these, 99.9% were executed on time, with an average payment time of 10.3 days, thus significantly below the maximum of 30 days allowed.

There are still areas needing improvement such as reviewing procurement procedures, updating checklists and financial policies to be in line with the Financial Regulation.



3.3.3 Economy: the costs of controls

The principle of economy requires that the resources used by the institution in the pursuit of its activities shall be made available in due time, in appropriate quantity and quality and at the best price.

Costs of controls mostly consist in staff costs. As the table below shows, the total cost of controls related to the European Ombudsman's expenditure amounts to EUR 77 451 and represents 0.53% of the payments made in 2025 (0.52% in 2024 and 0.54% in 2023).

Title of Relevant Control System (RCS)	Ex-ante controls				Ex-post controls				Total	
		(a)	(b)	(c)		(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)
	Full time equivalent	Total costs (in EUR)	Funds managed ⁽¹⁾ (in EUR)	Ratio (%) (a)/(b)	Full time equivalent	Total costs (in EUR)	Total value verified (in EUR)	Ratio (%) (d)/(e)	Total estimated cost of controls (EUR)	Ratio (%) (g)/(b)
Procurement and Administrative expenditure	0,52	67.772	14.705.581	0,46%	3 weeks per year	9.679	1.260.358	0,77%	77.451	0,53%

⁽¹⁾ Funds managed = payments made

3.3.4 Conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of controls

Based on the most relevant efficiency indicators and control results, the Ombudsman's Office has assessed the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of its control system and reached a positive conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of the controls for which it is responsible.

The control strategy is considered adequate as, with a reasonable cost of controls, the main objectives were achieved on time. They provide reasonable assurance that the European Ombudsman's 2025 budget has been implemented effectively, on time and in compliance with the rules.

3.4 Whistleblowing and investigations by OLAF

The authorising officer by delegation is not aware of any OLAF investigation or of any member of staff providing information under article 22(a) of the Staff Regulations in 2025.

3.5 Conclusions on the assurance

Results of controls of procurement, financial control and the analysis of exceptions support the conclusion that resources are used for the intended purpose and operations of the Office are legal and regular.

Analysis of the control results, ex-ante analysis of contracts and evaluation activities ensure sound financial management; the measures taken to protect information and assets also give assurance concerning the safeguarding of assets and information.



The follow-up of audit recommendations and the assessment of the internal control systems provide reasonable assurance that the control systems work as intended and fraud is prevented and detected.

The authorising officer by delegation therefore has reasonable assurance that, overall, bearing in mind the level of expenditure and budget handled by the institution, suitable controls are in place and are working as intended; risks are being appropriately monitored and mitigated; and necessary improvements are being implemented.

4. Reservations and impact on the statement

4.1 Materiality criteria

To decide whether a weakness is significant and must entail a reservation in the Annual Activity Report, the authorising officer by delegation ('AOD') bases their judgement on the following materiality criteria, which apply to the European Ombudsman's budget:

4.1.1 Scope criteria

The weakness falls within the scope of the AOD annual declaration: it relates to the reasonable assurance regarding the legality and regularity of financial transactions, the true and fair view, the use of resources for their intended purposes, sound financial management, non-omission of significant information, efficiency, the safeguarding of assets and the prevention and detection of fraud.

4.1.2 Qualitative criteria

Qualitative assessment includes an analysis of the causes and the types of error(s), considering also mitigating controls and/or corrective actions taken:

- the nature and scope of the weakness,
- the duration of the weakness,
- the existence of compensatory measures,
- the existence of effective corrective actions to correct the weaknesses,
- residual reputational, financial, operational and legal/regulatory risk,
- significant control system weaknesses,
- critical issues reported by the authorising officer by sub-delegation, the European Court of Auditors, the Internal Auditor and the European Anti-Fraud Office.

4.1.3 Quantitative criteria

The weakness is deemed significant in quantitative terms where the monetary value of the problem or the amount at risk exceeds the acceptable threshold.

The European Ombudsman uses a residual error rate threshold of maximum 2% of the total annual expenditure, as applied by other institutions such as the European Commission and the European Court of Auditors.

The European Ombudsman has thus decided on 2% of the annual appropriations as the materiality threshold in this regard, which would correspond to EUR 309 558.40.



4.2 Reservation

No reservation.

4.3 Conclusion

Based on the above, the Director for Administration of the European Ombudsman, in her capacity as authorising officer by delegation in 2025, has issued the annual declaration with no reservation.



5. Declaration of assurance

I, the undersigned, Marie-Pierre Darchy,

Director for Administration,

In my capacity as authorising officer by delegation in 2025, hereby declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view⁶.

State that I have reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in the report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place provide satisfactory guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of self-assessments, the ex-post controls, the work and observations of the internal auditor, and the lessons learnt from the reports of the Court of Auditors for years prior to the year of this declaration.

Confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported which could harm the interests of the European Ombudsman.

Done at Brussels,

Marie-Pierre Darchy
Director for Administration

⁶ True and fair in this context means a reliable, complete and correct view on the state of affairs in the service.



Annexes:

Annex 1: Human resources and professional training charts

Annex 2: The European Ombudsman's Operating Framework

Annex 3: Report on budgetary and financial management for the financial year 2025

Annex 4: The European Ombudsman's draft Annual Report for 2025



Annexes

Annex 1: Human resources and professional training charts

A. Breakdown of human resources available to the Ombudsman

The European Ombudsman's job-screening exercise is carried out in accordance with Article 53 of the Financial Regulation. It is based on the "*Inter-institutional job screening methodology*" developed by the European Commission.

The job screening is a top-down and across-the board analysis of all jobs based on the organisational chart. The aim is to classify the human resources under one of the following three categories according to the organisational role each job is serving: 'Operations', 'Coordination and support' and 'Compliance'.

The categorisation of jobs is undertaken to identify how roles are evolving and to maximise the proportion of jobs devoted to 'Operations'.

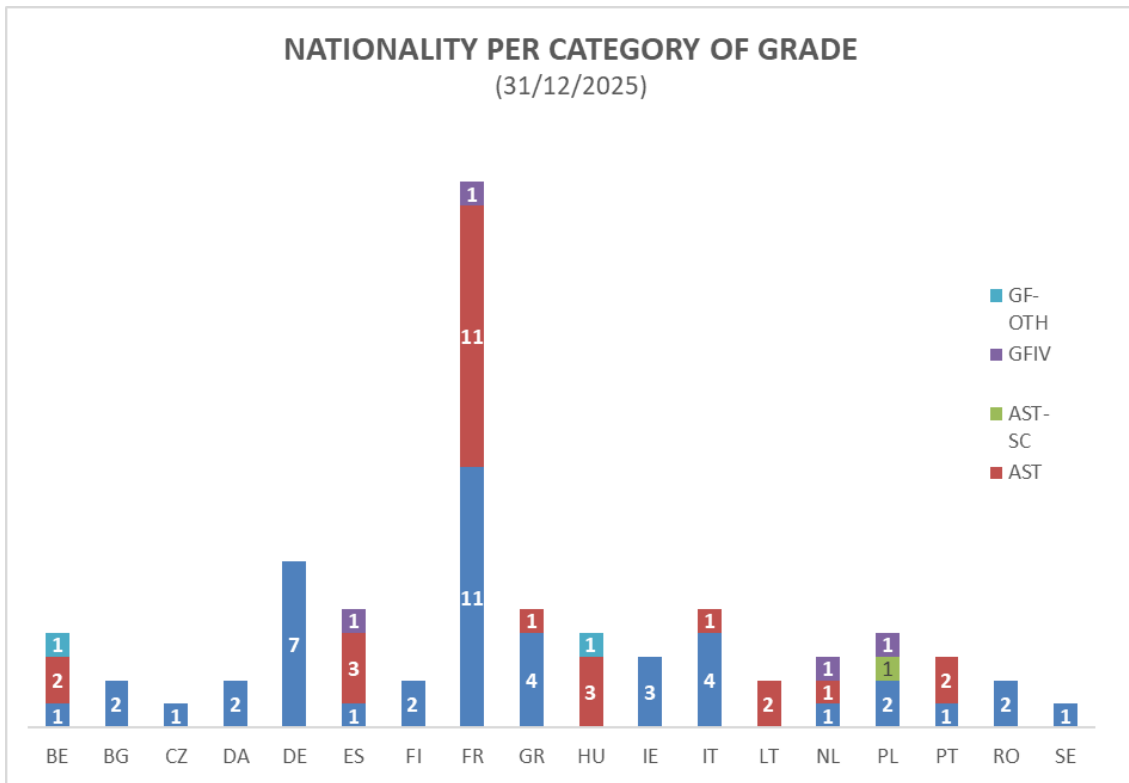
In December 2025, the categorisation of jobs performed by staff in the Ombudsman's Office resulted in the following figures.

Job-type category	2025	2024	2023
Operations	69.3%	68.2%	67.8%
Coordination and support	18.8%	20%	21.5%
Compliance	11.9%	11.8%	10.7%

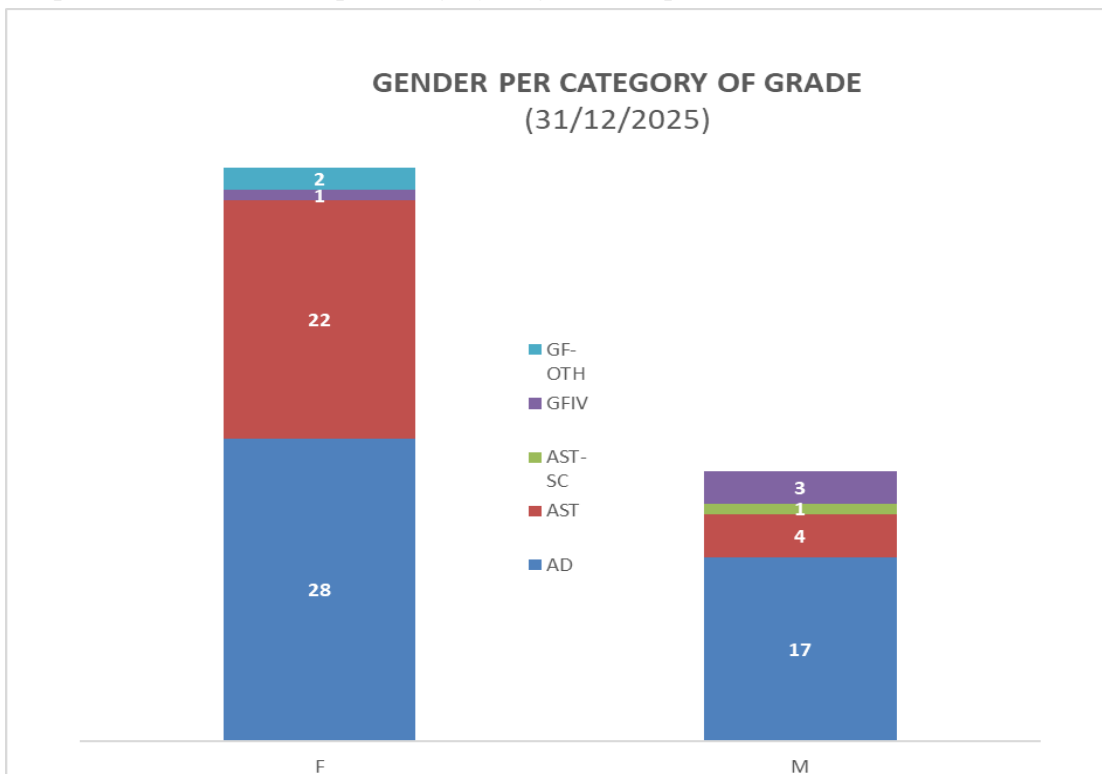
Graphs 1 to 3 on the following pages show the breakdown of staff respectively by nationality per category of grade, by gender per category of grade, and by gender and nationality among managers.



Graph 1 - Nationality of staff per category of grade: snapshot on 31 December 2025

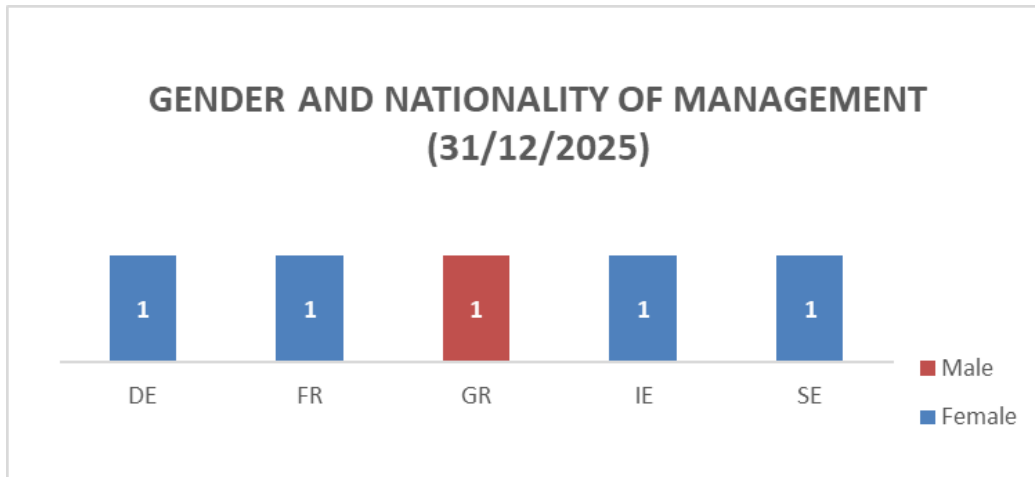


Graph 2 - Gender of staff per category of grade: snapshot on 31 December 2025





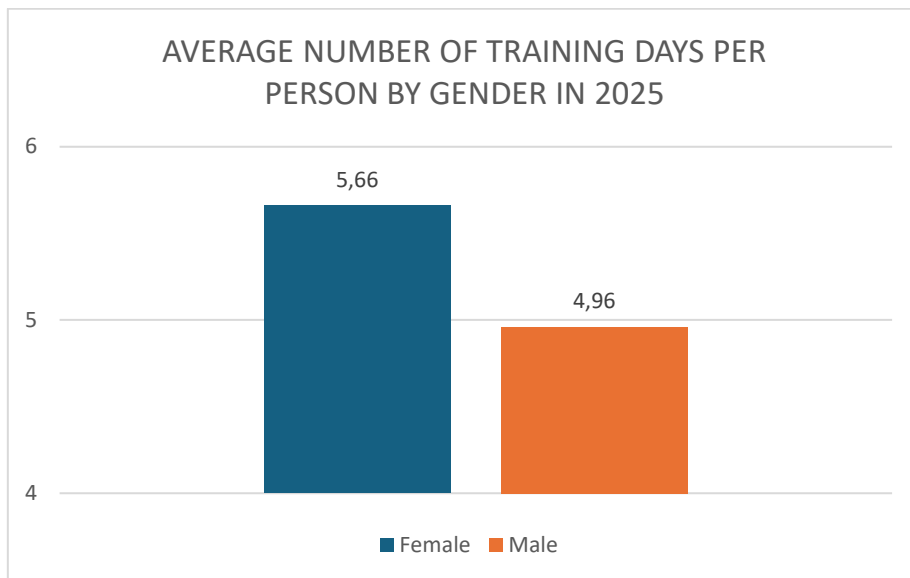
Graph 3 - Gender and nationality among managers: snapshot on 31 December 2025



B. Number of days of professional training in 2025

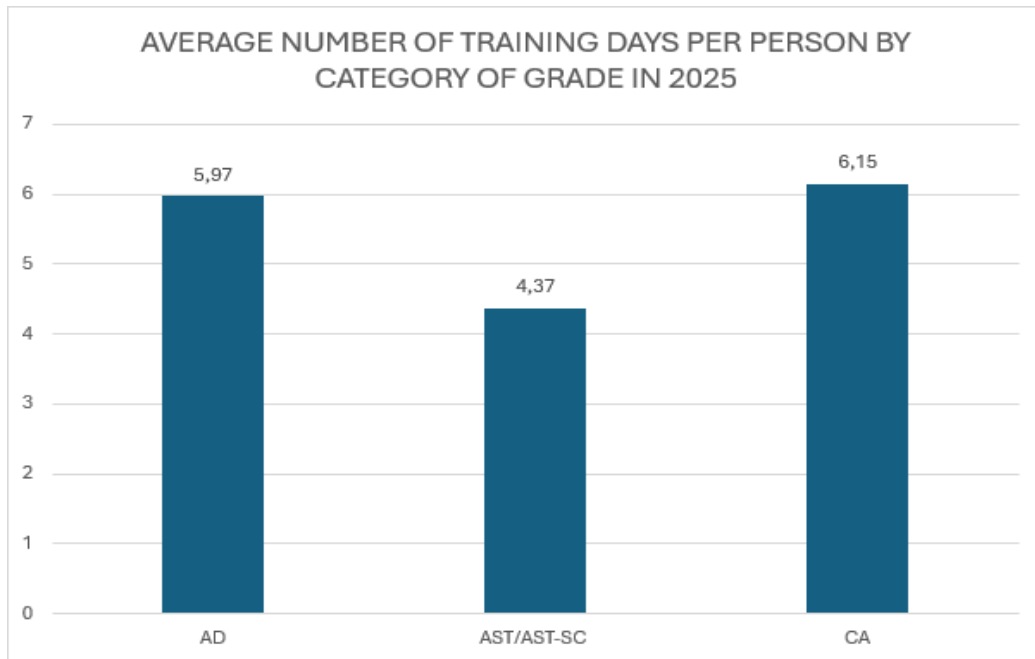
The average number of training days per staff member was 5.43 excluding language training. Graphs 4 and 5 below provide the breakdown of training days by gender and by category of grade. Graph 6 provides a breakdown of staff enrolled in language classes.

Graph 4 - Training days per person (excluding language training)



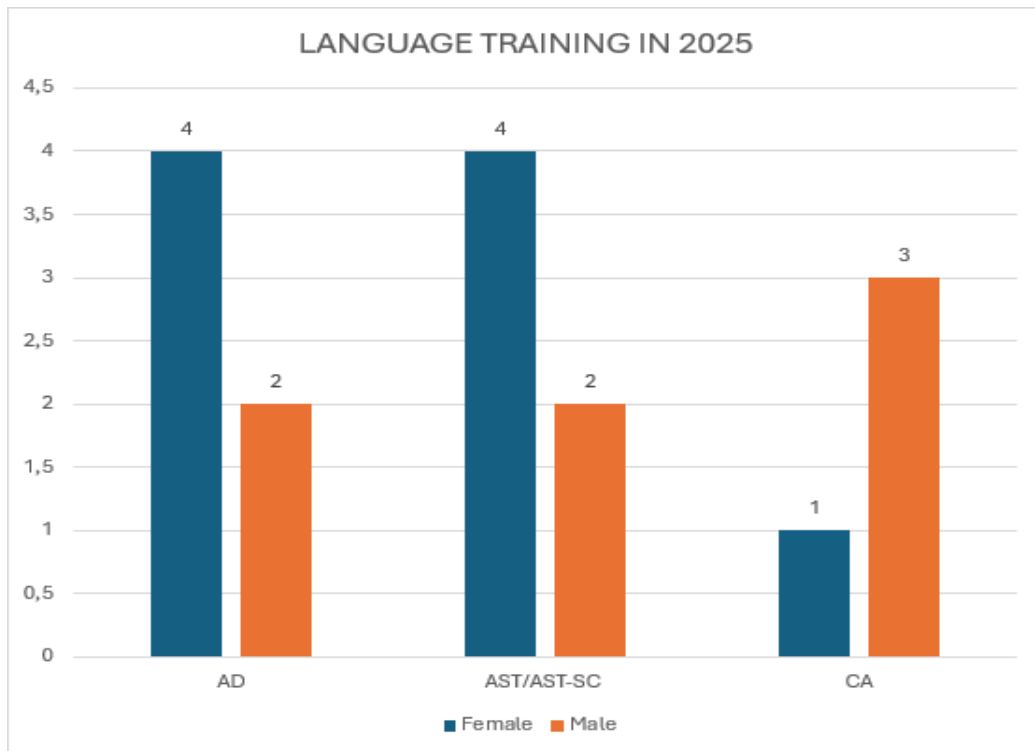


Graph 5- Training days by category of grade (excluding language training)



Graph 6 - Staff who took language classes by gender and by category of grade

In 2025, 16 staff members were enrolled in language classes.





The following annexes are enclosed as separate documents.

Annex 2: The Ombudsman's Operating Framework (PowerPoint Presentation)

Annex 3: Report on budgetary and financial management for the financial year 2025

Annex 4: Draft Annual Report 2025 of the European Ombudsman

The Ombudsman shall submit to the European Parliament a report on the outcome of inquiries every year. The Annual Report of the European Ombudsman for 2025 will be presented to the European Parliament in the first half of 2026. A draft version is attached to the present report.

The report will subsequently be made available in all languages in the [annual reports](#) section of the Ombudsman's website.



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

© European Union, 2026

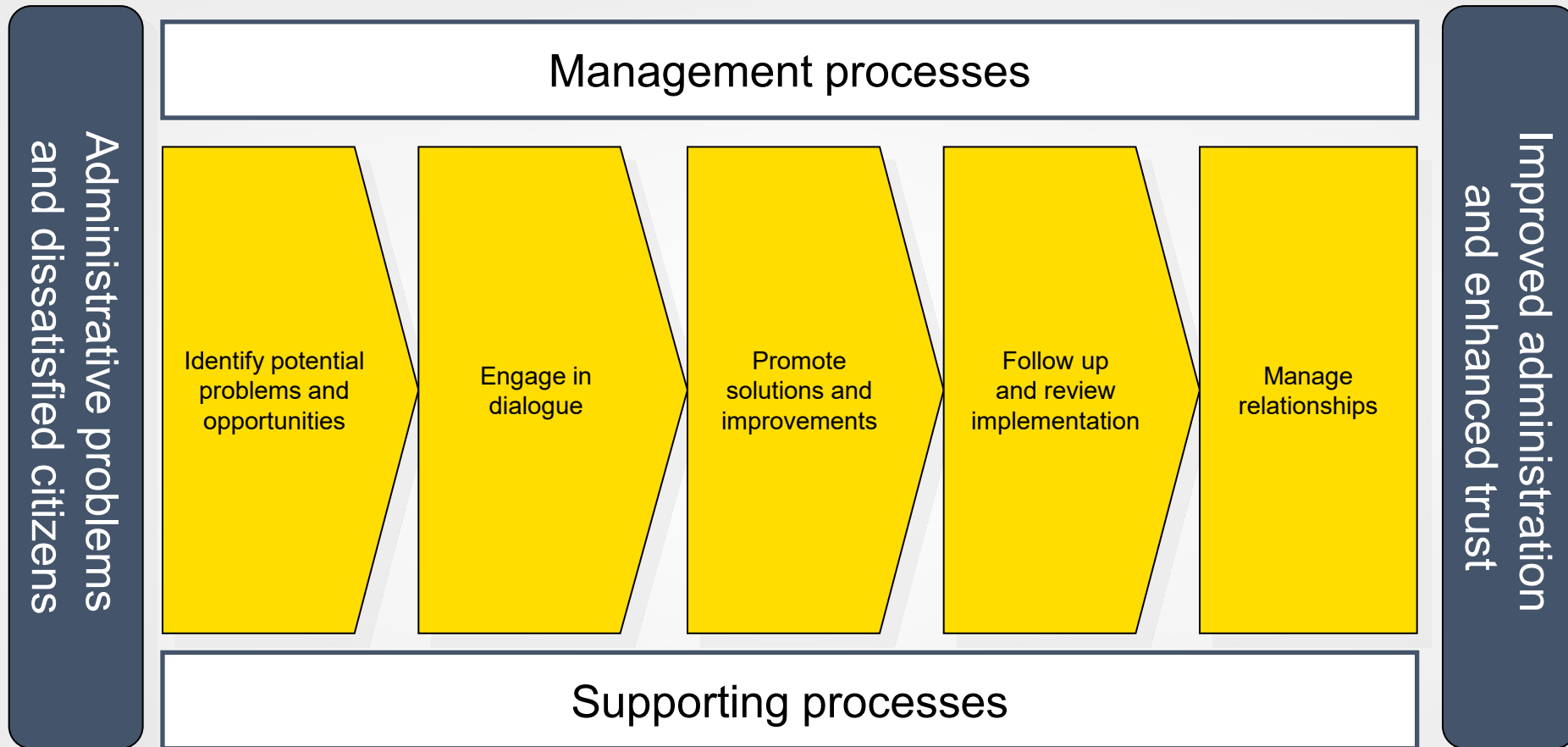
Reproduction for educational and
non-commercial purposes is authorised,
provided the source is acknowledged.



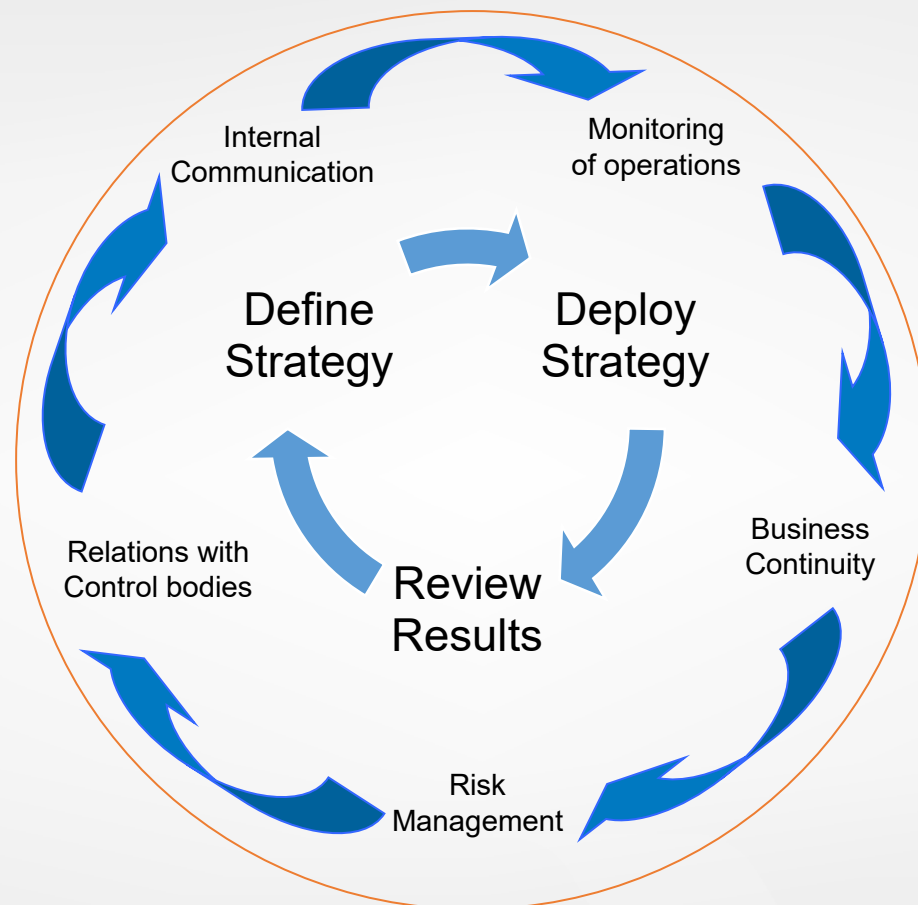
OPERATING FRAMEWORK AND KEY PROCESSES

V16 – March 2026

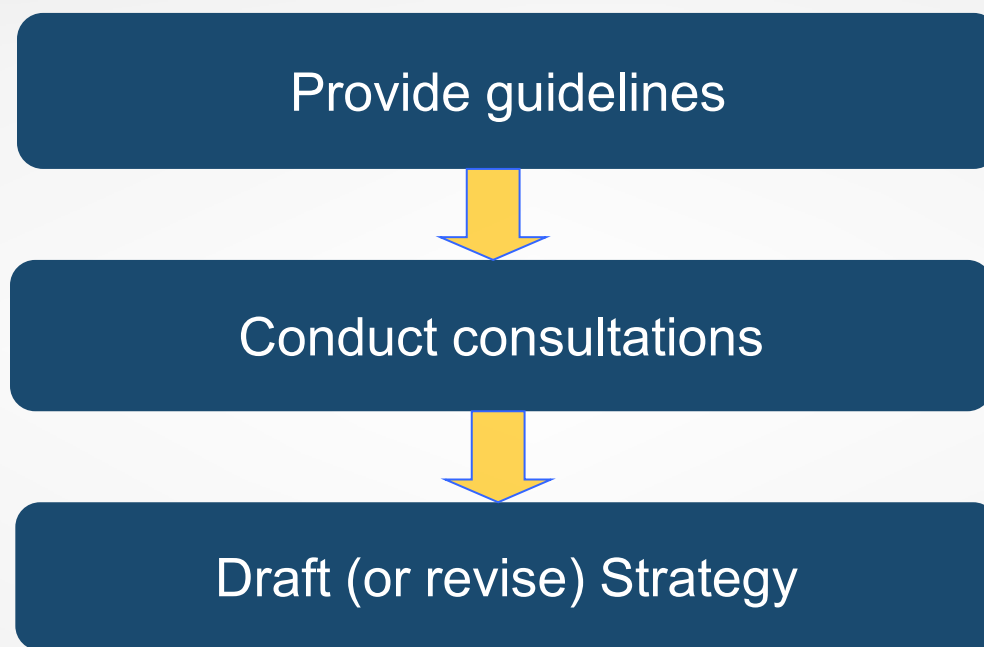
Operating Framework



1. Management processes



1.1 Define Strategy



1.2 Deploy Strategy

Annual Management Plan (AMP)



Periodic review of the implementation
of the AMP and KPI scoreboard



Annual Activity Report (AAR)



2. Identify potential problems and opportunities

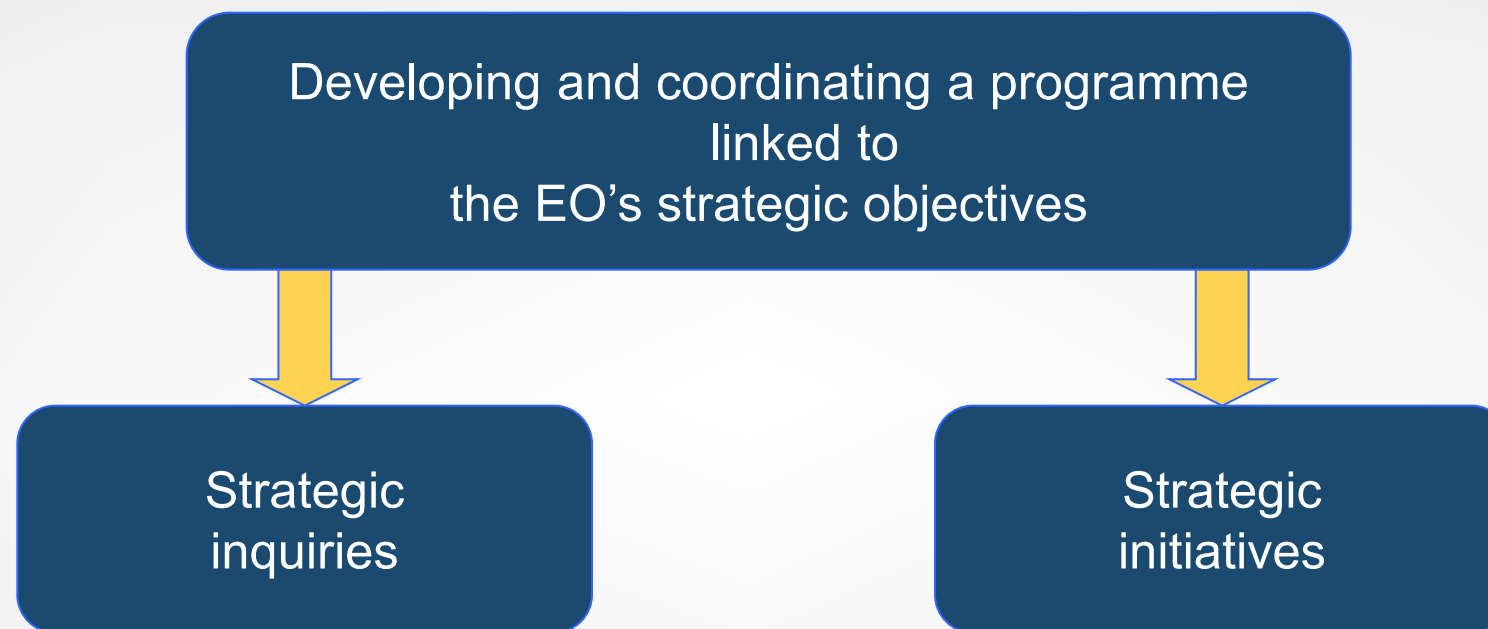
2.1 Proactive identification of systemic issues in the EO's fields of activity

2.2 Complaints

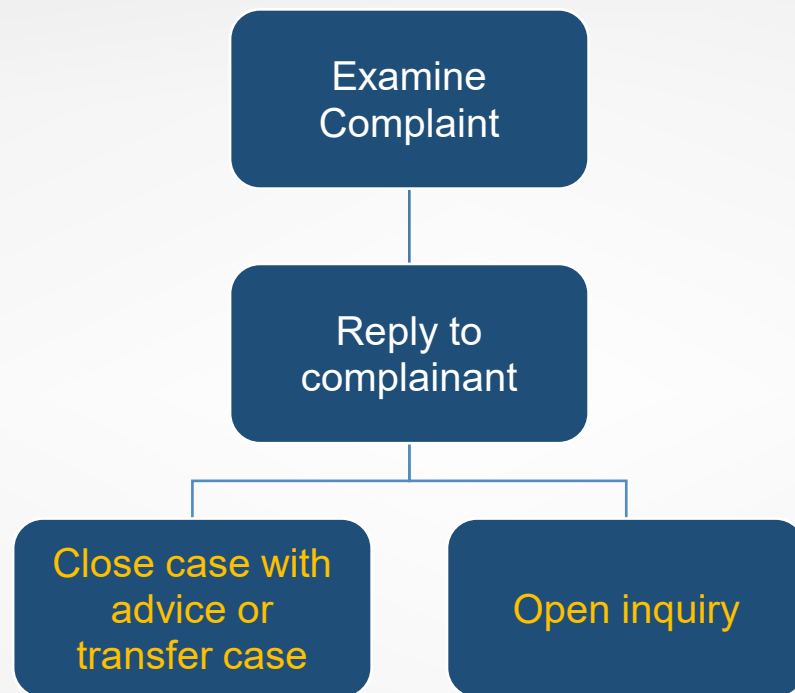
2.3 Other stakeholder input



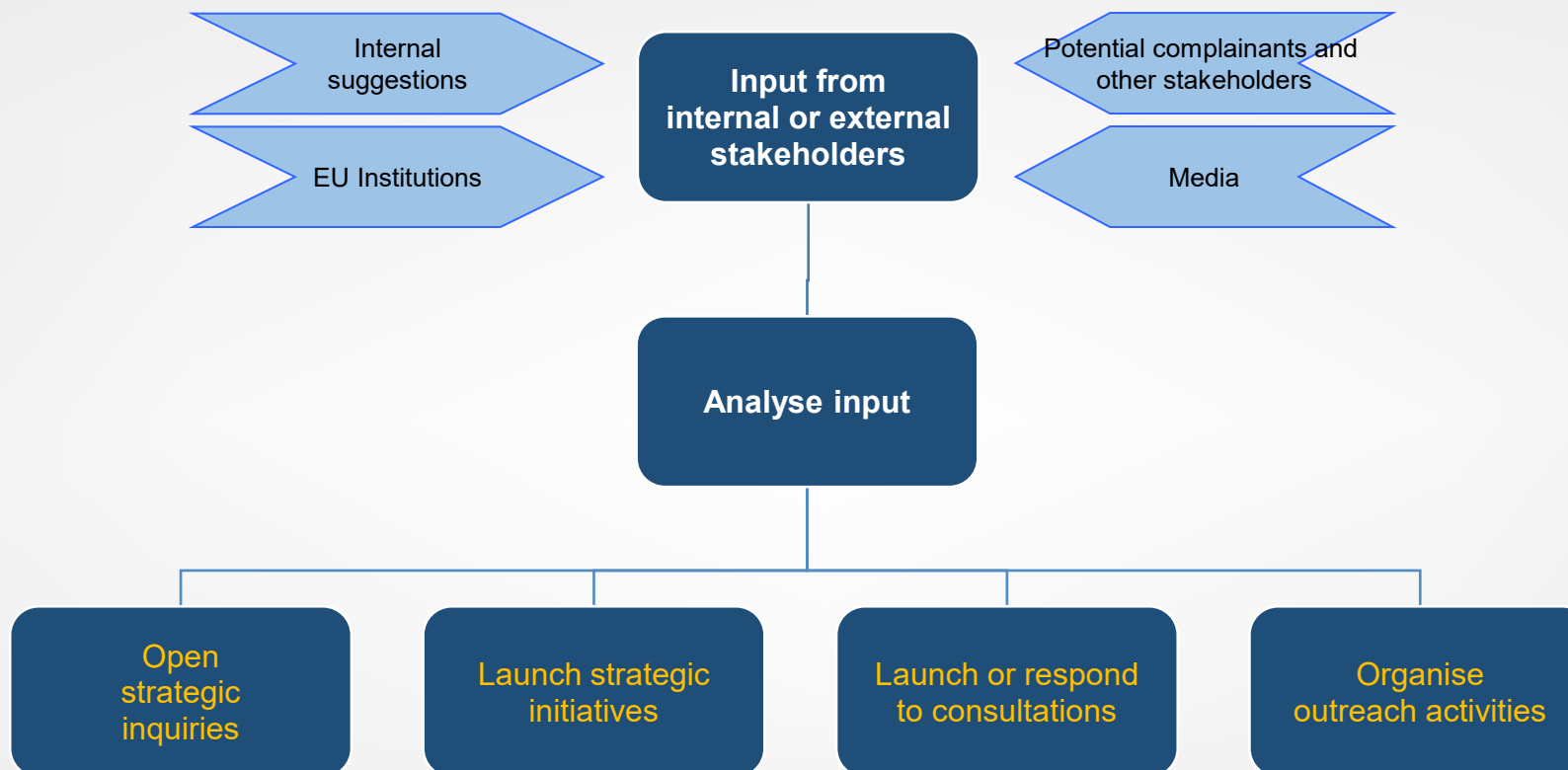
2.1 Proactive identification of systemic issues in the EO's fields of activity



2.2 Complaints



2.3 Other Stakeholder input



3. Engage in dialogue

In the context of

[3.1 Inquiries](#)

[3.2 Strategic initiatives](#)

[3.3 Consultations](#)

[3.4 Outreach and other activities](#)



3.1 Inquiries

Investigating complaints

Inquiries of
public importance

Fast-Track
inquiries
(Regulation
1049/2001)

Inquiries about
the institutions'
failure to reply

Strategic (own-initiative) inquiries

Queries from the ENO

Joint/parallel inquiries with the ENO



3.2 Strategic initiatives

Launching strategic initiatives



Inviting feedback from institution



Analysis of feedback
and follow-up



3.3 Consultations

Responding to consultations

Public consultations launched by EU institutions, requests from Committees of the European Parliament or from other stakeholders, ...

Launching consultations

Public, European Network of Ombudsmen, EDPS, ...



3.4 Outreach and other activities

Meetings and events with institutions
and other stakeholders

Target group activities

Proactive use of media,
including active social media engagement



4. Promote solutions and improvements

4.1 Evaluation and recommendations in the inquiry process

4.2 Issuing general guidance

4.3 Informing and persuading



4.1 Evaluation and recommendations

Solutions

Recommendations

Suggestions

Special Reports



4.2 Issuing general guidance

Practical recommendations for the EU
Administration

Thematic papers

Sharing and promoting
best practices



4.3 Informing and persuading

Publishing recommendations made in the context of inquiries

Publishing practical recommendations for the EU administration

Presentations to target audiences

Press releases and interviews

Organising thematic events



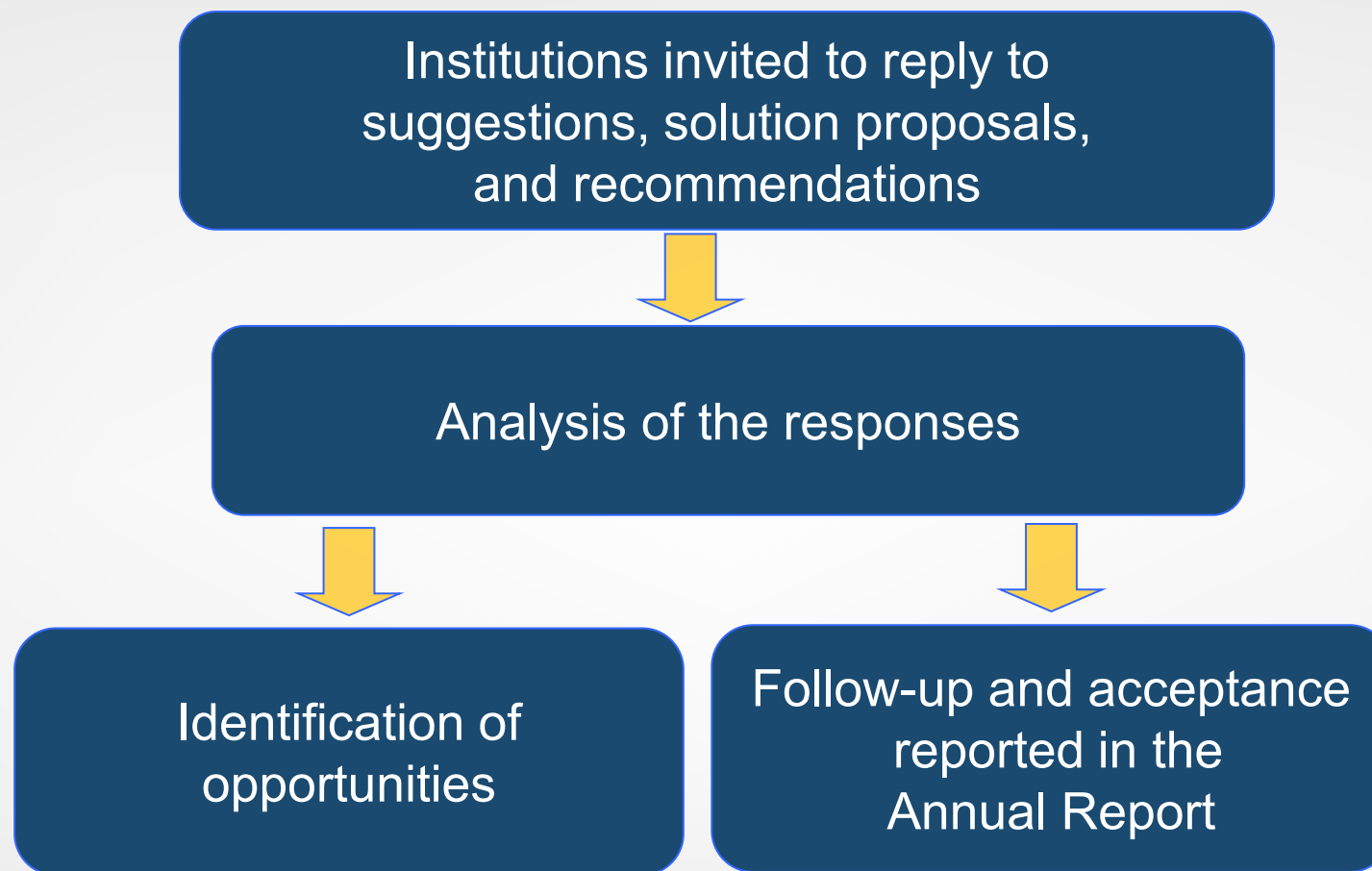
5. Follow-up and review implementation

5.1 Acceptance analysis

5.2 Acceptance rate



5.1 Acceptance analysis



5.2 Acceptance rate

To what extent did the institutions accept the Ombudsman's suggestions and recommendations?



Acceptance
rate



6. Manage relationships

[6.1 Relations with complainants](#)

[6.2 Relations with the European Parliament](#)

[6.3 Relations with the European Network of Ombudsmen](#)

[6.4 Relations with other stakeholders](#)

[6.5 Recognising excellence in EU public service](#)



6.1 Relations with complainants

Dialogue throughout the life of the complaint

Complainant feedback survey

Requests for review

Information on institutions' follow-up



6.2 Relations with the European Parliament

Annual Reports

Special Reports

Meetings with MEPs

Appearances before Committees



6.3 Relations with the European Network of Ombudsmen

Transfer of cases

Parallel investigations

Queries

Seminars, workshops and other events

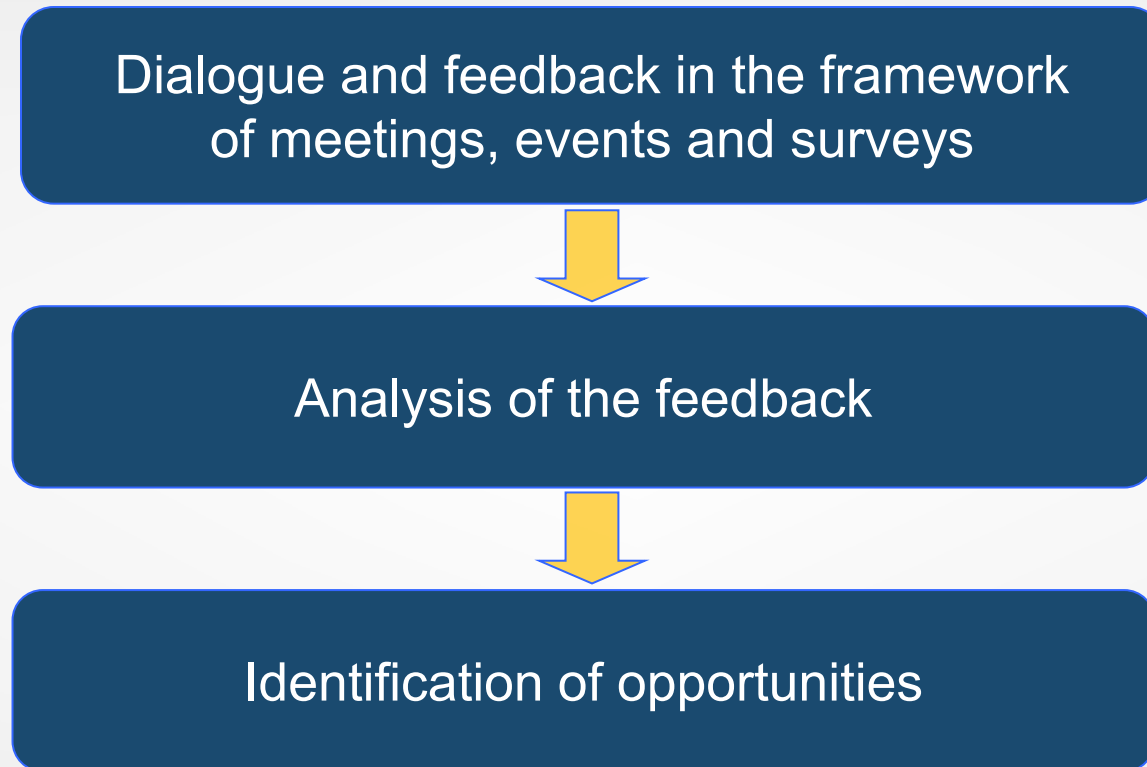
Electronic discussion forum and news
service

E-Newsletter



6.4 Relations with other stakeholders

(EU institutions, media, NGOs, ...)



6.5 Recognising excellence in EU public service



7. Supporting processes

[7.1 Human resources](#)

[7.2 Finances and controls](#)

[7.3 Information management](#)

[7.4 ICT](#)

[7.5 Administration](#)



7.1 Human Resources

Implementing HR policies

Ethics & good
conduct

Working environment
and conditions

Recruitment

HR
management

Learning &
Development

Internal
communication



7.2 Finances and controls

Preparation of Estimates

Budget Execution

Financial Management

Asset Management

Procurement

Financial Reporting

Accounting

Internal & External Audit



7.3 Information Management

Complaints management
system

Managing non-complaints
related documents

Implementing the EUCI
Decision

Historical archiving

Public Access to
information
and documents

Data protection



7.4 ICT

Implementation of priorities and projects

Maintenance, updating and
security
of existing systems

Management of
hardware, servers and
standard applications

Relations with external
service providers

Management of
framework contracts

Preparation of budget
and reporting on the
implementation of priorities

Management of
external procurement



7.5 Administration

Direct
administration

Process management

Infrastructure

Business continuity

Managing
interinstitutional
cooperation

European Parliament
(Buildings and associated
services, IT Security,
helpdesk,...)

European Commission
(PMO, ABAC, SYSPER 2,
ARES...)

Translation Centre





European
Ombudsman

REPORT ON BUDGETARY AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

European Ombudsman

Financial year 2025



Contents

Introduction	2
1 - Revenue	3
2 - Expenditure	3
2.1 Final appropriations available, commitments and payments by title	3
2.2 Budget transfers	5
2.3 Title I - Expenditure relating to people working with the Institution	7
2.4 Title II - Buildings, furniture, equipment and miscellaneous expenditure	9
2.5 Title III - Expenditure resulting from general functions carried out by the institution	10
3 - Appropriations carried over from 2024	12
Annex 1: Estimated revenue, established entitlements and entitlements carried over	13
Annex 2: Changes in appropriations for the year	14
Annex 3: Use of appropriations for the year	17
Annex 4: Use of appropriations carried-over from 2024	20



Introduction

This report has been drawn up in accordance with Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2024/2509 of 23 September 2024 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the Union, and in particular Article 255 thereof.

The report summarises the European Ombudsman's budgetary and financial management during 2025 and outlines the institution's financial situation, budget evolution and main events having an impact on the budgetary performance.

The 2025 budget implementation shows the following patterns:

- The utilisation rate of appropriations (94.77%) remains high, even though below the previous year's result (97.55% in 2024), while the execution rate for payments, which represents 97.96% of total commitments, is slightly higher (97.08% in 2024). Appropriations carried over to 2026 represent 2.04% of total commitments (2.92% in 2024).
- Five transfers were made during the year, totalling € 262 500, to reallocate funds to finance specific needs. Detailed information on the purpose of the transfers is provided in section 2.2 below.



1 - Revenue

Established entitlements for the financial year 2025 totalled € 2 114 935.70. They represent 107.73 % of the estimated revenue of € 1 963 256 (Table 1), compared to 106.65% in 2024.

The total revenue recovered as at 31 December 2025 (€ 2 114 337.10) represents 99.97% of the entitlements established in 2025.

The detailed table can be found in Annex I.

Table 1 - Established entitled 2025

(EUR)

Title	Estimated revenue 2025	Established entitlements 2025	Total recovered 2025	% in total
3 - Administrative revenue	1.963.256	2.114.919,86	2.114.321,26	99,97%
4 - Financial revenue, default interest and fines	-	15,84	15,84	100%
6 - Revenue, contributions and refunds related to Union policies	-	-	-	0%
Total	1.963.256	2.114.935,70	2.114.337,10	99,97%

Of the € 2 114 321.26 in administrative revenue recovered, 100% represents deductions from the salaries of Members and staff (taxes and special levies on remuneration and pensions). Other revenue recovered in the financial year amounts to € 15.84 related to recoveries on bank interests. An amount of € 598.26 concerning insurance costs was still to be recovered at 31/12/2025. By way of comparison, in 2024, deductions made from the salaries of Members and staff (taxes and special levies on remuneration and pensions) amounted to € 1 863 715.70 and other revenue for the financial year amounted to € 1 833.52.

2 - Expenditure

2.1 Final appropriations available, commitments and payments by title

Total appropriations available for 2025, appropriations committed, payments made during the year and the remaining amount to be carried over to 2025 are summarised in Table 2 and Table 3 below.

A more detailed analysis by chapter can be found in Tables 5 to 10 below, together with explanatory notes on some specific chapters and/or items.



Table 2 - Final appropriations available and commitments by title

(EUR)

Title	Final appropriations	Appropriations committed	%
Title I - Expenditure relating to persons working with the institution	12.757.988	12.024.349	94,25%
Title II - Buildings, furniture, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure	2.465.530	2.448.091	99,29%
Title III - Expenditure resulting from general functions carried out by the institution	254.400	195.442	76,82%
Titles I, II and III - Total	15.477.918	14.667.882	94,77%

Table 3 - Commitments and payments by title

(EUR)

Title	Commitments	Payments	%	Carry-over	%
Title I - Expenditure relating to persons working with the institution	12.024.349	11.965.827	99,51%	58.521	0,49%
Title II - Buildings, furniture, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure	2.448.091	2.249.582	91,89%	198.508	8,11%
Title III - Expenditure resulting from general functions carried out by the institution	195.442	152.873	78,22%	42.570	21,78%
Titles I, II and III - Total	14.667.882	14.368.283	97,96%	299.599	2,04%



2.2 Budget transfers

During the financial year, the European Ombudsman made five budgetary transfers totalling € 262 500 (Table 4). The aim of these transfers was to support specific needs, ensure that the European Ombudsman's various departments operated smoothly and that any related requirements were met.

Table 4 - Budget transfers in 2025

(EUR)		
Type de transfer	Number of transfers in 2025	Total amount transferred
Title to title	2	17.000
Chapter to chapter		70.000
Article to Article		77.000
Item to item	3	98.500
Total	5	262.500

The main budget lines impacted were the following:

Reductions:

- Fitting-out and installation work: -100%
- Translation and interpretation: -51%
- Expenditure on recruitment: -50%
- Meetings in general: -23.6%
- Rent: -8.2%
- Salaries, allowances and payments related to salaries (article 120): -0.2%

Increases:

- Legal costs: + 1700%
- Communication and publications: +64%
- Cleaning, maintenance and energy consumption: +41%
- Support for activities: +34%
- Informatics: +17%
- Trainings: +8%
- Security and surveillance of buildings: +0.9%

The reinforcement of the above-mentioned budget lines was possible thanks to the savings resulting from unused appropriations for fitting-out and installation work, expenditure on recruitment, meetings in general, rent and salaries, allowances and payment related to salaries (article 120). Additional appropriations also became available due to reduced translation costs, following the successful integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into the



translation processes for the European Ombudsman's website. Since 2023, this has not only made the website more accessible and inclusive by providing content in various languages, as needed, but has also minimized the expenditure on translations.

Legal costs (budget item 2305): The budget line needed reinforcement to pay for the services of an external lawyer after two applications were brought against the European Ombudsman before the General Court of the European Union. These services were needed to support the agents responsible for defending the European Ombudsman's Office in these cases.

Communication and publications (budget item 3210): To better align with the priorities set by the newly elected Ombudswoman and with the digital communication needs, the Office decided to perform a usability review of the Ombudsman's website, with the primary focus on enhancing the user experience by improving the navigation, content quality, and search functionality. Appropriations needed to be transferred to budget item 3210 to cover the conduct of an assessment and the delivery of a study including a set of recommendations by an external contractor. The assessment involved a set of activities such as (i) conducting a content review of the website's pages, (ii) performing an expert evaluation of the site, (iii) administering a survey to identify the website's users and understand their reasons for visiting and (iv) conducting interviews with selected users and stakeholders.

Cleaning, maintenance and energy (budget item 2002): The European Ombudsman's operating costs for its premises in Strasbourg and Brussels have risen significantly due to high inflation and the ongoing crisis with Russia. As a result, maintenance costs have increased and energy prices have gone up, leading to higher actual expenditure for the premises rented from Parliament. To reflect this rise, the lump sum for rental charges had to be re-evaluated. However, despite the European Ombudsman's 2025 estimates having anticipated an increase, the European Commission reduced the corresponding expenditure. This reduction resulted in a funding gap, necessitating additional appropriations for budget item 2002.

Support for activities (budget article 232): In 2025 the European Ombudsman decided to join the Artificial Intelligence pilot project (GPT@EC) developed by the European Commission with the goal of pooling expenses and reducing costs through economies of scale. The transfer of appropriations to this budget line was needed to cover the one-off onboarding fees and the 2025 licence costs. This investment is expected to yield long-term benefits, including enhanced operational efficiency and improved service delivery.

Informatics (budget item 2100): Appropriations were transferred to budget item 2100 to (i) cover the significant increase in the cost of Microsoft licenses and (ii) replace older IT equipment which was becoming obsolete, particularly in light of efforts to reinforce cybersecurity and ensure the continued support of operations.

Training (budget item 1612): Appropriations needed to be transferred to this budget line to cover the increased cost of training (including language training) offered by the Commission's training platform, EULearn.



Security and surveillance of buildings (budget item 2003): Appropriations had to be transferred to this budget line because the costs for security and surveillance of buildings were higher in 2025 than initially estimated when preparing the 2025 draft budget.

The effects of the transfers at item level are detailed in Annex 2.

2.3 Title I - Expenditure relating to people working with the Institution

Table 5 and Table 6 below summarise the final appropriations, commitments and payments for 2025 in Title I.

Table 5 - Final appropriations available and commitments in Title I

(EUR)

Chapters	Final appropriations	Appropriations committed	%
10- Members of the institution	827.000	643.062	77,76%
12- Officials and temporary staff	10.828.000	10.484.112	96,82%
14- Other staff and outside services	795.500	595.650	74,88%
16- Other expenditure relating to persons working with the institution	307.488	301.525	98,06%
Title I - Total	12.757.988	12.024.349	94,25%

In 2025, the utilisation rate of appropriations under Title I was 94.25% (in 2024, this rate was 98.37%).

Appropriations in Chapter 10 (Members of the institution) were used in 2025 at a rate of 77.76% (in 2024, the figure was 96.99%).

The utilisation rate for Chapter 12 (Officials and temporary staff) was 96.82% compared to 98.79% in 2024.

The utilisation rate for Chapter 14 (Other staff and outside services) was 74.88% compared to 94.33% in 2024.

Appropriations in Chapter 16 (Other expenditure relating to persons working with the institution) were used in 2024 at a rate of 98.06% compared to 96.41% in 2024.



Table 6 - Commitments and payments in Title I

(EUR)					
Chapters	Commitments	Payments	%	Carry-over	%
10- Members of the institution	643.062	639.229	99,40%	3.833	0,60%
12- Officials and temporary staff	10.484.112	10.481.400	99,97%	2.713	0,03%
14- Other staff and outside services	595.650	592.750	99,51%	2.900	0,49%
16- Other expenditure relating to persons working with the institution	301.525	252.449	83,72%	49.076	16,28%
Title I - Total	12.024.349	11.965.827	99,51%	58.521	0,49%

In 2025, for Title I, payments totalled € 11 965 827, i.e. 93.79% of the final appropriations and 99.51% of the total commitments (in 2024, these rates were 97.74% and 99.37% respectively).

Commitments carried over automatically to 2026 in accordance with Article 12 of the Financial Regulation amounted to € 58 521, i.e. 0.46% of the final appropriations and 0.49% of the total commitments (in 2024, these rates were 0.62% and 0.63% respectively).

The largest proportion of the carry-over regarding Chapter 16 concerned staff training (€ 21 225), the European Schools (€ 10 512) and the Crèches and childcare facilities (€ 15 716) for which legal obligations existed but invoices were not received or had been received but not fully processed by the end of the financial year.



2.4 Title II - Buildings, furniture, equipment and miscellaneous expenditure

Table 7 and Table 8 below summarise final appropriations, commitments and payments for 2025 in Title II.

Table 7 - Final appropriations available and commitments in Title II

(EUR)			
Chapters	Final appropriations	Appropriations committed	%
20- Buildings and associated costs	1.623.594	1.622.999	99,96%
21- Data processing, equipment and furniture: purchase, hire and maintenance	450.236	443.236	98,45%
23-Current administrative expenditure	391.700	381.856	97,49%
Title II - Total	2.465.530	2.448.091	99,29%

The utilisation rate for appropriations in Title II reached 99.29% in 2025 (compared to 94.91% in 2024).

While most Chapters show a relatively high execution, the lower implementation rate for Chapter 23 (Current administrative expenditure) is due to reduced expenditure on budget article 231 - Translation and interpretation following the successful integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into the translation processes for the European Ombudsman's website.

Table 8 - Commitments and payments in Title II

(EUR)					
Chapters	Commitments	Payments	%	Carry-over	%
20- Buildings and associated costs	1.622.999	1.563.999	96,36%	59.000	3,64%
21- Data processing, equipment and furniture: purchase, hire and maintenance	443.236	357.301	80,61%	85.935	19,39%
23-Current administrative expenditure	381.856	328.282	85,97%	53.574	14,03%
Title II - Total	2.448.091	2.249.582	91,89%	198.508	8,11%



Payments totalled € 2 249 582, equivalent to 91.24% of the final appropriations and 91.89% of the commitments (in 2024, these rates were 84.15% and 88.66% respectively). Commitments carried over to 2026 in accordance with Article 12 of the Financial Regulation amounted to € 198 508, i.e. 8.05% of the final appropriations and 8.11% of the commitments (in 2024, these rates were 10.77% and 11.34% respectively).

In Chapter 20 ('Buildings and associated costs'), the appropriations carried over concern budget article 200 – Rent, where an amount of € 59 000 is carried over to cover the anticipative partial payment of 2026 rental costs for the Havel Building.

The budget line which accounts for most of the carry-over of € 85 935 under Chapter 21 is budget item 2100 - Purchase, servicing and maintenance of equipment and software, and related work, with € 84 012. This mainly relates to IT projects, including those for which budgetary transfers took place in the second semester of the year and to existing commitments for which invoices were not received by the end of the financial year.

In Chapter 23 ('Current administrative expenditure'), the appropriations carried over concern budget item 2305 – Legal costs and damages where an amount of € 12 000 is carried over to cover the remaining legal fees owed to the external lawyer in charge of supporting the agents responsible for defending the European Ombudsman's Office in two cases before the General Court of the EU, budget article 231 - Translation and interpretation for € 11 479 and budget article 232 - Support for activities, where an amount of € 24 000 is carried over to cover management fees resulting from the application of the cooperation and service level agreements between the European Ombudsman and other Institutions.

2.5 Title III - Expenditure resulting from general functions carried out by the institution

Table 9 and Table 10 below summarise final appropriations, commitments and payments for 2025 in Title III.

Table 9 - Final appropriations available and commitments in Title III

(EUR)			
Chapters	Final appropriations	Appropriations committed	%
30- Meetings and conferences	189.000	144.262	76,33%
32- Expertise and information: acquisition, archiving, production and dissemination	53.000	49.031	92,51%
33- Studies and other subsidies	10.000	-	0,00%
34- Expenses relating to the Ombudsman's duties	2.400	2.150	89,58%
Title III - Total	254.400	195.442	76,82%



In 2025, the utilisation rate of appropriations under Title III was 76.82% (in 2024, this rate was 86.50%).

Table 10 - Commitments and payments in Title III

(EUR)					
Chapters	Commitments	Payments	%	Carry-over	%
30- Meetings and conferences	144.262	129.998	90,11%	14.263	9,89%
32- Expertise and information: acquisition, archiving, production and dissemination	49.031	20.725	42,27%	28.306	57,73%
33- Studies and other subsidies	-	-	0,00%	-	0,00%
34- Expenses relating to the Ombudsman's duties	2.150	2.150	100,00%	-	0,00%
Title III - Total	195.442	152.873	78,22%	42.570	21,78%

Payments totalled € 152 873, equivalent to 60% of the final appropriations and 78.2% of the commitments (in 2024, these rates were 60% and 69.36% respectively). Commitments carried over to 2026 in accordance with Article 12 of the Financial Regulation amounted to € 42 570, i.e 16.7% of the final appropriations and 21.8% of the commitments (in 2024, these rates were 26.5% and 60.6% respectively).

In Chapter 30 'Meetings and conferences', the majority of the carry-over relates to budget article 300 - Staff mission expenses (€ 13 063) for which legal obligations existed but invoices or expense claims were not received or had been received but not fully processed by the end of the financial year.

The only budget line which accounts for the amount of € 28 306 carried over under Chapter 32 ('Expertise and information: acquisition, archiving, production and dissemination') is budget item 3210- Communication and publications. This relates to the ongoing usability review of the Ombudsman's website, for which a budget transfer took place in the second semester of the year.

Additional details on the use of the appropriations of the year can be found in Annex 3.



3 - Appropriations carried over from 2024

The carry over of 2024 appropriations is shown in Table 11 below and in Annex 4.

Table 11 - Carry over of 2024 appropriations to 2025

(EUR)

Chapters	Carry-over from 2024 to 2025	Payments on carry-over	Cancellations
10- Members of the institution	11.585	5.052	6.533
12- Officials and temporary staff	-	-	-
14- Other staff and outside services	1.500	291	1.209
16- Other expenditure relating to persons working with the institution	56.745	32.685	24.059
Title I - Total	69.829	38.028	31.801
20- Buildings and associated costs	-	-	-
21- Data processing, equipment and furniture: purchase, hire and maintenance	198.914	196.554	2.360
23- Current administrative expenditure	55.576	42.949	12.627
Title II - Total	254.490	239.503	14.987
30- Meetings and conferences	27.972	18.158	9.813
32- Expertise and information: acquisition, archiving, production and dissemination	42.376	41.608	768
33- Studies and other subsidies	-	-	-
34- Expenses relating to the Ombudsman's duties	-	-	-
Title III - Total	70.348	59.767	10.582
Title I, II and III - Total	394.667	337.298	57.369

Automatic carry-overs of appropriations (Article 12 of the Financial Regulation) from the financial year 2024 to the financial year 2025, which totalled € 394 667, gave rise to payments amounting to € 337 298, i.e. a utilisation rate of 85.5% compared to 76.6% in 2024.



Annex 1: Estimated revenue, established entitlements and entitlements carried over

Line	Heading	Revenues 2025 (in EUR)			
		Initial Budget	Establ Rights of the Year	Recovered of Year	To be recovered of Year
3000	Tax on remunerations	915.272	888.300,11	888.300,11	-
3001	Special levies on remunerations	167.874	167.906,48	167.906,48	-
300	Taxes and levies	1.083.146	1.056.206,59	1.056.206,59	-
3010	Staff contributions to the pension scheme	880.110	1.058.115,01	1.058.115,01	-
3011	Transfer or purchase of pension rights by staff	p.m	-	-	-
3012	Contributions to the pension scheme by staff on leave	p.m	-	-	-
301	Contributions to the pension scheme	880.110	1.058.115,01	1.058.115,01	-
Chapter 30	Revenue from staff	1.963.256	2.114.321,60	2.114.321,60	-
310	Sale of immovable property — Assigned revenue	p.m	-	-	-
311	Sale of other property	p.m	-	-	-
312	Letting and subletting immovable property — Assigned revenue	p.m	-	-	-
Chapter 31	Revenue linked to property	p.m	-	-	-
3202	Revenue from the supply of goods, services and work for other Union institutions, agencies and bodies — Assigned revenue	p.m	-	-	-
320	Revenue from the supply of goods, services and work — Assigned revenue	p.m	-	-	-
321	Refunds by other institutions or bodies of mission allowances — Assigned revenue	p.m	-	-	-
322	Revenue from third parties in respect of goods, services or work — Assigned revenue	p.m	-	-	-
Chapter 32	Revenue from the supply of goods, services and work - assigned revenue	p.m	-	-	-
330	Repayment of amounts wrongly paid — Assigned revenue	p.m	-	-	-
331	Revenue for a specific purpose (income from foundations, subsidies, gifts and bequests) — Assigned revenue	p.m	-	-	-
333	Insurance payments received — Assigned revenue	p.m	-	-	-
338	Other revenue from administrative operations — Assigned revenue	p.m	-	-	-
339	Other revenue from administrative operations	p.m	598,26	-	598,26
Chapter 33	Other administrative revenue	p.m	598,26	-	598,26
Title 3	Administrative revenue	1.963.256	2.114.919,86	2.114.321,60	598,26
400	Revenue from investments, loans granted and bank accounts	p.m	15,84	15,84	-
Chapter 40	Revenue from investments and accounts	p.m	15,84	15,84	-
Title 4	Financial revenue, default interest and fines	p.m	15,84	15,84	-
668	Other contributions and refunds — Assigned revenue	p.m	-	-	-
Chapter 66	Other contributions and refunds	p.m	-	-	-
Title 6	Revenue, contributions and refunds related to Union policies	p.m	-	-	-
Total		1.963.256	2.114.935,70	2.114.337,44	598,26



Annex 2: Changes in appropriations for the year

in EUR

Budget Line	Initial Budget 2025	Increases / Reductions	Transfers (+/-)	Appropriations Year 2025	Carry Over by Right Y-1
Article 1 00 - Salaries, allowances and payments related to salaries	550.000	-10.000	0	550.000	0
Article 1 02 - Temporary allowances	0	0	0	0	0
Article 1 03 - Pensions	0	0	0	0	0
Article 1 04 - Mission expenses	50.000	0	0	50.000	11.585
Article 1 05 - Language and data-processing courses	2.000	0	0	2.000	0
Article 1 08 - Allowances and expenses on entering and leaving the service	235.000	0	0	235.000	0
Chapter 10 - Members of the institution	837.000	-10.000	0	837.000	11.585
12 00 Remuneration and allowances	10.867.000	-50.000	-22.000	10.795.000	0
12 02 Paid overtime	3.000	0	0	3.000	0
12 04 Entitlements on entering the service, transfer and leaving the service	30.000	0	0	30.000	0
Article 1 20 - Remuneration and other entitlements	10.900.000	-50.000	-22.000	10.828.000	0
12 20 Allowances for staff retired in the interests of the service	0	0	0	0	0
12 22 Allowances for staff whose service is terminated and special retirement scheme for officials and temporary staff	0	0	0	0	0
Article 1 22 - Allowances upon early termination of service	0	0	0	0	0
Chapter 12 - Officials and temporary staff	10.900.000	-50.000	-22.000	10.828.000	0
14 00 Other staff	560.000	-20.000	0	540.000	0
14 04 Graduate traineeships, grants and exchanges of officials	256.500	-1.000	0	255.500	1.500
Article 1 40 - Other staff and externals	816.500	-21.000	0	795.500	1.500
Chapter 14 - Other staff and outside services	816.500	-21.000	0	795.500	1.500
16 10 Expenditure on recruitment	3.000	0	-1.500	1.500	0
16 12 Further training	90.000	0	7.500	97.500	18.881
Article 1 61 - Expenditure relating to staff management	93.000	0	6.000	99.000	18.881
16 30 Social welfare	0	0	0	0	0
16 31 Mobility	18.000	0	0	18.000	0
16 32 Social contacts between members of staff and other social measures	7.000	0	0	7.000	1.136
Article 1 63 - Measures to assist the institution's staff	25.000	0	0	25.000	1.136
16 50 European Schools	133.488	0	0	133.488	0
16 51 Crèches and childcare facilities	50.000	0	0	50.000	36.728
Article 1 65 - Activities relating to all persons working with the institution	183.488	0	0	183.488	36.728
Chapter 16 - Other expenditure relating to persons working with the institution	301.488	0	6.000	307.488	56.745
TITLE I - EXPENDITURE RELATING TO PERSONS WORKING WITH THE INSTITUTION	12.854.988	-81.000	-16.000	12.767.988	69.829



Budget Line	Initial Budget 2025	Increases / Reductions	Transfers (+/-)	Appropriations Year 2025	Carry Over by Right Y-1
2000 Rent	1.058.000	0	-87.000	971.000	0
2001 Fitting-out and installation work	5.000	0	-5.000	0	0
2002 Cleaning, maintenance and energy consumption	215.594	0	88.900	304.494	0
2003 Security and surveillance of buildings	345.000	0	3.100	348.100	0
Article 2 0 0 - Buildings	1.623.594	0	0	1.623.594	0
Chapter 2 0 - Buildings and associated costs	1.623.594	0	0	1.623.594	0
2100 Purchase, servicing and maintenance of equipment and software, and related work	372.236	0	63.000	435.236	187.524
Article 2 1 0 - Equipment, operating costs and services relating to data processing and telecommunications	372.236	0	63.000	435.236	187.524
Article 2 1 2 - Furniture	3.000	0	0	3.000	738
Article 2 1 6 - Vehicles	12.000	0	0	12.000	10.652
Chapter 2 1 - Data processing, equipment and furniture: purchase, hire and maintenance	387.236	0	63.000	450.236	198.914
2300 Stationery, office supplies and miscellaneous consumables	3.500	0	0	3.500	545
2301 Postage on correspondence and delivery charges	2.500	0	0	2.500	936
2302 Telecommunications	4.500	0	0	4.500	1.125
2303 Financial charges	700	0	0	700	652
2304 Other expenditure	3.500	0	0	3.500	205
2305 Legal costs and damages	1.000	0	17.000	18.000	0
Article 2 3 0 - Administrative expenditure	15.700	0	17.000	32.700	3.463
Article 2 3 1 - Translation and interpretation	245.000	0	-125.000	120.000	20.247
Article 2 3 2 - Support for activities	179.000	0	60.000	239.000	31.866
Chapter 2 3 - Current administrative expenditure	439.700	0	-48.000	391.700	55.576
TITLE II - BUILDINGS, FURNITURE, EQUIPMENT AND MISCELLANEOUS OPERATING EXPENDITURE	2.450.530	0	15.000	2.465.530	254.490



Budget Line	Initial Budget 2025	Increases / Reductions	Transfers (+/-)	Appropriations Year 2025	Carry Over by Right Y-1
Article 3 0 0 - Staff mission expenses	102.000	0	0	102.000	24.704
Article 3 0 2 - Reception and representation expenses	2.000	0	0	2.000	0
Article 3 0 3 - Meetings in general	72.000	0	-17.000	55.000	0
Article 3 0 4 - Internal meetings	30.000	0	0	30.000	3.268
Chapter 3 0 - Meetings and conferences	206.000	0	-17.000	189.000	27.972
3 2 0 0 Documentation and library expenditure	1.000	0	0	1.000	276
3 2 0 1 Expenditure on archive resources	6.000	0	0	6.000	40.295
Article 3 2 0 - Acquisition of information and expertise	7.000	0	0	7.000	40.571
3 2 1 0 Communication and publications	28.000	0	18.000	46.000	1.805
Article 3 2 1 - Production and dissemination	28.000	0	18.000	46.000	1.805
Chapter 3 2 - Expertise and information: acquisition, archiving, production and dissemination	35.000	0	18.000	53.000	42.376
3 3 0 0 Studies	10.000	0	0	10.000	0
3 3 0 1 Relations with national/regional ombudsmen and other similar bodies and support for activities of the European Network of Ombudsmen	0	0	0	0	0
Article 3 3 0 - Studies and subsidies	10.000	0	0	10.000	0
Chapter 3 3 - Studies and other subsidies	10.000	0	0	10.000	0
3 4 0 0 Miscellaneous expenses	2.400	0	0	2.400	0
Article 3 4 0 - Expenses relating to the Ombudsman's duties	2.400	0	0	2.400	0
Chapter 3 4 - Expenses relating to the Ombudsman's duties	2.400	0	0	2.400	0
TITLE III - EXPENDITURE RESULTING FROM GENERAL FUNCTIONS CARRIED OUT BY THE INSTITUTION	253.400	0	1.000	254.400	70.348
GRAND TOTAL	15.558.918	-81.000	0	15.487.918	394.667



Annex 3: Use of appropriations for the year

in EUR

Budget Line	Appropriations Year 2025	Commitments	Payments	Available on Comt	Carry Over Right Y+1	Cancelled Appropriations
Article 1 0 0 - Salaries, allowances and payments related to salaries	540.000	516.541,88	516.541,88	-	-	23.458,12
Article 1 0 2 - Temporary allowances	-	-	-	-	-	-
Article 1 0 3 - Pensions	-	-	-	-	-	-
Article 1 0 4 - Mission expenses	50.000	24.000,00	20.167,09	3.832,91	3.832,91	26.000,00
Article 1 0 5 - Language and data-processing courses	2.000	-	-	-	-	2.000,00
Article 1 0 8 - Allowances and expenses on entering and leaving the service	235.000	102.520,28	102.520,28	-	-	132.479,72
Chapter 1 0 - Members of the institution	827.000	643.062,16	639.229,25	3.832,91	3.832,91	183.937,84
1 2 0 0 Remuneration and allowances	10.795.000	10.471.366,17	10.471.366,17	-	-	323.633,83
1 2 0 2 Paid overtime	3.000	-	-	-	-	3.000,00
1 2 0 4 Entitlements on entering the service, transfer and leaving the service	30.000	12.746,31	10.033,57	2.712,74	2.712,74	17.253,69
Article 1 2 0 - Remuneration and other entitlements	10.828.000	10.484.112,48	10.481.399,74	2.712,74	2.712,74	343.887,52
1 2 2 0 Allowances for staff retired in the interests of the service	-	-	-	-	-	-
1 2 2 2 Allowances for staff whose service is terminated and special retirement scheme for officials and temporary staff	-	-	-	-	-	-
Article 1 2 2 - Allowances upon early termination of service	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chapter 1 2 - Officials and temporary staff	10.828.000	10.484.112,48	10.481.399,74	2.712,74	2.712,74	343.887,52
1 4 0 0 Other staff	540.000	385.336,91	385.336,91	-	-	154.663,09
1 4 0 4 Graduate traineeships, grants and exchanges of officials	255.500	210.312,59	207.412,59	2.900,00	2.900,00	45.187,41
Article 1 4 0 - Other staff and externals	795.500	595.649,50	592.749,50	2.900,00	2.900,00	199.850,50
Chapter 1 4 - Other staff and outside services	795.500	595.649,50	592.749,50	2.900,00	2.900,00	199.850,50
1 6 1 0 Expenditure on recruitment	1.500	913,50	913,50	-	-	586,50
1 6 1 2 Further training	97.500	97.500,00	76.274,99	21.225,01	21.225,01	-
Article 1 6 1 - Expenditure relating to staff management	99.000	98.413,50	77.188,49	21.225,01	21.225,01	586,50
1 6 3 0 Social welfare	-	-	-	-	-	-
1 6 3 1 Mobility	18.000	13.235,89	12.745,89	490,00	490,00	4.764,11
1 6 3 2 Social contacts between members of staff and other social measures	7.000	6.387,24	5.254,49	1.132,75	1.132,75	612,76
Article 1 6 3 - Measures to assist the institution's staff	25.000	19.623,13	18.000,38	1.622,75	1.622,75	5.376,87
1 6 5 0 European Schools	133.488	133.488,00	122.975,92	10.512,08	10.512,08	-
1 6 5 1 Crèches and childcare facilities	50.000	50.000,00	34.284,00	15.716,00	15.716,00	-
Article 1 6 5 - Activities relating to all persons working with the institution	183.488	183.488,00	157.259,92	26.228,08	26.228,08	-
Chapter 1 6 - Other expenditure relating to persons working with the institution	307.488	301.524,63	252.448,79	49.075,84	49.075,84	5.963,37
TITLE I - EXPENDITURE RELATING TO PERSONS WORKING WITH THE INSTITUTION	12.757.988	12.024.348,77	11.965.827,28	58.521,49	58.521,49	733.639,23



Budget Line	Appropriations Year 2025	Commitments	Payments	Available on Comt	Carry Over Right Y+1	Cancelled Appropriations
2 0 0 Rent	971.000	970.551,13	911.551,13	59.000,00	59.000,00	448,87
2 0 1 Fitting-out and installation work	-	-	-	-	-	0,00
2 0 2 Cleaning, maintenance and energy consumption	304.494	304.370,34	304.370,34	-	-	123,66
2 0 3 Security and surveillance of buildings	348.100	348.077,72	348.077,72	-	-	22,28
Article 2 0 0 - Buildings	1.623.594	1.622.999,19	1.563.999,19	59.000,00	59.000,00	594,81
Chapter 2 0 - Buildings and associated costs	1.623.594	1.622.999,19	1.563.999,19	59.000,00	59.000,00	594,81
2 1 0 Purchase, servicing and maintenance of equipment and software, and related work	435.236	434.392,80	350.380,90	84.011,90	84.011,90	843,20
Article 2 1 0 - Equipment, operating costs and services relating to data processing and telecommunications	435.236	434.392,80	350.380,90	84.011,90	84.011,90	843,20
Article 2 1 2 - Furniture	3.000	2.722,17	1.219,37	1.502,80	1.502,80	277,83
Article 2 1 6 - Vehicles	12.000	6.121,06	5.701,06	420,00	420,00	5.878,94
Chapter 2 1 - Data processing, equipment and furniture: purchase, hire and maintenance	450.236	443.236,03	357.301,33	85.934,70	85.934,70	6.999,97
2 3 0 Stationery, office supplies and miscellaneous consumables	3.500	3.497,42	2.339,64	1.157,78	1.157,78	2,58
2 3 0 1 Postage on correspondence and delivery charges	2.500	2.500,00	1.100,00	1.400,00	1.400,00	-
2 3 0 2 Telecommunications	4.500	3.145,12	895,12	2.250,00	2.250,00	1.354,88
2 3 0 3 Financial charges	700	700,00	42,00	658,00	658,00	-
2 3 0 4 Other expenditure	3.500	2.904,08	2.275,13	628,95	628,95	595,92
2 3 0 5 Legal costs and damages	18.000	17.000,00	5.000,00	12.000,00	12.000,00	1.000,00
Article 2 3 0 - Administrative expenditure	32.700	29.746,62	11.651,89	18.094,73	18.094,73	2.953,38
Article 2 3 1 - Translation and interpretation	120.000	120.000,00	108.521,00	11.479,00	11.479,00	-
Article 2 3 2 - Support for activities	239.000	232.109,00	208.109,00	24.000,00	24.000,00	6.891,00
Chapter 2 3 - Current administrative expenditure	391.700	381.855,62	328.281,89	53.573,73	53.573,73	9.844,38
TITLE II - BUILDINGS, FURNITURE, EQUIPMENT AND MISCELLANEOUS OPERATING EXPENDITURE	2.465.530	2.448.090,84	2.249.582,41	198.508,43	198.508,43	17.439,16



Budget Line	Appropriations Year 2025	Commitments	Payments	Available on Comt	Carry Over Right Y+1	Cancelled Appropriations
Article 3 0 0 - Staff mission expenses	102.000	91.944,79	78.881,52	13.063,27	13.063,27	10.055,21
Article 3 0 2 - Reception and representation expenses	2.000	81,00	81,00	-	-	1.919,00
Article 3 0 3 - Meetings in general	55.000	39.261,18	39.061,18	200,00	200,00	15.738,82
Article 3 0 4 - Internal meetings	30.000	12.974,57	11.974,57	1.000,00	1.000,00	17.025,43
Chapter 3 0 - Meetings and conferences	189.000	144.261,54	129.998,27	14.263,27	14.263,27	44.738,46
3 2 0 0 Documentation and library expenditure	1.000	147,69	147,69	-	-	852,31
3 2 0 1 Expenditure on archive resources	6.000	4.958,00	4.958,00	-	-	1.042,00
Article 3 2 0 - Acquisition of information and expertise	7.000	5.105,69	5.105,69	-	-	1.894,31
3 2 1 0 Communication and publications	46.000	43.925,23	15.618,99	28.306,24	28.306,24	2.074,77
Article 3 2 1 - Production and dissemination	46.000	43.925,23	15.618,99	28.306,24	28.306,24	2.074,77
Chapter 3 2 - Expertise and information: acquisition, archiving, production and dissemination	53.000	49.030,92	20.724,68	28.306,24	28.306,24	3.969,08
3 3 0 0 Studies	10.000	-	-	-	-	10.000,00
3 3 0 1 Relations with national/regional ombudsmen and other similar bodies and support for activities of the European Network of Ombudsmen	-	-	-	-	-	-
Article 3 3 0 - Studies and subsidies	10.000	-	-	-	-	10.000,00
Chapter 3 3 - Studies and other subsidies	10.000	0	0	-	-	10.000,00
3 4 0 0 Miscellaneous expenses	2.400	2.150,00	2.150,00	-	-	250,00
Article 3 4 0 - Expenses relating to the Ombudsman's duties	2.400	2.150,00	2.150,00	-	-	250,00
Chapter 3 4 - Expenses relating to the Ombudsman's duties	2.400	2.150,00	2.150,00	-	-	250,00
TITLE III - EXPENDITURE RESULTING FROM GENERAL FUNCTIONS CARRIED OUT BY THE INSTITUTION	254.400	195.442,46	152.872,95	42.569,51	42.569,51	58.957,54
GRAND TOTAL	15.477.918	14.667.882,07	14.368.282,64	299.599,43	299.599,43	810.035,93



Annex 4: Use of appropriations carried-over from 2024

in EUR

Budget Line	CARRY OVER BY RIGHT		CANCELLED APPROPRIATIONS	CARRY OVER BY DECISION
	Carry over by right	Payments CO Right		
Article 1 0 4 - Mission expenses	11.584,68	5.051,54	6.533,14	-
Chapter 1 0 - Members of the institution	11.584,68	5.051,54	6.533,14	-
1 2 0 4 Entitlements on entering the service, transfer and leaving the service	-	-	-	-
Article 1 2 0 - Remuneration and other entitlements	-	-	-	-
Chapter 1 2 - Officials and temporary staff	-	-	-	-
1 4 0 4 Graduate traineeships, grants and exchanges of officials	1.500,00	291,26	1.208,74	-
Article 1 4 0 - Other staff and externals	1.500,00	291,26	1.208,74	-
Chapter 1 4 - Other staff and outside services	1.500,00	291,26	1.208,74	-
1 6 1 0 Expenditure on recruitment	-	-	-	-
1 6 1 2 Further training	18.880,99	12.885,76	5.995,23	-
Article 1 6 1 - Expenditure relating to staff management	18.880,99	12.885,76	5.995,23	-
1 6 3 2 Social contact between members of staff and and other social measures	1.135,70	1.127,69	8,01	-
Article 1 6 3 - Measures to assist the institution's staff	1.135,70	1.127,69	8,01	-
1 6 5 1 Crèches and childcare facilities	36.728,00	18.672,00	18.056,00	-
Article 1 6 5 - Measures to assist the institution's staff	36.728,00	18.672,00	18.056,00	-
Chapter 1 6 - Other expenditure relating to persons working with the institution	56.744,69	32.685,45	24.059,24	-
TITLE I - EXPENDITURE RELATING TO PERSONS WORKING WITH THE INSTITUTION	69.829,37	38.028,25	31.801,12	-

Budget Line	CARRY OVER BY RIGHT		CANCELLED APPROPRIATIONS	CARRY OVER BY DECISION
	Carry over by right	Payments CO Right		
2 0 0 1 Fitting-out and installation work	-	-	-	-
Article 2 0 0 - Buildings	-	-	-	-
Chapter 2 0 - Buildings and associated costs	-	-	-	-
2 1 0 0 Purchase, servicing and maintenance of equipment and software, and related work	187.524,28	186.506,99	1.017,29	-
Article 2 1 0 - Equipment, operating costs and services relating to data processing and telecommunications	187.524,28	186.506,99	1.017,29	-
Article 2 1 2 - Furniture	737,50	737,50	-	-
Article 2 1 6 - Vehicles	10.652,29	9.309,50	1.342,79	-
Chapter 2 1 - Data processing, equipment and furniture: purchase, hire and maintenance	198.914,07	196.553,99	2.360,08	-
2 3 0 0 Stationery, office supplies and miscellaneous consumables	545,07	456,40	88,67	-
2 3 0 1 Postage on correspondence and delivery charges	936,02	620,60	315,42	-
2 3 0 2 Telecommunications	1.125,00	595,77	529,23	-
2 3 0 3 Financial charges	652,00	336,15	315,85	-
2 3 0 4 Other expenditure	205,00	20,00	185,00	-
Article 2 3 0 - Administrative expenditure	3.463,09	2.028,92	1.434,17	-
Article 2 3 1 - Translation and interpretation	20.246,50	16.976,40	3.270,10	-
Article 2 3 2 - Support for activities	31.866,00	23.943,64	7.922,36	-
Chapter 2 3 - Current administrative expenditure	55.575,59	42.948,96	12.626,63	-
TITLE II - BUILDINGS, FURNITURE, EQUIPMENT AND MISCELLANEOUS OPERATING EXPENDITURE	254.489,66	239.502,95	14.986,71	-



Budget Line	CARRY OVER BY RIGHT		CANCELLED APPROPRIATIONS	CARRY OVER BY DECISION
	Carry over by right	Payments CO Right		
Article 3 0 0 - Staff mission expenses	24.704,02	15.203,66	9.500,36	-
Article 3 0 3 - Meetings in general	-	-	-	-
Article 3 0 4 - Internal meetings	3.267,89	2.954,83	313,06	-
Chapter 3 0 - Meetings and conferences	27.971,91	18.158,49	9.813,42	-
3 2 0 0 Documentation and library expenditure	276,09	113,28	162,81	-
3 2 0 1 Expenditure on archive resources	40.295,20	40.295,20	-	-
Article 3 2 0 - Acquisition of information and expertise	40.571,29	40.408,48	162,81	-
3 2 1 0 Communication and publications	1.804,95	1.199,65	605,30	-
Article 3 2 1 - Production and dissemination	1.804,95	1.199,65	605,30	-
Chapter 3 2 - Expertise and information: acquisition, archiving, production and dissemination	42.376,24	41.608,130	768,11	-
TITLE III - EXPENDITURE RESULTING FROM GENERAL FUNCTIONS CARRIED OUT BY THE INSTITUTION	70.348,15	59.766,62	10.581,53	-
GRAND TOTAL	394.667,18	337.297,82	57.369,36	-

**European Ombudsman
Annual Report
2025**

DRAFT

Table of contents

Foreword	3	
1. Strategy	5	
2. 2025 at a glance	6	
3. Key topics	7	
3.1. Participatory decision making		7
3.2. Accountability in decision making		8
3.3. Transparency		9
3.4. Integrity standards		10
3.5. Fundamental rights		12
3.6. EU personnel		13
3.7. Grants and contracts		13
4. Complaints and inquiries: how we help the public	14	
4.1. Type and source of complaints		15
4.2. Against whom?		18
4.3. About what?		19
4.4. Results achieved		19
4.5. Impact and achievements		20
5. Cooperation with institutions	22	
5.1. Relations with the EU		22
5.2. UN Disability Rights Convention		26
6. Communication	28	
6.1. Ombudsman 30 Year Anniversary		29
6.2. Award for Good Administration		30
7. European Network of Ombudsmen	31	
7.1. European Network of Ombudsmen Conference		32
8. Artificial intelligence	33	
9. Resources	34	
9.1. Budget		34
9.2. Use of resources		34
10. How to contact the European Ombudsman	35	

Foreword

In February 2025, I started my mandate with the firm commitment that defending the rights of citizens across Europe would be at the heart of my work. One year later, in a rapidly changing Europe, this commitment remains as vital as ever before. Our shared values and democratic systems are facing significant challenges — geopolitical tensions, technological disruption, and a growing strain on public trust.

In times of uncertainty, citizens rightly expect more: more transparency, more accountability, and more meaningful engagement. At the same time, institutions and decision-makers often find themselves under pressure, navigating complex procedures while striving to deliver tangible results. The distance between expectations and actual outcomes can widen quickly.

In this defining moment, the work of the European Ombudsman proves to be not only relevant, but essential, as it stands as a fundamental safeguard — one that upholds accountability and protects citizens' rights when this is needed the most.

As an independent and impartial voice, the Ombudsman helps bridge the gap between citizens and institutions. By doing so, we strengthen the bond of trust that not only sustains our democratic institutions but also ensures that the European project remains faithful to its core values and principles.

The *Omnibus I* inquiry clearly illustrates the challenges facing European decision-making in a climate of permanent crisis management. As EU policymaking accelerates in response to geopolitical and technological pressures, urgency becomes the norm. Yet speed cannot come at the expense of legitimacy. My findings showed that swift legislative action and the respect for EU's core principles must go hand in hand. Faster laws still require firm democratic foundations.

Promoting and safeguarding good administration is central to meeting these challenges. My meetings in 2025 with the Heads of EU institutions marked an important step in strengthening a solution-oriented approach. Through constructive, trust-based dialogue, we support institutions in delivering results while upholding participation, transparency and accountability — the essential standards of sound administrative practice.

Transparency is another fundamental component of good administration. A significant portion of our work focuses on ensuring public access to documents, enabling citizens to follow and scrutinise decision-making processes. Here, improvements remain necessary, particularly in the timely and consistent handling of access requests. Strengthening these practices would reinforce accountability and public trust.

As our office marked three decades of service in 2025, we were also confronted with a record number of complaints. This increase may reflect greater awareness of both our role and of citizens' rights under EU law. It also mirrors broader developments of the digital era: increased accessibility to administrative processes, evolving expectations of responsiveness, and the growing impact of artificial intelligence on public administration. These dynamics bring important opportunities, but also new demands.

My predecessors often described this office as a small institution with a big mandate. That mandate is now framed by the strategy I have adopted, built on three pillars: listening carefully to citizens' complaints, using our decision-making powers with sound judgement and impact,



Foreword

and strengthening partnerships that enhance the quality of EU administration. Together, these priorities form the foundation of our work that is building a constructive bridge between Europeans and EU institutions.

Operational excellence is another central component of this strategy. In 2026, we will focus on adapting our internal organisation to evolving demands, strengthening our capacity in artificial intelligence, and ensuring that appropriate safeguards accompany technological developments.

Clear communication remains equally essential. We increasingly act as “qualified translators” between institutions and citizens, explaining complex administrative processes in accessible language. Promoting plain language is not a choice of style. It is a matter of accessibility and fairness.

Finally, our commitment also shapes our work within the European Network of Ombudsmen, which I am proud to coordinate. Our cooperation across Europe strengthens administrative standards and fosters shared learning. As we prepare to mark the Network’s 30th anniversary in 2026, we will use this milestone to highlight our collective contribution to upholding good administration throughout Europe.

As we advance into 2026, our responsibility as guardians of fairness, transparency, and accountability is being tested by various challenges that require vigilance and leadership. We must continue to champion good administration, not as an abstract ideal, but as the bedrock of a Union that listens to its citizens. At the European Ombudsman, our determination, cooperation, and the unwavering commitment to our shared European values will be strengthened to uphold democracy – one complaint, one solution, and one decision at a time.

Teresa Anjinho

1. Strategy

Building trust, driving change – European Ombudsman strategy for 2025-2029

The European Ombudswoman published her strategy for the Office for the years 2025-2029 in November. This strategy will guide the Office's actions from its complaint-handling to its external activities, communication, and internal administration.

There are four overall objectives – empower citizens, effect positive change, strengthen partnerships, and foster operational quality and efficiency:

1. Empower citizens: To raise awareness of the role of the European Ombudsman among citizens and civil society and ensure their voices are heard and rights upheld.
2. Effect positive change: To drive institutional change and strengthen good administration by promoting fairness, integrity, transparency, and trust.
3. Strengthen partnerships: To reach out and nurture collaborative relationships with stakeholders that can support and enhance the Ombudsman's effectiveness in protecting citizens' rights and promoting good administration.
4. Foster operational quality and efficiency: To promote a forward looking, adaptable and service-minded Ombudsman's Office that exemplifies best practices, embraces innovation, and remains responsive to evolving trends and needs.

These are underpinned by the principles and values of the office, including treating people and organisations justly and equitably, upholding the highest standards of professional conduct, and promoting constructive dialogue and cooperation with institutions and stakeholders.

Implementation of the strategy will be monitored through an annual plan alongside measurable yearly goals to help achieve its objectives and priorities.

2. 2025 at a glance

At a glance

Key statistics

- 3 490 new complaints handled; increase of 54% compared to the year 2024
- 492 inquiries opened: increase of 19% compared to the year 2024
- Transparency issues accounted for 35% of inquiries

Key cases

Revolving doors

The first own-initiative inquiry launched by the Ombudswoman focuses on how EU agencies manage revolving doors. With agencies feeding into policies that concern issues from medicines to food safety to defence, it is important that the rules governing moves by EU staff to the private sector are implemented properly.

Urgent decision making

Among the key issues examined by the Ombudswoman in 2025 was how to ensure accountability when decisions are taken in an urgent manner. Three inquiries explored this issue, which related to legislative proposals to simplify rules for farmers, to simplify corporate sustainability rules, and to counter migrant smuggling.

Artificial Intelligence

Another key topic of inquiries in 2025 concerned AI, including how the European Commission ensures transparency, inclusiveness, and accountability in the adoption of harmonised standards for artificial intelligence.

Key speeches

“ *Ombudsmen are not merely complaint handlers or problem solvers. We are instigators and educators.*

[Welcome address to European Network of Ombudsmen conference 2025](#)

“ *«...» disability rights are not special rights. They are equal rights – and protecting them is a measure of the Union’s integrity, its fairness, and its commitment to every individual. Leading by example. Ombudsmen are not merely complaint handlers or problem solvers. We are instigators and educators.*

[Work of the European Ombudsman in relation to persons with disabilities](#)

“ *By working together—by insisting on transparency, fairness, and accountability — we strengthen the rule of law.*

[Monitoring compliance with the rule of law by the European Ombudsman](#)

3. Key topics

The Ombudsman helps people, businesses, and organisations facing problems with the EU administration. These can include difficulties around citizen participation in decision making, delays or refusals in providing access to documents, integrity issues, violations of fundamental rights, and contractual issues. The following sections provide an overview of key inquiries related to particular areas.

3.1. Participatory decision making

Participatory decision making was a key matter for the European Ombudsman Office in 2025 as civil society organisations filed complaints about the way the European Commission simplified existing legislation or introduced new legislation to meet new policy priorities.

Recommendation on *Omnibus I*, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), and countering migrant smuggling

In November, [the Ombudswoman issued a finding of maladministration after having identified a number of procedural shortcomings in the way four pieces of legislation were prepared](#). The legislative drafts concerned corporate sustainability reporting for companies, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), and countering migrant smuggling.

The inquiry found that, in the preparation of these legislative proposals, the Commission did not comply with certain parts of its own Better Regulation rules, which are meant to ensure law-making is evidence-based, transparent, and inclusive.

The procedural shortcomings identified in the Ombudswoman's inquiries included failing to fully justify the urgency of the legislative proposals to the public and failing to document reasoning for deviating from internal rules on law making. There were also other problems specific to each legislative proposal.

In two forward-looking recommendations to the Commission, the Ombudswoman asked it to ensure a predictable, consistent, and non-arbitrary application of the Better Regulation rules and that future urgent preparation of legislative proposals is always transparent, evidence-based, and inclusive.

The Ombudswoman also made a number of suggestions in light of the upcoming revision of the Better Regulation rules. These include clarifying minimum standards for stakeholder consultations in urgent procedures and that climate assessments should be carried out for all legislative proposals.

The Ombudswoman asked the Commission to send a detailed reply to her recommendation by 25 February 2026.

Case 983/2025/MAS – the “Omnibus” case, **2031/2024/VB** – the “migration” case, and **1379/2024/MIK** – the “CAP” case

Ombudswoman welcomes EIB decision to proactively publish more environmental and social data

Following an inquiry by the Ombudsman Office, the European Investment Bank (EIB) said it would start publishing its environmental and social assessments for projects located outside the EU that are likely to have a significant impact on the environment ahead of the adoption of financing decisions by its Board of Directors. This should allow the public to more meaningfully participate in the assessment of the environmental and social aspects of projects the EIB is considering funding.

3. Key topics

The measures were implemented after an [inquiry concerning the Bank's refusal to give public access to the environmental and social assessment of a project in Nairobi, Kenya](#) as well as its general practice of not publishing such information until after financing decisions have been taken. The Ombudswoman welcomed the new measures.

Case **2252/2022/OAM**

3.2. Accountability in decision making

Inquiry concerning the development of EU standards for artificial intelligence

The Ombudswoman opened an inquiry [into how the European Commission ensures transparency, inclusiveness, and accountability in the adoption of harmonised standards for artificial intelligence \(AI\)](#). The complainant, a civil society organisation, was concerned by the fact that the standardisation bodies responsible for developing the standards for the Commission – the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) and the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardisation (CENELEC) – are not required to publicly disclose information about the individuals working on them and do not publish the minutes of their meetings. The complainant also argued that the Commission had failed to ensure a balanced representation of interests in the standardisation process. The Commission asked the standardisation bodies to create harmonised standards and ensure they will contribute to minimising the risks stemming from AI to safety and fundamental rights. The Ombudswoman asked the Commission about the composition of the group preparing the standards, the transparency rules applied by standardisation bodies, how the Commission manages and monitors the standardisation process, and how it will review its outcomes.

Case **1974/2025/MIK**

Commission fails to address delays in the authorisation procedure for chemicals

The Ombudswoman closed her Office's inquiry into how the European Commission decides on applications by companies for [authorisations for particularly dangerous chemicals](#) and concluded that it had failed to address the issue of lengthy delays in the process. The Ombudsman Office had found maladministration in 2024 and asked the Commission to reduce the lengthy time it takes to prepare draft authorisation decisions under the EU Regulation on the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH).

However, the Commission's response did not address the recommendation from the Ombudsman Office to review its lengthy internal procedures, nor did it accept the recommendation that applications containing insufficient information be promptly dismissed so that those companies can no longer use the dangerous substances in the EU.

The Ombudswoman reiterated that the Commission needs to take further steps to fully implement the goals of the REACH regulation and recent case law to avoid lengthy delays in the risk management of chemical substances.

Case **OI/2/2023/MIK**

3. Key topics

3.3. Transparency

Transparency issues, and particularly access to documents requests, continued to account for the greatest proportion (35%) of inquiries in 2025. The Ombudswoman aims to ensure that the law governing access to EU documents (Regulation 1049/2001) is applied in a rigorous and fair manner by the EU administration. This means that those requesting documents should either get the documents they are looking for in a timely manner or receive well-reasoned justifications for access not being granted.

The European Commission's refusal to give public access to the risk assessment report of X

With the Digital Services Act being a key piece of EU legislation for establishing accountability in digital services and ensuring a safe online environment for users, the Ombudswoman found maladministration in the European Commission's [refusal to analyse the risk assessment of social media platform X for disclosure](#). When a journalist requested access to X's report, the Commission refused, arguing that it could be generally presumed that disclosure could undermine the company's commercial interests as well as an ongoing investigation into its compliance with the Digital Services Act. The Ombudswoman found that it was unreasonable for the Commission to apply a general presumption of non-disclosure. While X itself made the report public with redactions, the Ombudswoman recommended that the Commission conduct an individual assessment of the document for disclosure. The Ombudswoman asked that the assessment aim at granting the journalist the widest access possible, possibly including to the redactions made by the company.

Case [1746/2024/MIG](#)

Inquiry into how Commission handled access request for text message concerning Mercosur negotiations

The Ombudswoman opened an inquiry into how the Commission handled an access to documents request [for a text message its President received from the French President](#) regarding trade negotiations with Mercosur countries. The Commission explained to the complainant, a journalist, that based on the internal rules in place, it had assessed that there was no obligation to register the text message in question. In addition, the 'disappearing messages' feature was activated on the President's phone. The Ombudsman's Office asked to review documents that detail the steps taken by the Commission in dealing with this access request. The Office also asked to review documents that explain the Commission's policies on corporate mobile phone use and the retention of text and instant messages.

Case [2482/2025/NH](#)

Delays in dealing with access to documents requests

In 2025, there continued to be inquiries concerning lengthy delays by the Commission in dealing with access requests, including a request concerning the [meeting minutes of the Network and Information Systems Cooperation Group](#), a group hosted by the Commission to discuss cybersecurity matters. Although the Commission ultimately granted wide access to the documents in question, it responded to the complainant's request for a review of its initial decision (confirmatory application) only after almost a year had passed.

Case [228/2024/NH](#)

3. Key topics

Throughout the year, several Ombudsman Office inquiries led to improved access for people and organisations that requested documents.

1/ One case concerned a request for public access to documents related to the [Commission's proposal for applying the 'rule of law procedure' in Hungary](#). The Commission identified fourteen documents as falling within the scope of the request and disclosed all but parts of three documents. Following an intervention by the Ombudswoman, the Commission gave full access to the requested documents.

Case 444/2024/PVV

2/ An inquiry concerning the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) resulted in the agency moving from granting access to two of 76 documents related to [reception conditions in several Cypriot migration management facilities](#) to granting access to 64 of the remaining documents.

Case 724/2024/AML

3/ Two inquiries related to the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) led to the agency granting wider access to exchanges it had with the [Commission on a proposal for a regulation](#) to prevent and combat online child sexual abuse (CSAM) and to [emails it exchanged with an organisation](#) that works on fighting online child sexual abuse.

Case reference 1372/2024/OAM

4/ The European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) updated its internal policy on dealing with requests for public access to documents to ensure that those requesting documents are provided with a list of the documents that ENISA identifies in cases where no or only very limited access can be granted. The improvements, which the Ombudswoman welcomed as being citizen-friendly, followed an [inquiry related to an access to documents request](#) concerning an investigation by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) into misconduct by one of ENISA's staff members.

Case 1689/2024/MIG

3.4. Integrity standards

How EU agencies deal with 'revolving door' cases

The Ombudswoman opened an own-initiative inquiry into the [handling of revolving doors by EU agencies](#). These agencies contribute to the implementation of EU policies across a wide range of areas. The inquiry is focused on 15 agencies whose work involves significant contact with the private sector and is examining how they managed recent revolving doors cases concerning members of management boards and senior staff. The agencies were also asked for information on the policies they have in place for managing such cases, including rules on intended post-mandate and post-service activities, as well as the criteria and guidance used to assess post-employment restrictions.

The inquiry builds on previous own-initiative work by the Ombudsman Office into how the European Commission manages moves by EU staff to related work in the private sector. The aim is to ensure that there is a common understanding of what revolving doors are and that the rules for mitigating potential situations of conflicts of interest are applied uniformly. The results of the inquiry are expected in early 2026.

Case OI/5/2025/KR

3. Key topics

Revolving doors at the European Commission

The Ombudsman Office's work on revolving doors over the years has alerted the EU institutions to the importance of managing this issue in a strong and coherent manner. In 2025, this effect was made evident when the Commission carried out a robust assessment of [whether a former EU official from its competition department could work on a specific competition case dealt with by the Commission for their new employer](#). Following its assessment, which looked into the real, potential, and perceived conflicts of interest, the Commission concluded that the former staff member should not work on the case in question. The Ombudswoman welcomed this approach in her decision closing an inquiry into this matter.

Case **2231/2024/KR**

European Commission improves conflict of interest measures for experts evaluating European Defence Fund projects

Following a separate inquiry, [the Commission put in place measures to ensure that external experts who evaluate project proposals for the European Defence Fund \(EDF\) do not have any conflicts of interest](#). The measures include asking expert candidates to list family members with links to the defence industry and to outline their direct financial investments in defence companies. Other steps included enhancing the IT tool for managing the evaluation of EDF proposals so that it can automatically search for potential conflict of interest details beyond the information already given by the experts themselves. The Ombudswoman welcomed the new measures.

Case **OI/5/2023/KR**

European Commission implements measures on staff work trips paid for by third parties

A further inquiry [led to the Commission implementing measures to ensure that staff work trips paid for by third parties do not give rise to conflicts of interest](#). The Commission agreed to record the nature of third parties paying for staff work trips and the costs borne by them, as well as its assessments of potential and perceived conflicts of interest. The inquiry had examined how the Commission assessed and mitigated potential conflicts of interest related to work travel following revelations that a former Commission director-general travelled to Qatar and received hospitality paid for by third parties. The Ombudswoman welcomed the Commission's constructive engagement on the matter.

Case **OI/1/2024/KR**

3. Key topics

3.5. Fundamental rights

Monitoring of EU funds granted in the context of border management operations

The Ombudsman Office closed an inquiry into [how the European Commission ensures fundamental rights compliance in the context of EU funds granted to Greece for border management](#) in early 2025 and made some suggestions for improvement. In particular, she urged the Commission to put in place guidelines for assessing compliance with fundamental rights throughout the course of the programme's implementation. There were also suggestions about the transparency of the monitoring process and measures to strengthen the involvement of civil society.

In response to the suggestions, the Commission said it would continue working closely with the Greek authorities to ensure a robust system for monitoring investigations concerning fundamental rights allegations and ensuring the necessary follow up. It also said that it would request the Greek authorities publish other relevant documents to ensure greater transparency and request more meaningful participation for civil society organisations.

Case 1418/2023/VS

Respect for human rights in the context of the EU-Tunisia Memorandum of Understanding

In response to an Ombudsman Office inquiry into how the Commission intends to [guarantee respect for human rights in the context of the EU-Tunisia Memorandum of Understanding](#), the Commission said it would encourage relevant EU delegations, implementing partners, and partner countries to take all steps necessary to ensure that fundamental rights are upheld, including setting up complaints mechanisms to receive allegations about breaches of human rights.

Case reference OI/2/2024/MHZ

The time taken by the European Commission to conclude an infringement procedure

The Ombudswoman found maladministration in [the time taken by the Commission to conclude an infringement procedure – opened in 2016 – against Spain about its compliance with EU environmental noise rules](#). The finding followed a complaint by a group of citizens concerned by airport noise in Spain. The Ombudswoman found that there was a period of three years showing no trace of any action taken by the Commission. The Ombudswoman noted that given the major public health implications, she expected the Commission to deal with the infringement procedure as a matter of priority.

Case 410/2025/EIS

Failure to provide clear information about the applicable deadline for submitting a complaint

Following an inquiry, the Ombudswoman asked the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) in future to ensure that when it informs a person concerned of the closure of an investigation, [it provides timely and clear information on the possibility to turn to the Controller of Procedural Guarantees](#). This suggestion came after the inquiry showed that OLAF failed to provide clear information to the firm concerned about the deadline for submitting a complaint. This meant that the firm submitted the complaint after the deadline, and the Controller rejected it.

Case 1827/2024/FA

3. Key topics

3.6. EU personnel

The Ombudswoman dealt with a number of complaints concerning the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) during 2025. In several inquiries, the Ombudswoman found that EPSO had acted reasonably, but in one inquiry she found [maladministration for how it handled a complaint related to technical issues](#) during remote testing in a staff selection procedure. In another inquiry, the Ombudswoman suggested that EPSO in future give clear and complete replies to candidates who have requested a review. The reply should inform them whether a review has taken place and about the reasons for EPSO's decision. In a further inquiry, the Ombudswoman [found maladministration for how EPSO dealt with a request from a candidate who had recently given birth](#) and wanted to reschedule an oral test.

Dealing with harassment allegations

In 2025, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) said it would implement suggestions from the Ombudsman Office on how to improve its [investigations into harassment allegations](#). This follows a decision in the previous year in which the Ombudsman Office found maladministration for the time it took OLAF – almost three years – to conclude an investigation into alleged harassment by a staff member at an EU agency. In its reply to the Ombudsman Office, OLAF said it agreed that it needs dedicated rules on investigations into harassment allegations and that it also aims to issue an internal guide on best practices and standards for these investigations.

Case **2414/2023/PB**

3.7. Grants and contracts

Maladministration in the handling of a grant application and concerns regarding a potential conflict of interest

Following an inquiry, the Ombudswoman asked the European Commission to in future avoid [rejecting a grant application](#) on the basis of an obvious clerical error. The findings came after the Commission turned down a grant application – rather than ask for clarifications – because the applicant sought EU funding above the maximum percentage allowed under the call. The Ombudswoman also found that the Commission did not adequately assess the allegations of the complainant concerning a potential conflict of interest in the awarding of the grant in question.

Case **1846/2023/FA**

Delays by the European Commission to handle payments to a service provider and its subcontractor

The Ombudswoman opened an inquiry into the length of time it was taking the Commission [to process payments to a service provider](#) in the context of their work on the "Strengthening the Global Gateway Investment Agenda Development and Implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean" programme. The delay affected payment to the subcontractor who provided services until October 2024 but still had not been paid by May 2025 when he submitted a complaint to the Ombudsman Office. As a result of the Ombudswoman's inquiry, the Commission resolved the matter, apologised for the delay, and paid the outstanding amount and related interest to the service provider who then paid the complainant.

Case **OI/2/2025/LA**

4. Complaints and inquiries: how we help the public

The core function of the European Ombudsman is to help people and organisations that face problems with the EU administration by dealing with the complaints they submit. Through inquiries, the Ombudsman not only aims to address these problems but also seeks to promote good administrative practices within the EU institutions.

The Ombudsman Office takes a solution-oriented approach to dealing with complaints. To achieve this, the Office prioritises engagement with the EU institutions, bodies, and agencies – a method that fosters trust with the EU administration while allowing the Ombudsman to conduct its oversight tasks in a fully independent manner.

The Office's diverse team of case handlers and the multilingual website reflect the Ombudsman's commitment to helping those seeking assistance in all 24 official languages of the EU.

While the Ombudsman is not always in a position to inquire into all complaints received, the Office nonetheless tries to help those who seek assistance.

In 2025, there was a steep rise in the number of complaints to the Ombudsman Office – 56% more than in 2024. This is understood to be partially due to complainants learning about the Ombudsman's existence through their use of AI tools.

It is extremely positive that there is greater public awareness about citizens' rights and our work and that this heightened awareness has led to an increase of 19% in inquiries opened by the Ombudsman over the past year. At the same time, the surge in complaints and the work needed to process and analyse them has put a significant strain on the Office's resources.

This is especially challenging when the advice provided by AI is not accurate, leading – among other things – to a steep rise in inadmissible complaints (+86%). These complaints are often deemed inadmissible because the complainant has not initially turned to the institution in question. While in previous years the Office would have advised the complainant to turn to the relevant institution first, with many of these new complaints, the institution mentioned is in many instances not actually responsible for the matter at hand.

Other complaints arise because the complainant does not accept an EU institution's argument that it is not responsible for the issue raised. The complainant then turns to the Ombudsman with the Office, after having gone through the complaint and the arguments, ending up confirming that the EU body was correct.

4. Complaints and inquiries: how we help the public

4.1. Type and source of complaints

4.1.1. Overview of complaints and strategic inquiries

The Ombudsman may open an inquiry only into complaints that are within the mandate and have fulfilled the necessary ‘admissibility criteria’, such as the complainant having previously tried to resolve the matter directly with the institution involved.

The subject matter of the Ombudsman’s inquiries derive from the Ombudsman’s mandate and the complaints received. However, in addition to the core work on complaints, the Ombudsman may also use strategic inquiries to address broader systemic issues in the EU institutions or, under certain circumstances, open own-initiative inquiries following a complaint submitted by a complainant outside the EU.

Advice and complaints in 2025

25 041	People helped
20 182	Advice given through the Interactive Guide on the Ombudsman's website
3490	New complaints handled
910	Requests for information replied to by the Ombudsman's services
459	Email complaints redirected to the online form, with guidance on the Ombudsman's mandate

Inquiries by the European Ombudsman in 2025

492	Inquiries opened
480	complaint-based
11	own-initiative inquiries
1	strategic inquiry
405	Inquiries closed
398	complaint-based
4	own-initiative inquiries
3	strategic inquiries

Strategic inquiries and strategic initiatives in 2025

Beyond inquiries into specific complaints about maladministration in the EU institutions, the European Ombudsman also has the power to proactively work on broader strategic issues. Strategic inquiries investigate wider systemic issues affecting the EU institutions while strategic initiatives are requests for clarification rather than formal inquiries.

In 2025, the Ombudswoman opened a strategic inquiry into [how EU agencies deal with ‘revolving door’ cases](#) and closed three strategic inquiries. Two concerned accountability matters - [how the Commission deals with third parties paying for work travel and hospitality for its staff members](#), and [how the Commission applies the rules governing the transparency of expert groups](#). The third closed strategic inquiry concerned the [Commission’s risk management of dangerous chemical substances](#). The Office also closed one strategic initiative on how the Commission ensures that the revised rules governing the [Joint Sickness Insurance Scheme \(JSIS\) for EU staff guarantee comprehensive coverage for disability-related health needs](#).

4. Complaints and inquiries: how we help the public

National origin of complaints registered and inquiries opened by the European Ombudsman in 2025

	Country	Number of complaints registered	Number of inquiries opened
ES	Spain	455	56
DE	Germany	351	53
BE	Belgium	245	71
PL	Poland	233	11
FR	France	170	36
PT	Portugal	169	8
IT	Italy	156	32
NL	Netherlands	128	38
EL	Greece	103	13
IE	Ireland	101	30
BG	Bulgaria	89	3
AT	Austria	82	15
RO	Romania	81	7
SE	Sweden	74	13
LU	Luxembourg	53	14
CZ	Czechia	50	20
HU	Hungary	48	1
FI	Finland	44	5
HR	Croatia	44	3
DK	Denmark	40	8
SK	Slovakia	32	3
CY	Cyprus	31	2
MT	Malta	26	5
SI	Slovenia	26	2
LV	Latvia	21	5
LT	Lithuania	20	4
EE	Estonia	9	0
	Other country	556	22
	Not Known	98	0
		3 535	480

4. Complaints and inquiries: how we help the public

4.1.2. Complaints outside the Ombudsman's mandate (OMCs)

In 2025, the Office processed a record number of complaints (2 249) that did not fall within the mandate, often because they did not concern the work of the EU administration. This increase (+62% compared to 2024) appears to be in part the result of artificial intelligence being used to help formulate complaints. Out of mandate complaints from Spain, Germany, and Poland accounted for 32% of the total of such complaints. Spain accounted for 14%, with the two other countries accounting for 10% and 8% respectively.

Complaints related to public services and administrative transparency were the most frequent while others were related to a range of issues and institutions including national courts, healthcare, and the free movement of people.

Other complaints the Office received did concern EU institutions, particularly the European Commission, but as they related to political work or the merits of legislation, they were outside the Ombudsman's mandate.

Besides complaints sent by a single person, business, or organisation, the Ombudsman also received several mass complaints that fell outside the mandate. These concerned the situation in the Middle East, the Readiness 2030 European defence initiative, and the annulment of the 2024 presidential elections in Romania.

The Ombudsman replied to all those seeking help in the language of their complaint or of their preference. The replies clarified the Ombudsman's mandate and, as far as possible, advised complainants to turn to other bodies that could help. While these were usually national and regional ombudsman institutions, the Ombudsman also guided complainants to national public authorities and rights and consumer protection organisations in the Member States.

Depending on the issue raised, and where suitable, the Office also advised complainants to contact EU institutions (mostly the European Commission and the European Parliament) or Europe-wide networks, such as SOLVIT and the European Consumer Centres.

Where complainants were unhappy with specific EU legislation, the Ombudsman generally advised them to turn to the European Parliament's Committee on Petitions. Those who raised issues relating to the implementation of EU law at national level were referred to national or regional ombudsmen, or to EU services, such as Europe Direct, Your Europe, and the E-Justice Portal.

A key improvement in October 2025 was the introduction of a structured process for complaints received by email. Instead of recording them in the Office's complaint management system and processing them, the Office now responds with a standard message providing information about the Ombudsman's mandate and directing complainants to the online complaint form, which guides them through the essential elements needed to submit a complete complaint within the mandate.

This approach ensures that e-mail complaints are handled in a supportive way, while helping complainants submit all the required and relevant information. This change was decisive in reducing the proportion of out-of-mandate complaints from approximately 67% in the first ten months of the year to 47% in November and December 2025.

4. Complaints and inquiries: how we help the public

Number of complaints handled 2021-2025

	Complaints outside the mandate of the European Ombudsman	Complaints inside the mandate of the European Ombudsman	Total
2021	1 437	729	2 166
2022	1 483	755	2 238
2023	1 506	886	2 392
2024	1 389	875	2 264
2025	2 249	1 241	3 490

4.2. Against whom?

Inquiries conducted by the European Ombudsman in 2025 concerned the following institutions

Complaint-based Inquiries	Own-initiatives Inquiries	492 inquiries opened (480 + 12 OIs included)	Acronym	number	%
287	6	European Commission	EC	293	59.55%
36		European Personnel Selection Office	EPSO	36	7.32%
18	4	European External Action Service	EEAS	22	4.47%
18		European Border and Coast Guard Agency	Frontex	18	3.66%
16		European Parliament	EP	16	3.25%
12		European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation	Europol	12	2.44%
9		European Anti-Fraud Office	OLAF	9	1.83%
8	1	European Investment Bank	EIB	9	1.83%
5		European Central Bank	ECB	5	1.02%
5		European Union Agency for Asylum	EUAA	5	1.02%
66	1 ⁽²⁾	Other EU institutions, Bodies and Agencies ⁽¹⁾		67	13.61%
480	12			492	100.00%

⁽¹⁾ EIOPA (5), EMA (5), EUIPO (4), ENISA (4), EASA (4), AMLA (4), EESC (3), EPPO (3), EDPS (3), Council of the EU (3), EIT (3), EACEA (2), REA (2), EFSA (2), ESMA (2), CINEA (2), EBA (2), EUSPA (2), EDA (2), ELA (2), SRB (2), ECHA (2), APPF (2), EIF (1), BEREC (1), EEA (1), EMSA (1), Eurojust (1), eu-LISA (1), EISMA (1), Eurofound (1), FRA (1), SatCen (1), ECA (1), OP (1), CEPOL (1), HaDEA (1) and ACER (1)

⁽²⁾ 12 Own-initiative inquiries opened: OI/5/2025/KR is against several institutions, bodies and agencies

4. Complaints and inquiries: how we help the public

4.3. About what?

Subject matter of inquiries closed by the European Ombudsman in 2025

Transparency and accountability	154	38.1%
Culture of service	74	18.3%
Proper management of infringement proceedings	48	11.9%
Recruitment	38	9.4%
Proper use of discretion (including in infringement procedures)	35	8.6%
Good management of personnel issues	32	7.9%
Respect for procedural rights	25	6.2%
Grants, procurement, contracts	21	5.2%
Other	17	4.2%
Respect for fundamental rights	16	4.0%
Ethics	12	3.0%
Public participation in EU decision-making	7	1.7%
Whistleblowing	2	0.5%
Sound financial management	2	0.5%

Note: In some cases, the Ombudsman closed inquiries with two or more subject matters. The above percentages therefore total more than 100%.

4.4. Results achieved

Action taken by the European Ombudsman on new complaints dealt with in 2025

2 008	Advice given or case transferred to another complaints body	57.50%
1002	Reply sent to inform the complainant that no further advice could be given	28.70%
480	Inquiry opened	13.80%

Evolution in the number of complaint-based and own-initiative inquiries by the European Ombudsman

Year	Inquiries opened	Inquiries closed
2016	245	291
2017	447	363
2018	490	545
2019	458	560
2020	370	394
2021	338	305
2022	348	330
2023	398	372
2024	415	427
2025	492	405

4. Complaints and inquiries: how we help the public

Results of inquiries closed by the European Ombudsman in 2025

Settled by the institution, solution achieved, solution partly achieved	255	63.0%
No maladministration	74	18.3%
No further inquiries justified	61	15.1%
Maladministration found	17	4.2%
Dealt with by a Court (Art. 2.7)	2	0.5%
Dropped by the complainant	1	0.2%

Note: In some cases, the Ombudsman closed inquiries on two or more grounds. The above percentages therefore total more than 100%.

Length of inquiries closed by the European Ombudsman

in 2025 (5 months on average)	
224 (55%)	Cases closed within 3 months
134 (33%)	Cases closed within 3 to 12 months
32 (8%)	Cases closed within 12 to 18 months
15 (4%)	Cases closed after more than 18 months ¹

4.5. Impact and achievements

One of the overarching goals of the European Ombudsman is to achieve tangible improvements for complainants and the public in how the EU administration works. The Ombudsman does this by making proposals in the form of solutions, recommendations, and suggestions. In addition, the Ombudsman may prompt an institution to settle a matter even before a formal solution proposal or recommendation is made.

4.5.1. Acceptance rate

The acceptance rate is the percentage of positive replies to the total number of proposals (solutions, recommendations, and suggestions) made by the Ombudsman. As the Ombudsman gives institutions up to six months to follow up on suggestions made in her decisions closing inquiries, the acceptance rate for 2025 covers cases closed in 2024.

Statistics show that EU institutions have responded well to the Office's increased use of 'solution proposals' in which the Ombudsman outlines a way forward for the institution in a particular case. In 2024, 89% of solution proposals were accepted while 78% of suggestions for improvement were accepted. Overall, the EU institutions cooperated satisfactorily with the Ombudsman in 72% of instances in 2024.

The Ombudsman's renewed focus on dialogue with EU institutions, bodies, and agencies continued throughout 2025. As stated in her Strategy, the Ombudswoman is committed to actively promoting meaningful dialogue and productive collaboration with EU institutions, bodies, offices, and agencies. This is crucial for achieving better outcomes for both complainants and the institutions concerned, helping the Ombudswoman fulfill her mandate and foster a solution-based approach.

¹ Some complex cases require several rounds of consultations with the complainant and the institution concerned.

4. Complaints and inquiries: how we help the public

Broader Impact

The acceptance rate captures responses from the institutions to proposals at a particular point in time and may not fully capture the long-term impact of the Ombudsman's work.

For example, the Ombudsman carried out a major inquiry in 2016 related to how the Commission interacts with tobacco lobbyists and the Office has been monitoring the issue ever since. In 2025, the Ombudsman was in a position to praise the Commission for the steps it has taken including [an awareness-raising exercise to assess the risk of exposure of its management to the tobacco industry and adopting a list of measures \(toolbox\) for dealing with tobacco lobbying](#). The Ombudswoman encouraged the Commission to make full use of the measures to ensure that all of its departments and services meet the EU's commitments under the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

In response to the Ombudsman's [inquiry, opened in 2023, into how the Council of the EU and the Commission handle requests for public access to legislative documents](#), both institutions committed to improving proactive transparency. [The Ombudswoman welcomed this commitment and said that her office was encouraged to note that the Council was preparing a revised 'Transparency Guide' for all matters related to access to documents](#). The Ombudswoman also emphasized that [she intends to monitor how both institutions implement the suggestions made in the context of the inquiry](#).

The [secretariat administering the Transparency Register for the Commission, Parliament, and Council of the EU strengthened how it carries out investigations](#) into complaints concerning alleged breaches of the code of conduct. Among the improvements, which followed an Ombudsman inquiry, it said it now carries out 'thorough and meaningful' investigations and actively seeks additional information from registrants. It also updated its guidelines related to how registrants should detail their membership or affiliation with other entities.

5. Cooperation with institutions

In line with the new Strategy 2025-2029 for her Office, the European Ombudswoman has focused on fostering solution-based dialogue and constructive cooperation with EU institutions and stakeholders over the past year. This approach aims to enhance her Office's effectiveness in protecting citizens' rights and promoting good administration.

5.1. Relations with the EU

5.1.1. European Parliament

The European Ombudswoman's mandate is derived from the EU Treaties and the Ombudswoman is accountable to Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). In March, the newly elected Ombudswoman met with the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, to discuss shared priorities for the future and both institutions' common mission to uphold the rights of European citizens. They convened again in May when the Ombudswoman submitted her Office's Annual Report for 2024.



Ombudswoman Anjinho hands over the Annual Report 2024 to European Parliament President Roberta Metsola

Throughout the following months, the Ombudswoman met with several MEPs, particularly the chairs of committees whose work is linked to the Office's mission. These outreach activities aimed to raise awareness of the Office's role in the EU and to discuss recent cases and conclusions, fostering strong cooperation between the two institutions in the process.

A vital aspect of this cooperation is the Ombudswoman's participation in hearings and events organised by the Parliament. These gatherings provide an opportunity to present key findings from major inquiries and to reinforce the recommendations made to EU institutions.

The Ombudswoman participated in a number of Parliament committee meetings throughout the year. For example, she engaged in discussions with the Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI) regarding urgent decision-making and the need for an EU administrative law. She also participated in discussions with the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) on the rule of law in the EU and with the Committee on Public Health (SANT) on citizens' access to cross-border healthcare.

These exchanges provided an excellent opportunity to strengthen trust between the Ombudsman Office and the Parliament, paving the way for continued collaboration. The Office also took part in hearings and events organised by MEPs to discuss specific topics such as the monitoring of European funds, access to documents, and the transparency of the EU legislative process.

5. Cooperation with institutions

During the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the European Ombudsman in September, held at the Strasbourg Town Hall, Parliament Vice-President Sabine Verheyen delivered the opening speech.

Additionally, the Ombudswoman participated in a meeting with the Heads of the European Parliament's Liaison Offices (EPLOs) to enhance awareness of her Office's work in the Member States.

Building on the Office's commitment to clear communication, the Ombudswoman delivered a speech at a conference on clear language, which was organised by the Parliament's Directorate-General for Translation (DG TRAD).

5.1.2. Committee on Petitions



2 December 2025: Annual Workshop on The Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Ombudswoman listens to introductory remarks by Bogdan Rzońca, Chair of the Committee on Petitions (PETI)

The European Parliament's Committee on Petitions (PETI) is responsible for overseeing relations with the European Ombudsman and working together to ensure that citizens' concerns are addressed at the EU level. In 2025, the Ombudsman Office continued its collaboration with PETI in the interests of their shared goal of ensuring that EU institutions uphold citizens' fundamental rights.

In June, the Ombudswoman presented the Annual Report for 2024 to the members of PETI and outlined the principles behind her Strategy for 2025-2029. This presentation sparked an exchange of views with Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) regarding current and future challenges faced by citizens.

Additionally, the Ombudswoman held meetings with PETI Chair Bogdan Rzońca, several MEPs from the Committee, the Director General of the European Parliament's Directorate-General for Citizens' Rights, Justice and Institutional Affairs (IUST), and the Head of the PETI Committee Secretariat.

5.1.3. European Commission and Council



Teresa Anjinho and Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission

5. Cooperation with institutions

In addition to the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council of the European Union are key interlocutors for the Ombudsman Office at EU level.

As the largest EU institution and executive branch of the EU, the Commission's work is the subject of many of the complaints that the Ombudsman Office receives. Maintaining a constructive dialogue between these two institutions is therefore crucial for finding practical solutions for citizens.

In June, the Ombudswoman met with the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, to discuss important topics such as timely access to documents and inclusive decision-making. She also met with Maros Šefčovič, the Commissioner responsible for interinstitutional relations. These meetings resulted in a clear commitment to fostering an open and continuous dialogue between the Ombudsman Office and the Commission.

At staff level, the Ombudsman's Office also maintained close contact with the Commission's services to ensure an effective, solution-oriented approach for addressing inquiries.

Additionally, the Ombudswoman met with António Costa, the President of the European Council, to discuss transparency and ethics in EU administration. They also explored avenues for future cooperation to ensure that the EU institutions and agencies maintain credibility in the eyes of citizens.



Teresa Anjinho meets with António Costa, President of the European Council, in Brussels.

In December, the Ombudswoman took part in a conference to mark the 25th anniversary of the proclamation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, organised by the European Commission, the Danish Presidency of the Council, and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. The event provided an opportunity to examine how the Charter has shaped the fundamental rights culture in the EU and to reflect on future challenges and opportunities. The Ombudswoman noted that as an instrument of primary EU law that enshrines citizens' fundamental rights, the Charter has become a crucial pillar of our Union.

5.1.4. Other institutions, agencies, and organisations

Strengthening working relationships with EU institutions, bodies, offices, and agencies, as well as with important non-EU institutions, is crucial for ensuring that the role of the European Ombudsman is understood and respected. This collaboration is also essential for achieving prompt and fair resolutions to complaints, promoting positive changes for citizens and businesses, and fostering good administrative practices.

This principle guided the Ombudswoman's interactions and meetings throughout 2025 when she engaged with several heads of EU institutions and agencies, including Nadia Calviño, President of the European Investment Bank (EIB), Sirpa Rautio, Director of the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), Bernhard Url, Acting Executive Director of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), and Oliver Salles, the Director of the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO).

5. Cooperation with institutions



Teresa Anjinho and Sirpa Rautio, Director of the Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union, in Strasbourg

Additionally, the Ombudswoman participated in the plenary session of the EEAS Staff Committee to discuss staff-related cases, such as those related to harassment, and in the Bureau of the Committee of the Regions to exchange views about relevant cases.

At the beginning of her mandate, the Ombudswoman met with Michael O'Flaherty, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, and Louise Holck, the Chair of the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI). The Ombudswoman also took part in the high-level Conference for Ombudsperson Institutions and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI) held in March at the Council of Europe.



High-level Conference at the Council of Europe (CoE): Teresa Anjinho with Claire Bazy-Malaurie (President of the Venice Commission, CoE), Michael O'Flaherty (Commissioner for Human Rights, CoE), and Bjorn Berge (Deputy Secretary General, CoE).

5.1.5. Ombudswoman visits to EU Member States

As part of her regular visits to EU Member States and EU agency offices, the Ombudswoman travelled to Poland, Malta, and Spain in 2025. These Member States visits involve meetings with EU agencies, NGOs, ombudsmen, national authorities and universities to raise awareness of the Ombudsman Office at the national level.

In Poland, the Ombudswoman participated in a conference organised by the Polish Ministry of Justice titled 'The Role of Civil Society in the Protection of the Rule of Law.' During her visit, she held meetings with the Polish and Ukrainian Ombudsmen and took part in a visit to the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), where she held a meeting with its Executive Director.

5. Cooperation with institutions

In Malta, the Ombudswoman's visit coincided with the 30th anniversary of the Maltese Parliamentary Ombudsman, which included an opportunity to participate in an event focused on discussing good governance during challenging times. Alongside discussions with various ombudsmen from across Europe, the Ombudswoman met with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) focused on human rights, asylum, and migration. She also visited the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) for in-depth discussions.

In Spain, the Ombudswoman held a bilateral meeting with the Spanish Ombudsman, engaged in discussions with Spanish environmental NGOs, delivered a keynote speech on advancing gender equality in the European Union at an event organised by Forbes Women, and gave a lecture at Universidad Autónoma de Madrid on 'The Role of the European Ombudsman and its Impact on Citizens.'



Ombudswoman Anjinho with students and professors at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Spain), October 2025

In addition, the Ombudswoman gave a lecture to students of the European Master's Degree in Human Rights and Democratisation (EMA) at the Global Campus of Human Rights in Venice, Italy.

5.2. UN Disability Rights Convention

The European Union is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), a binding international human rights instrument to 'promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity'.

Compliance with the UN CRPD in the EU is monitored by the EU CRPD Framework. As a member of the Framework, the European Ombudsman pays close attention to the EU administration's implementation of the UN CRPD. At the start of 2025, the Framework submitted an updated contribution, which included input from the Ombudsman Office, for the UN CRPD Committee's periodic review of the EU's compliance with the Convention.

In March 2025, the UN CRPD Committee issued its concluding observations. It highlighted several recurring problems that the Ombudsman Office also identified through complaints and own-initiative work. These include deinstitutionalisation and the use of EU funds; working conditions for persons with disabilities within the EU administration, including recruitment, benefits for carers, and reasonable accommodation; and health insurance coverage for EU staff with disabilities. The CRPD Committee also noted that the EU institutions should comply with the Ombudsman's recommendations.

The Ombudsman Office handled several complaints in 2025 related to the rights of persons with disabilities, most notably concerning EU recruitment and staff matters. For instance, one inquiry relates to how the Commission deals with complaints about discrimination based on disability as well as the implementation of reasonable accommodation.

5. Cooperation with institutions

The European Ombudsman and the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights jointly conducted a survey among EU agencies focusing on the rights of persons with disabilities, including EU staff with disabilities.

The Ombudsman Office also presented its work related to the rights of persons with disabilities at several events throughout the year, such as at the UN CRPD review of the EU. In addition, the Ombudswoman took part in the annual workshop on the rights of persons with disabilities organised by the Parliament's Petitions Committee (PETI) during Disability Rights Week.

“
«...» In times of uncertainty, it is especially important for all EU actors to remain focused, to follow up on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Committee's concluding observations, and to continue playing our part in advancing the rights of persons with disabilities.

[Excerpt from Ombudswoman Anjinho's speech at the annual workshop on the rights of persons with disabilities organised by the Parliament's Petitions Committee.](#)

DRAFT

6. Communication

Ensuring visibility is an important element of the Ombudsman Office's work in reaching stakeholders, the EU administration, and civil society. The communication activities of the Office focus not only on inquiries, but also on the promotion of transparency, ethics, and accountability in the EU administration.

The Ombudswoman presented the Annual Report for 2024 to journalists in April, providing her with an important opportunity to share her plans for her mandate and to announce her first own-initiative inquiry.

The Ombudswoman also attended and gave speeches at several events hosted by EU and international institutions. These included Gender Equality Week and several panel and committee meetings hosted by the European Parliament; the European Citizen Action Service (ECAS) Day; the Association of European Journalists congress; a World Economic Forum panel on good governance; and several other presentations to stakeholders, citizens, and young audiences, including during the European Youth Event in May.



European Youth Event 2025 in Strasbourg: Teresa Anjinho discusses transparency and accountability and takes questions from the audience.

In terms of press coverage of the Ombudsman's work in 2025, there were around 3 800 articles mentioning or directly reporting on inquiries.



At a World Economic Forum event in Geneva, the Ombudswoman speaks about trends observed in good governance from a public sector perspective.

The Ombudswoman and staff members also continued their outreach activities by giving interviews to the press, attending academic conferences, and speaking to visitor groups.

As a way of making the work and policies of the Office more accessible to citizens, the Ombudswoman's 2025-2029 strategy as well as the thematic area of procurement and grants inquiries were presented in scrollable web stories. This method of presenting key thematic areas will continue in 2026.

In 2025, the communication activities of the Office extended further to include regular videos for social media to explain the work of the Office and the Ombudswoman's activities, as well as to highlight certain specialist topics.

6. Communication

These included ‘debrief’ videos where the Ombudswoman gave an overview of the latest inquiry developments as well as her meetings and speaking engagements, and case explainer videos where she detailed specific key inquiry outcomes.

In addition, the Office ran a ‘Behind the Scenes’ social media campaign where colleagues from various parts of the office – inquiry officers, legal advisers, digital communications experts – explained their role and day-to-day tasks. The aim was to underline the European Ombudsman as an accessible, friendly, and professional place, while also highlighting the core values of the Office. In 2025, thanks in part to the activities mentioned, social media followers grew steadily on all platforms on which the Office is active. Overall, social media saw a growth of 13 338 followers, and an impressions/engagement ratio of 5.36% across the Office’s top three platforms (LinkedIn, Instagram, Bluesky). Visits to the website from social media content also showed good results, with 8 416 visitors coming directly from posts. Overall, the website remains a key communication tool for the office, with 1 786 995 visits throughout the year.

6.1. Ombudsman 30 Year Anniversary

2025 marked the [30th anniversary](#) of the European Ombudsman’s Office.

Throughout the year, most of the Ombudsman’s outreach activities were designed and organised around the 30-years theme and visual identity.

A ‘Did you Know?’ campaign highlighted different facts about the Office, including its mission, history, and how it works.

A social media campaign, including videos starring colleagues and a video statement by the Ombudswoman, was coupled with a scrollable story featuring these elements in a format designed to appeal to the Office’s broader stakeholder audience.

The anniversary was also celebrated through an event co-organised with the City of Strasbourg that coincided with the inauguration of a city tram, enabled by the Town Hall, bearing the logo and values of the Ombudsman. The tram operated in the city until the end of 2025.



The Ombudswoman addresses representatives of institutions and civil society at the Office’s 30th anniversary event, held at the Strasbourg Town Hall.

For three decades now, this Office has worked to strengthen the bond between the European Union and its citizens. Through our unwavering commitment to fairness and the public good, we will continue to protect citizens’ rights and ensure people’s voices are heard in the years to come.

30th anniversary message from Teresa Anjinho

6. Communication



European Parliament Quaestor Fabienne Keller, European Parliament Vice-President Sabine Verheyen, European Ombudswoman Teresa Anjinho, and Deputy Mayor of Strasbourg Véronique Bertholle inaugurating the commemorative tramway in Strasbourg.

A physical exhibition with panels featuring the history of the Ombudsman Office and its areas of work was displayed throughout the year in various locations. These included Strasbourg, the European Parliament during its plenary, and the European Network of Ombudsmen conference – a biennial event organised by the Ombudsman Office.



The tram ran on different lines across the Strasbourg transport network (including the one crossing the Rhine and going to Kehl, Germany).

6.2. Award for Good Administration

In October, the Ombudswoman officially opened nominations for the fifth edition of the European [Ombudsman Award for Good Administration](#).

The Award recognises actions by the EU public administration that have a visible and direct positive impact on the lives of citizens. In addition to an overall award winner, a number of category winners will be selected.

Categories for award submissions for this edition include excellence in technological innovation and the use of AI, excellence in citizen/civil society participation, excellence in diversity and inclusion, and excellence in open administration.

An advisory committee will draw up a short-list with the European Ombudswoman selecting the winners and announcing them at a special ceremony in June 2026. There will also be an online public vote for the most popular project.



Representatives of Eurojust and the Office of the Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court receiving the 2023 European Ombudsman Award for Good Administration for their work to help document core international crimes and human rights violations.

7. European Network of Ombudsmen

The European Network of Ombudsmen (ENO) is an informal network coordinated by the European Ombudsman, consisting of over 95 offices of ombudsmen and similar bodies from across Europe, as well as the European Parliament's Committee on Petitions.

An important ENO tool is the queries procedure. Through this procedure, ENO members can ask questions about EU law that arise during their inquiries, with the European Ombudsman obtaining expert replies for them from the EU institutions. Query topics in 2025 concerned the [coordination of social security systems](#) with respect to child benefits, [free movement rights for non-EU family members](#) of EU citizens, and [access to health insurance for Croatian students studying in another EU country](#).

In 2025, the Ombudswoman also visited some of the offices of national ombudsmen. She met with the Polish Commissioner for Human Rights as well as the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights in Warsaw, the Ombudsman of Spain in Madrid, and the Parliamentary Ombudsman of Malta in Valletta. During these visits, the Ombudswoman discussed issues of mutual importance with the national ombudsmen and sought ways to better work together to solve citizens' problems.

Complainants advised to contact other institutions and bodies by the European Ombudsman in 2025 and complaints transferred (2 008)

Member of the European Network of Ombudsmen	315	15.7%
National or regional ombudsman or similar body	269	13.4%
European Parliament's Committee on Petitions	46	2.3%
National administrations and other organisations	1561	77.8%
European Commission	113	5.6%
SOLVIT	7	0.3%
Other EU institutions, bodies or agencies	12	0.6%

7. European Network of Ombudsmen

7.1. European Network of Ombudsmen Conference

The European Network of Ombudsmen held its annual conference in Brussels in November 2025. The conference provided a forum for ombudsmen from across Europe to improve cooperation, exchange ideas, and anticipate future issues that will require their attention.



Ombudsmen and liaison officers from the European Network of Ombudsmen at the European Parliament in Brussels.

The conference format was designed to encourage individual input and discussion. In addition to opening and closing plenary sessions, the conference featured eight workshops on different topics held over the course of two days. This enabled ombudsmen to focus on the subjects that are of particular interest to their country or region.



Teresa Anjinho and Marta Hirsch-Ziembinska (Principal Adviser on international cooperation and fundamental rights at the European Ombudsman) opening the annual European Network of Ombudsmen (ENO) Conference.

The eight workshops covered:

- Practical barriers for intra-EU mobility
- The challenges and opportunities of monitoring EU law compliance
- Preserving ombudsmen independence in challenging times
- Sharing ombudsmen experience in dealing with environmental complaints
- Ombudsman oversight of semi-private and semi-public administration
- Preventing the fragmentation of the protection of citizens' rights
- The evolving role of ombudsmen in migration and asylum complaints
- Regulatory simplification – what could it mean for the protection of rights?

Representatives from EU bodies such as the European Commission and the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency also participated in some of the workshops, sharing their knowledge and expertise.

Following the conference, a liaison officers meeting was scheduled to be held in Málaga, Spain, in early 2026 to follow-up on the conclusions reached at the workshops and to reflect on potential future projects.

8. Artificial intelligence

As digital tools reshape how public institutions serve citizens, the Ombudsman Office embraced the opportunity to harness artificial intelligence (AI) as a means to deliver a more responsive and effective service. Throughout 2025, the Office took steps toward AI adoption guided by the principles of good administration, accountability, and transparency.

To ensure AI integration aligns with these principles, the Office established a cross-department AI taskforce, which guides strategic decision-making and facilitates knowledge sharing with internal and external stakeholders. A dedicated AI officer was recruited to provide specialist oversight and coordinate all AI-related efforts, ensuring that technological advancement remains firmly anchored in the Ombudsman's mission of serving citizens. The Office also participated in the network of AI correspondents organised by the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS), a forum for voluntary exchange of best practices among EU institutions.

The Ombudsman launched a pilot project to test the use of GPT@EC, a general-purpose generative AI system using large-language models developed by the European Commission for use across the EU institutions. The pilot explores how AI can assist with ancillary tasks in case-handling, administrative work, and communication, while maintaining the independence and integrity central to the Ombudsman's mandate. The pilot assesses AI's potential to support several specific tasks: improving the clarity and style of drafts including letters, recommendations, and decisions; researching EU and national laws; summarising and analysing large documents attached to complaints or obtained during inquiries; editing drafts in administrative areas such as human resources and finance; providing coding support for IT projects; and assisting with communication tasks such as grammar verification and document summaries.

The project was launched after robust governance measures were put in place, including risk management frameworks, data protection impact assessments, usage guidelines, and guardrails for data protection, security, copyright compliance, and human oversight. A Service Level Agreement with the European Commission ensures that the Ombudsman's drafts, working materials, case-related information, and personal data remain protected and inaccessible to Commission staff or third parties without authorisation. Data processed by the Ombudsman are not used to train or improve AI models.

The key principle guiding the pilot is human oversight. Staff members using AI remain fully responsible for all outputs, and AI is not used to take decisions, make recommendations, assess admissibility, determine outcomes, or prioritise complaints.

All AI-generated content is carefully checked for accuracy by staff before use, ensuring that the technology serves to enhance efficiency while human judgment and decision-making remain at the core of complaint resolution and inquiries.

Reflecting the Ombudsman's commitment to transparency and accountability in AI use, an AI notice was published on the Ombudsman's website, providing citizens with clear information about how AI systems are employed, which safeguards are in place, and what rights complainants have in their interactions with the Office.

9. Resources

9.1. Budget

The European Ombudsman's budget is an independent section of the EU budget. It is divided into three titles. Title 1 covers salaries, allowances, and other expenditure related to staff. Title 2 covers buildings, furniture, equipment, and miscellaneous operating expenditure. Title 3 covers the expenditure resulting from general functions that the institution carries out. In 2025, budgeted appropriations amounted to EUR 15 558 918.

To ensure the effective management of resources, the Ombudsman's internal auditor regularly checks the internal control systems and the financial operations that the Office carries out. As is the case with other institutions, the Ombudsman is also subject to the European Court of Auditors' review, which did not identify any specific issues in the context of its external audit work.

9.2. Use of resources

Every year, the Ombudsman Office adopts an Annual Management Plan, which identifies specific actions the Office expects to take to meet the objectives and priorities of the Ombudswoman's strategy. Given that 2025 was a transition year between the outgoing and newly elected Ombudswoman, the Annual Management Plan was adopted by the former Ombudswoman before the election and was based on her strategy 'Towards 2024'. In October 2025, the new Ombudswoman adopted her strategy 'Building Trust, Driving Change', which will form the basis for future Annual Management Plans.

The Ombudsman Office has a highly qualified multilingual staff. This ensures that the Office can deal with complaints in the 24 official EU languages and raise awareness about its work throughout the EU. The Office's hybrid work policy, which is results-oriented and trust-based, supports the Ombudswoman's ambition to promote a modern, digital, and flexible work environment.

In 2025, there were 75 posts in the Ombudsman's establishment plan, in addition to which, there was an average of 8 contract agents working with the Office. Over the course of 2025, 18 trainees also gained work experience at the Ombudsman's Office with one group finishing in August and another starting in September.

Detailed information on the structure of the Ombudsman Office and the tasks of the various units is available on the Ombudsman's website.

10. How to contact the European Ombudsman

Online

Website: <https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/contacts>

Bluesky: bsky.app/profile/ombudsman.europa.eu

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/company/european-ombudsman](https://www.linkedin.com/company/european-ombudsman)

Threads: [threads.net/euombudsman](https://www.threads.net/euombudsman)

Instagram: [instagram.com/euombudsman](https://www.instagram.com/euombudsman)

Youtube: [youtube.com/eotubes](https://www.youtube.com/eotubes)

By telephone

+33 (0)3 88 17 23 13

Postal address

Médiateur européen

1 avenue du Président Robert Schuman

CS 30403

F-67001 Strasbourg Cedex

Our offices

Visitor address

Strasbourg

Bâtiment Václav Havel (HAV)

Allée Spach

F-67000 Strasbourg

Brussels

Bâtiment Froissart (FRS)

Rue Froissart 87

B-1000 Bruxelles

10. How to contact the European Ombudsman

If you require a large print version of this publication, please contact the European Ombudsman's office.

This *Annual Report* is published on the Internet at:

www.ombudsman.europa.eu

© European Union, 2026

All photographs and images © European Union, except the cover (© Eddy Drmwn / Adobe Stock and © HAPIXEL / Adobe Stock).

Reproduction for educational and non-commercial purposes is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.
Set in FrutigerNext.

Print	ISBN 978-92-9483-428-7	ISSN 1680-3809	doi:10.2869/7499417	QK-AA-26-001-EN-C
HTML	ISBN 978-92-9483-426-3	ISSN 1680-3922	doi:10.2869/3149489	QK-AA-26-001-EN-Q
PDF	ISBN 978-92-9483-427-0	ISSN 1680-3922	doi:10.2869/9362814	QK-AA-256001-EN-N

Logo OP

DRAFT