**PRESIDENCY OF THE EUROPEAN OMBUDSMAN INSTITUTE MET IN BRATISLAVA**

**European Ombudsman Institute (EOI) held a board meeting at the Office of the Public Defender of Rights. More than 20 members of the institute from European and also non-European countries met in Bratislava.**

**(Bratislava, March 15, 2019) Ombudswoman Mária Patakyová** welcomed deputies of the ombudsman offices and other members of the institute (EOI) from 12 countries – Germany, Austria, Netherlands, Italy, Hungary, Latvia, Ukraine, Cypress, Bulgaria, Srbia, Romania and Russia in the Office of the Public Defender of Rights. As an introduction, the ombudswoman presented how the office works in Slovakia, followed by the agenda of institute.

At the beginning of the meeting Mária Patakyová explained her competences in the cases of a violation of fundamental rights and freedoms by the public administration bodies in Slovakia. Within the cooperation with parliament, she said that she regularly presents the annual reports in the Human Rights and Ethnic Minorities Committee of the National Council of the Slovak Republic and in the plenum of the parliament. She also mentioned an attendance of the members of the parliament in the plenum during her presentation of the reports.

**„I annualy inform the parliament about my findings. Last year I presented my annual report to only seventeen members of parliament,“** said Mária Patakyová, the Public Defender of Rights and documented her statement with the photo from the last speech in the parliament.

In addition to regular presentation of the annual reports to the parliament, ombudswoman elaborates extraordinary reports in case she finds serious violation of the fundamental rights concerning the large number of persons. Recently she presented an extraordinary report on the inadequate length of the restitution proceedings in the last year.

Public Defender of Rights also noted that she has a right to initiate proceedings at the Constitutional Court and therefore make an effort to change a legislation if it violates fundamental rights and freedoms. **„The Office of the Public Defender of Rights has filed 12 motions with the Constitutional Court so far. In the last one I pointed out at the discriminatory conditions for obtaining contribution for vehicle or personal assistance for people with disabilites as granting of benefits is dependant on the age. This complaint was not rejected by the Constitutional Court and it was taken for further action“** closed Mária Patakyová.