



Press release No. 15/2013

The new European Ombudsman, Emily O'Reilly, meets with Parliament President Schulz and Commission President Barroso

9 October 2013

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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The new European Ombudsman, Emily O'Reilly, has discussed the need for high administrative standards in the European Union with the President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, and the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso. In two separate meetings, O'Reilly stressed her willingness to co-operate closely with both institutions and outlined her priorities for the coming year.

Both Presidents underlined the importance they attach to good co-operation with the European Ombudsman and the vital role she plays for citizens and for raising standards of good administration.

She explained: "The EU administration has to serve as a role model when it comes to openness, accountability, and good administration in the Union. This is a key precondition for winning the trust of Europe's citizens. A lot has been done in the past, but there is no room for complacency."

The Transparency Register for EU interest groups

The Commission and the Parliament jointly operate the Transparency Register for interest groups with an eye to making the EU's decision-making process more transparent. Around 6 000 companies, NGOs, and other interest groups have registered so far. The Register is currently under revision. The Ombudsman has received several complaints about it, including concerns about the

accuracy of the information contained in it. O'Reilly stated: "If over time we see that the Transparency Register does not work on a voluntary basis, serious consideration should be given to making it mandatory."