



European Ombudsman

Annual Management Plan

Year 2012

Strasbourg
23 January 2012

EN



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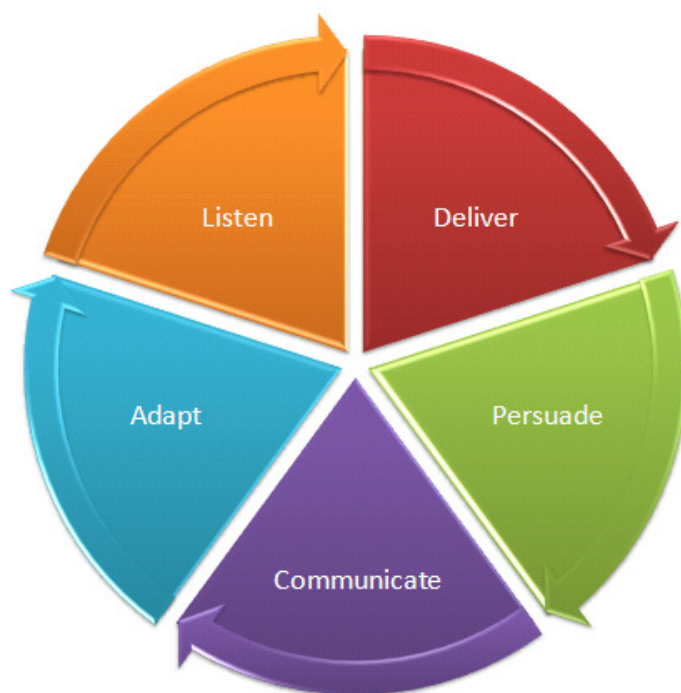
1. Introduction

The Annual Management Plan (AMP) identifies actions to be taken in 2012 with a view to implementing the Ombudsman's strategy for the mandate 2009-14.

The Ombudsman adopted a strategy document in September 2010 announcing that, by the end of the current mandate, we aspire to:

- measurably increase our effectiveness as an alternative means of resolving disputes with the Union institutions;
- be recognised as a driving force to put citizens at the centre of the Union's administrative culture; and
- more fully demonstrate our on-going commitment to identifying and meeting the expectations of complainants and of other stakeholders.

The strategy document translates these aspirations into five objectives, which are reflected in the graphic below:



For each of the five objectives, the strategy document identifies a number of priorities.

Section 3 of the AMP sets out the priorities on which the Ombudsman intends to focus in 2012 and outlines the corresponding actions. It also allocates responsibility for these actions among the different operational Units of the Ombudsman's office, which are described in section 2 below.

The actions are formulated in as concrete a way as possible in order to facilitate measurement and reporting of our performance (see section 4 below).



2. The organisation of the office

The activities of the Ombudsman's office are: (i) dealing with complaints and carrying out inquiries, (ii) communication, (iii) support activities and (iv) strategy and governance.

In order to enhance further his ability effectively to carry out the above activities, the Ombudsman adopted a new organisational structure, with effect from January 2012, consisting of the Ombudsman's private office (Cabinet), the Secretariat-General and two Directorates.

A table indicating the allocation of staff is provided in section 5.2 below. The table is based on the new organisational structure.

Secretariat-General

Under the new structure, the Secretary-General (SG) continues to be responsible for providing policy advice to the Ombudsman, for strategic management and direction and for ensuring overall coordination.

As from January 2012, the **Communication Unit** (COM) reports to the Ombudsman and the SG. COM takes on the tasks formerly performed by the Communication and the Media, Enterprise and Civil Society (MECS) Units, which have been merged.

The Communication Unit is responsible for informing individuals and organisations throughout the Union of the role and activities of the Ombudsman. The Unit maintains and promotes relations with the media, organises the Ombudsman's information visits and events, and liaises with other EU institutions on outreach initiatives. It drafts and produces the Ombudsman's publications and promotional material, maintains and develops the Ombudsman's websites, implements the institution's visual identity, coordinates the European Network of Ombudsmen and, more generally, is responsible for relations with ombudsman associations in Europe and beyond.

Two Directorates

The two Directorates each consist of three Units; two Complaints and Inquiries Units and a Unit in charge of support activities.

The two Directors share the tasks of dealing with complaints and inquiries. In addition, each Directorate is also responsible for one Unit in charge of support activities in the Ombudsman's office; that is respectively (1) the Personnel, Administration and Budget Unit and (2) the Registry.

The Complaints and Inquiries Units deal with the complaints sent to the Ombudsman. They conduct the inquiries needed to clarify possible cases of maladministration, look for solutions, and prepare draft recommendations, decisions closing inquiries and special reports to the European Parliament. The Units also propose and carry out inquiries that are based on the Ombudsman's own-initiative power and deal with Queries sent by other members of the European Network of Ombudsmen.

The **Personnel, Administration and Budget Unit (PAB)** carries out the functions formerly assigned to the Administration and Personnel Unit and to



the Budget and Finance Unit, which have been merged into a single Unit. It is the internal service provider of the Ombudsman's Office. The Unit is responsible for all administrative matters related to the institution's personnel, human resources, budget and finance and represents the institution in a number of interinstitutional committees.

As regards personnel and human resources, the Unit deals with recruitment, management of individual rights, internal communication and training.

As regards other administrative matters, the Unit deals with buildings, office space and equipment and coordinates translation requests. Furthermore, it is responsible for the institution's IT resources, including in-house development and maintenance of software applications specifically designed for the needs of the Ombudsman's services.

As regards budget and finance, the Unit prepares the budget estimates for presentation to the Budget authorities and ensures that the Ombudsman's Office complies with the applicable financial rules. It guarantees that available resources are used economically and efficiently, and are protected adequately. Additionally, the Unit establishes and implements the appropriate internal control mechanisms and prepares information for the various budgetary control authorities.

The **Registry** (REG), which became a Unit on 1 January 2012, deals with the registration, distribution and transmission of all documents received or sent by the office. It is also in charge of the Ombudsman's archives and library and the development and implementation of a public register of documents. During 2012, the Registry will also take on responsibility for dealing with many of the complaints that fall outside the Ombudsman's mandate.



3. Actions for 2012

This section sets out the priorities on which the Ombudsman will focus in 2012 and the actions that will be taken to help deliver on these priorities. The priorities are presented in the order, and under the objective and numbering, in which they appear in the Strategy.

The tables below list, under each priority, the actions to be taken in 2012 and indicate the organisational units responsible for carrying them out.

- Where an action requires co-operation between organisational units, the lead unit is, where applicable, indicated in **bold**.
- In cases where co-operation between Complaints and Inquiries Units is required, the table indicates "C&I". The two Directors will jointly ensure the implementation of these actions.
- The tables also indicate where the Ombudsman's Cabinet and/or the SG should be directly involved in the implementation of an action.

In selecting the actions, the Ombudsman has taken into account the results of a self assessment exercise organised in the framework of the Ombudsman's co-operation with the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM)¹. There will be an external assessment of the impact of these actions during 2012, with a view the Ombudsman being recognised by EFQM as 'Committed to Excellence'. The relevant actions are identified in the table below as 'EFQM actions'.

3.1 Actions under objective 1 - Listen

Priority 1.1 - Obtain regular feedback from complainants on their experiences and their views about the quality of service we provide

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| • Create a simple complainant feedback mechanism through the website. (EFQM Action) | COM/PAB/REG |
| • Begin to analyse the complainant feedback received and inform appropriate services within the institution. | COM |

¹ The EFQM Excellence Model developed by the EFQM is a management framework that helps organisations (1) understand their key strengths and potential gaps in relation to their stated vision and mission; (2) effectively communicate ideas within and outside the organisation; (3) integrate existing and planned initiatives, eliminating duplication and identifying gaps; and (4) provide a basic structure for the organisation's management system.



Priority 1.2 - Further develop contacts with EU institutions at all levels to understand better how we can help them nurture and promote a culture of service.

- Meet regularly at the level of the Secretary-General, Directors and/or Heads of Unit with the relevant coordinators or services of the Commission and other main institutions. C&I/SG
- Identify members of C&I Units responsible for following the work of specific agencies or bodies of the EU. C&I

Priority 1.4 - Look outward to examine how others achieve their performance levels and understand the processes which engender them.

- Examine the possibility of replacing our current Personnel Management IT System ("Arpège") with "Sysper II". PAB
- Prepare a business continuity plan. PAB
- Define and clarify the responsibilities of the Heads of Unit, Directors and Secretary-General. (EFQM action) PAB/SG

3.2 Actions under objective 2 - Deliver

Priority 2.3 - Develop alternative and simplified procedures to promote, wherever possible, a rapid resolution of complaints without resorting to a lengthy investigation

- Consolidate and develop the approach concerning telephone and other 'fast track' procedures, notably as regards deadlines. C&I

Priority 2.4 - Review the handling of complaints that are outside the mandate.

- Define the necessary human resources, IT resources, and changes to procedures and working methods to enable the Registry to deal with complaints outside the European Ombudsman's mandate. REG/C&I
- Implement the handling of complaints outside the European Ombudsman's mandate by the Registry. (EFQM action) REG/C&I



3.3 Actions under objective 3 - **Persuade**

Priority 3.2 - Emphasise the Ombudsman's role as a rich resource to help institutions improve their administrative practices

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the public service principles, the <i>European Ombudsman's Guide to Complaints</i>, and the new edition of the <i>European Code of Good Administrative Behaviour</i> to EU staff through targeted dissemination of the publications, and relevant meetings and events. | COM/C&I/
Cabinet |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise the ReNEUAL Seminar 2012. | COM/SG |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Digest of the European Ombudsman's decisions. | Cabinet/C&I/
COM |

Priority 3.3 - Persuade the institutions that reaching out to citizens and civil society organisations should be part of the culture of service and has high returns for them

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the programme of visits to agencies. | C&I |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convey this message in all meetings and visits to institutions, bodies and agencies. | C&I/SG/Cabinet |

3.4 Actions under objective 4 - **Communicate**

Priority 4.3 - Raise public awareness of the Ombudsman's ongoing inquiries and results in high-impact cases

- | | |
|---|-----|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and begin to implement a social media strategy for the institution. | COM |
|---|-----|

Priority 4.5 - Build on our internal communication policy better to inform staff of developments within the institution in a timely fashion

- | | |
|--|--------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve internal communication by revising the existing tools (Sisteo) and putting in place new communication means (Internal Newsletter). | PAB/SG |
|--|--------|



3.5 Actions under objective 5 - **Adapt**

Priority 5.1 - Enhance management and control mechanisms to ensure optimal use of human and financial resources and the highest standards of administration internally

- | | |
|--|-----|
| • Explore and take appropriate steps to guarantee the immediate and the long term functioning of our accounting operations both in terms of human resources and relevant IT solutions. | PAB |
| • Monitor forthcoming amendments of the Staff Regulations; revise internal rules and develop a policy to inform staff accordingly. | PAB |
| • Prepare a strategy for professional training as a career development tool linked with the individual objectives established in the staff evaluation reports. | PAB |
| • Prepare proposals for a revised allocation of responsibilities between the operational Units and the PAB Unit as regards public tender procedures. | PAB |

Priority 5.2 - Consistently monitor and increase the quality of our work

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| • Rethink the allocation of tasks within the Communication Unit and formulate new job descriptions for the Unit members. | COM |
| • Investigate possibilities for outsourcing certain tasks of the Communication Unit. | COM |
| • Submit draft policies and rules for document management and historical archiving for the European Ombudsman's case-related documents. | REG |
| • Finalise the public register project. | REG/PAB/COM |
| • Put in place relevant planning and monitoring tools to ensure that staffing needs and budgetary requirements are anticipated adequately. | PAB |
| • Ensure smooth transition to a new Operating System (Windows 7 Microsoft) and a new Office Suite (Microsoft Office 2010). | PAB |
| • Ensure effective implementation of the enhanced communications tools associated with the above migrations. | PAB |



Priority 5.3 - Put in place an effective integrated IT system to manage the office's overall workflow

- Facilitate and ensure coordination between the IT workflow consultant and the other internal services involved. SG
- Contribute to the implementation of the various phases of PAB the tender awarded to the IT workflow consultant.



4. Measuring and reporting on our performance

Progress in achieving our objectives is measured using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). They are set out below, together with targets and reference figures for 2012.

The KPIs and the relevant targets are reviewed and, if necessary, revised on a yearly basis. In order to take account of experience gained in 2011, the wording of the evaluation criteria for six of the KPIs was improved in 2012 without, however, altering their substance. The criteria concerned are marked with an asterisk.

Key Performance Indicators, measurement and targets for 2012

	Subject matter	Measurement / evaluation criteria	Results achieved in 2011	Targets or reference figures for 2012
KPI 1	Strategy and Governance	Assessment by the European Ombudsman's staff and external stakeholders.	76% ² (satisfaction rate)	Reference figure: 76%
KPI 2	Complaints and inquiries	Number of inquiries closed in relation to the number of ongoing inquiries at the end of the previous exercise.	1.2 ³	1.1
		*Proportion of cases in which the admissibility decision is taken within one month.	Average: 70% ⁴	90%
KPI 3	Complaints and inquiries	*Proportion of inquiries closed within (i) 12 and (ii) 18 months.	12-m: 66% 18-m: 80%	12-m: 70% 18-m: 90%

² KPI 1 was calculated on the basis of the scores obtained in reply to eight questions related to strategy and governance in a general staff survey conducted in April 2011. The question of assessment by external stakeholders will be examined in 2012.

³ To obtain this figure, the number of inquiries closed is divided by the number of ongoing inquiries at the end of the previous exercise.

⁴ The breakdown is as follows: (1) cases outside the mandate: 76%, (2) cases within the mandate but inadmissible: 75%, (3) no grounds cases: 31%, and (4) cases leading to an inquiry: 50%.



	Subject matter	Measurement / evaluation criteria	Results achieved in 2011	Targets or reference figures for 2012
KPI 4	Complaints and inquiries	*Relation between (i) the number of friendly solutions and draft recommendations and (ii) the number of decisions in which maladministration is found.	2.48 ⁵	2.5
KPI 5	Complaints and inquiries	*Number of systemic own-initiative inquiries launched.	7	6
KPI 6	Provide our external stakeholders with timely, useful and easily accessible information	External stakeholders contacted (frequency and significance).	Press releases: 20 Press cuttings: 1 879 ⁶ Events involving multipliers: 175 Complaints within the mandate: +1% Advice given through the Interactive Guide to contact a member of the European Network of Ombudsmen: 12 525 Unique visitors to the website: 295 106 Queries: 11 Contributions to discussions on the European Network of Ombudsmen Extranet: 170	20 1 300 120 ⁷ + 1% 13 000 300 000 12 180
KPI 7	Support Services (HR)	*Staffing levels, measured as a proportion of maximum full time equivalents (FTEs)	88.4% (based on 75 FTEs)	89.5%

⁵ To obtain this figure, the sum of cases in which the Ombudsman made a proposal for a friendly solution or a draft recommendation is divided by the number of cases closed with a critical remark in which the Ombudsman did not first make a proposal for a friendly solution or a draft recommendation.

⁶ Given that more than 500 press cuttings in 2011 referred to the incumbent Ombudsman in the context of the appointment of a Prime Minister in Greece and were therefore not directly related to his activities, it seemed reasonable not to take account of these in setting the target for 2012.

⁷ The target is lower than the outcome in 2011 because the latter year saw an exceptionally high number of follow-up events, triggered by major events held in March and September 2011, which may not be repeated in 2012.



	Subject matter	Measurement / evaluation criteria	Results achieved in 2011	Targets or reference figures for 2012
KPI 8	Support Services (HR)	* Average professional training days per person.	2.79 days	3 days
KPI 9	Support Services	Degree of satisfaction of the European Ombudsman's staff ⁸ .	79% (result of the 2011 staff survey in relation to support services)	80%
KPI 10	Support Services (finance)	Implementation of the budget (composite indicator).	Budget implementation: 85.6% Carried-over appropriations paid: 90.6% Number of payments beyond 30 days: 13	87% 92% maximum 10

Scoreboards to monitor and report on our performance against the above targets and on the basis of the KPIs will be updated periodically.

⁸ Surveys will be conducted in the context of a general self assessment survey of the Ombudsman's staff.



5.2. Budgetary resources by operational line

Budget Lines	Resources in Euro
A-1 6 1 2 Further training	55 000
A-1 6 3 2 Social contacts between members of staff	6 000
A-2 0 0 0 Rent	488 000
A-2 1 0 0 Purchase, servicing and maintenance of IT	63 000
A-2 1 2 Furniture	20 000
A-2 1 6 Vehicles	17 500
A-2 3 0 0 Stationery, office supplies and miscellaneous	28 000
A-2 3 0 1 Postage on correspondence and delivery charges	16 000
A-2 3 0 2 Telecommunications	13 000
A-2 3 0 3 Financial charges	2 000
A-2 3 0 4 Other expenditures	4 000
A-2 3 1 Translation and interpretation	667 000
A-2 3 2 Support for activities	85 000
A-3 0 0 Staff mission expenses	130 000
A-3 0 2 Entertainment and representation expenses	15 000
A-3 0 3 Meetings in general	40 000
A-3 0 4 Internal meetings	35 000
A-3 2 0 0 Documentation and library	12 000
A-3 2 0 1 Archive resources	15 000
A-3 2 1 0 Communication & publications	347 000
A-3 3 0 1 Other subsidies	26 000
A-3 4 0 0 Miscellaneous expenses	2 000

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