# Activities of the European Ombudsman - annual report 2018

2019/2134(INI) - 18/11/2019 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Petitions adopted the report by Peter JAHR on the activities of the European Ombudsman - annual report 2018.

Members welcomed the 2018 Annual Report presented by the European Ombudsman while welcoming her constructive efforts to improve the quality of the EU’s administration and the accessibility and quality of the services it offers to EU citizens.

***Greater transparency***

Stressing that restoring citizens' confidence in the Union's institutions was a priority for Parliament, the report stressed the importance of transparency and citizens' access to Council documents, more active citizen participation in decision-making, greater transparency in the way in which the administration operates and improving social dialogue.

Members welcomed the European Ombudsman's strategy to increase the visibility and impact of her mandate among EU citizens. In this context, they encouraged the Ombudsman to propose new ways for the Union institutions to better communicate with citizens in all the official languages of the Union.

The report called on the Council to implement without delay the Ombudsman's recommendations from her strategic inquiry, which concluded that the Council's transparency practices constituted acts of maladministration.

It also reiterated its call for an update on EU legislation on access to documents and requests that Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents.

Members stressed the need to:

- monitor the implementation of the Commission’s revised rules on revolving doors;

- develop more rules and stricter criteria for conflicts of interest;

- ensure transparency in the Union's decision-making process by setting up a Joint Legislative Portal for the services of the three institutions. Members expressed support for the publication of final trilogies documents.

The Commission was called on, in the phase of informal dialogue with the Member States, to ensure a high level of transparency and access to documents and information with regard to the EU Pilot and infringement procedures. The Commission should also be more involved in solving all instances of maladministration identified by the Ombudsman in the course of its activities.

***Lobbying at Union level***

The report stressed the importance of making available all information on the influence of lobbyists free of charge, fully comprehensible and easily accessible to the public, improving the accuracy of data in the

EU Transparency Register. It suggested the adoption of a legal act in order to make the Transparency Register fully mandatory and legally-binding for all EU institutions and agencies and third parties. It also reaffirmed that strict moral and ethical rules and standards need to be applied throughout the EU institutions.

The report encouraged the Ombudsman to continue her own initiative inquiry into the transparency of EMA and pharmaceutical companies' pre-submission applications for market authorisation interaction, and to continue monitoring the compliance of the Joint Sickness Insurance Scheme (JSIS) with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Members supported the Ombudsman's initiative to follow-up the #MeToo movement and call for continued monitoring of the EU administration's anti-harassment policies.

Lastly, Members reiterated their long-standing call to upgrade the current Code of Good Administrative Behaviour into a properly binding regulation for all EU institutions, agencies and third parties.