



**2021  
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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **European Ombudsman: new rules to protect Europeans from maladministration**

Brussels, 23 June 2021

**The European Parliament has adopted, with the Council’s consent and the Commission’s positive opinion, improved rules governing the Ombudsman’s duties.**

The new regulation, adopted by the European Parliament with 623 votes in favour, 9 against, and 61 abstentions, establishes a renewed mandate for the office of the **European Ombudsman**.

The new rules align the performance of the Ombudsman’s duties with the Treaty of Lisbon. The Ombudsman will be able to launch their own inquiries whenever they find grounds for one, and will be able to propose solutions to the issues an investigation raises, namely in cases of repeated, systemic or particularly serious instances of maladministration. The rules also clarify the conditions for access to documents and cooperation with member states’ authorities and Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies. A new “cooling off” period is required for eligibility to the Office, and provisions for the protection of victims of harassment and whistle-blowers are now foreseen.

#### **Quotes**

Parliament’s negotiator and rapporteur **Paulo Rangel (EPP, PT)** commented: “Today we have put in place improved rules for an important office of the EU. Simply put, the Ombudsman can now serve Europeans even better than before. But we have also made institutional history: Parliament exercised its right of initiative and managed to have all institutions on board.”

On behalf of the **Portuguese Presidency of the Council**, Secretary of State for EU Affairs Ana Paula Zacarias said: “The European Ombudsman plays an important part in our EU institutional framework, notably to ensure the trust of our citizens by promoting good administration by our institutions. The new statute reflects the evolution of the institutional architecture of the European Union, is in line with the Treaty of Lisbon and allows the European Ombudsman to exercise their duties under a strong and clear mandate.”

European Commission **Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič**, said: “I warmly welcome today’s revision of the statute, as it not only consolidates existing good practices, but also puts more emphasis on important issues, such as harassment, whistleblowing and conflicts of interest. I believe this will improve the Ombudsman’s work, which will ultimately benefit all Europeans, companies and associations. I would like to express my greatest appreciation for the excellent work and cooperation between colleagues in the European Parliament, Council and Commission.”



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### **Next steps**

The regulation will be signed by EP President Sassoli on Thursday 24 June, and enter into force on the first day of the month following its publication in the Official Journal of the EU.

### **Background**

The European Ombudsman aims to protect the interests of people and investigates cases where an EU institution or body has allegedly acted in violation of the law or good administration practices. Cases could concern administrative irregularities, discrimination, abuse of power, or failure to act.

Parliament has the exclusive right of initiative in this area, for which it needs the Council's consent and the Commission's opinion. The previous rules had stayed unaltered since before the Treaty of Lisbon, despite Parliament's draft regulation put forward in 2019, due to political deadlock. On 10 May 2021, the informal dialogue with the Council resulted in a **provisional set of rules, which was confirmed by the Committee on Constitutional Affairs on 25 May**, followed by the adoption of the updated negotiating mandate by Parliament on 10 June.

### **LINKS**

The adopted text will be available [here](#) (23.06.2021)

**[EP press release after the committee vote \(25.05.2021\)](#)**

**[Council Press Release: The Council gives its consent to the revised statute of the Ombudsman to further guarantee its independence \(18.06.2021\)](#)**

**[Profile of rapporteur Paulo Rangel \(EPP, PT\)](#)**

**[Procedure file](#)**

**[EP Research Service - "At A Glance: Election of the European Ombudsman" \(10.12.2019\)](#)**

**[EP Factsheets on the European Union - The European Ombudsman](#)**

**[European Ombudsman](#)**

**[Free photos, video and audio material \(Election of the European Ombudsman, 2019\)](#)**

**For further information:**

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