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Emily O'Reilly begins work as European Ombudsman

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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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Following her election by the European Parliament in July, Emily O'Reilly steps down as Irish Ombudsman and begins work as European Ombudsman on 1 October 2013. She follows P. Nikiforos Diamandouros, who retires after serving as European Ombudsman for more than ten years.

Commenting on her new role, O'Reilly stated: "Europe faces not only an economic crisis but also a crisis of political legitimacy. Negativity and division are rising across Europe, the trust of citizens in European institutions is declining, and many feel their voice simply does not count. This makes 2014 a crucial year for Europe and the future of the European Union. One of my proactive roles as Ombudsman is to highlight citizens' concerns and help bridge the wide gap between them and the EU institutions.

Twenty years after the Office of the European Ombudsman was created under the Maastricht Treaty, it is time to re-think its focus, with an eye to enhancing its impact and visibility. All the citizens and residents of the EU must benefit from an effective administration completely focused on serving their needs. I will build on my predecessor's fine achievements in making the EU administration more transparent and efficient and will work with the excellent and committed European Ombudsman staff in bringing renewed energy and effectiveness to the Office.

It is further my intention to cooperate with the European Parliament and to engage proactively with the Commission and the other EU institutions on behalf of citizens' rights and interests."

The European Ombudsman's work

Every year, the European Ombudsman receives around 2 500 complaints from citizens, businesses, NGOs, universities, municipalities, and other entities. Each year, the institution launches more than 450 investigations. Many of these are based on complaints about lack of transparency in the EU institutions, including refusal of access to documents or information. Other cases concern problems with EU programmes or projects, discrimination, or conflicts of interest in the EU administration.

More information about the new European Ombudsman is available at:
<http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/resources/otherdocument.faces/en/50735/html.bookmark>