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Ombudsman: Gaining people's trust is the most important point on "EU Wish List"

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The European Ombudsman investigates complaints about maladministration in the EU institutions and bodies. Any EU citizen, resident, or an enterprise or association in a Member State, can lodge a complaint with the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman offers a fast, flexible and free means of solving problems with the EU administration.

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European Ombudsman, Emily O'Reilly, says the perceived democratic deficit and the disconnect between citizens and the EU institutions are the key problems facing the EU.

In an interactive event with European Parliament President Martin Schulz and Commission President José Manuel Barroso in Brussels, she stressed the need for democratic clarity and transparency, particularly given the upcoming election of a new European Parliament and the appointment of a new European Commission later this year. The Lisbon Treaty has given an increased role to the European Parliament in the selection of the Commission President.

Emily O'Reilly said: "People need to know what they are voting for, and need to know that their vote in the elections will influence something concrete, something that has an impact on their lives. Many feel that their voice simply does not count. This can lead to disaffection from the EU. It is up to all EU leaders to take these concerns on board."

Presidents Barroso and Schulz also highlighted the need to regain trust in the EU. José Manuel Barroso, however, called on the citizens to: "criticise what you don't like about the EU, but don't turn your back on Europe". And Martin Schulz stated that: "we must regain the trust of the people of Europe, but the EU and the national institutions are jointly responsible for this."

More than 300 citizens, students, representatives of interest groups, and other participants engaged in debate with Schulz, Barroso, and O'Reilly at the Ombudsman's event entitled "Your wish list for Europe". There was also an active social media

discussion via the Twitter hashtag #EUwishlist with more than 2 000 tweets exchanged on this topic during the event and over the preceding two weeks.

The event video and other information is available at: <http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/activities/calendarevent.faces/en/818/html.bookmark>