



International Ombudsman Institute – European Region
Instituto Internacional del Ombudsman – Región Europea
Institut International de l’Ombudsman – Région Européenne

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Newsletter No 7

Dear colleague,

Our annual Board meeting was graciously hosted November 6 – 10, 2007 in Sydney, Australia by IOI Regional Vice-President and New South Wales Ombudsman Bruce Barbour. All members of the European Board were able to attend the meeting, which was held in the premises of the New South Wales Parliament.

Re-elections / reappointment

At the Sydney Board meeting, Bill Angrick was re-elected President of the IOI; Tom Frawley was re-elected Vice-President. Dean David Percy will continue to serve as Treasurer. Alice Tai was reappointed Secretary. The European Board of Directors also remains unchanged.

Current status of IOI European membership

The IOI – European Region currently comprises 75 members, of whom 67 are institutional (i.e. voting) members. 41 of the institutional European members are national ombudsmen, 15 are regional and 8 are local ombudsmen. 3 institutional members are speciality ombudsmen. 8 of the European IOI members are non-voting individual, associate or provisional members.

The number of European IOI members is constantly growing. In 2006/2007, 6 ombudspersons joined the IOI as institutional members: OM Ginyo Ganey, Bulgaria; OM Marianne De Boeck, French Community, Belgium; OM Marc Fischbach, Luxembourg; OM Alessandro Barbeta, City of Milan; OM Maria Grazia Fiori, Milan Province and OM Angel Stefanov, City of Sofia. Thomas Pegram from Oxford University was admitted as individual

Board of Directors

Mr. Peter Kostelka
President
Member of the Austrian
Ombudsman Board
Singerstraße 17,
A-1015 Vienna - Austria

Mrs. Riitta-Leena Paunio
Parliamentary Ombudsman
of Finland
Arkadiankatu 3,
FI-00102 Helsinki
Finland

Consejo Directivo

Mr. Tom Frawley
Ombudsman of
Northern Ireland
33 Wellington Place
Belfast, BT1 6HN
Northern Ireland

Conseil d'administration

Mr. Rafael Ribó
Catalan Ombudsman
C/Josep Anselm Clavé 31
ES-08002 Barcelona
Spain

Mr. Mats Melin
Chief Parliamentary
Ombudsman
of Sweden
Box 16327
S-103 26 Stockholm

member. Recently, OM Silvano Micele, the Basilicata region, Italy and OM Ullrich Galle, Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany, have applied for institutional membership.

There is greater detail about the IOI European Region in the Regional Report submitted to the Board in Sydney (see attachment 1).

IOI support for training initiatives

In an initiative to meet the development and training needs of our members, it has been decided in Sydney that each of the six IOI Regions would receive C\$10,000 to support ombudsman-related training projects. As a member, you are invited to submit your project proposals by 29 February 2008 to peter.kostelka@volksanwaltschaft.gv.at . After the closing date your proposals will be evaluated and the projects judged by the Executive Committee to have most potential will be funded to a level of C\$5,000. Please feel free to contact us at the above email address if you have any queries regarding further detail on this funding opportunity.

IOI membership fees

The IOI is very much dependant on members paying their fees regularly. As regards outstanding fees, the Board has adopted the following policy:

'The Secretary be authorized to take cancellation action in respect of any member with outstanding fees of two years or more and had not applied for fee waiver or reduction, nor responded to communications from the Secretariat.

To be consistent with the previous two ,cancellation initiatives', affected members should be given prior notice of the proposed cancellation and be offered a chance to restore their membership to good standing by paying current year fees (i.e. for 2007-08).'

Applications for fee waiver or reduction should be submitted to Secretary Alice Tai, who will make a decision after consulting Vice-President Tom Frawley.

Future Head Office of the IOI

As the Law School of the University of Alberta is not in a position to continue hosting the IOI Head Office after 2009, the search for a new location has begun. An Assessment Committee comprising Tom Frawley, Bruce Barbour, Song Chul-ho, David Percy and Alice Tai has been appointed to manage the bidding process. Meanwhile, Alice Tai has invited you by e-mail to contact her if you wish to express interest in hosting the Head Office or seek further information.

The criteria the future host of the Head Office should be able to meet are listed below:

1. facilitate coordination, to integrate regional activities into a coherent whole
 2. IT capability, admin capability
 3. stability and long term commitment
 4. language capacity – 3 official languages
 5. capacity building to provide assistance to new democracies
 6. possess record for protecting human rights
 7. steady, stable international, financial and political.
 8. publishing capacity desirable
 9. to develop links between IOI and other relevant international organizations
 10. commitment to concept of ombudsmanship and be prepared to execute decision of IOI and its programmes and to retain and increase membership.
 11. sufficient financial, legal and admin capacity, to coordinate relations with other international organization.
 12. human resources.
 13. service as central point to provide advisory support and information services to members
 14. be proactive and creative in organizing activities in support of the IOI purpose
 15. language competence is important.
 16. Capacity and Connectivity. Training resource, outreach, particularly from requests from countries without ombudsman offices. Strong administrative competence, proactive secretariat. Build and maintain institutional memory.
 17. Stimulate and nurture academic interest and research on ombudsmanship, e.g. examine viability of creating scholarships/bursaries.
 18. Host web-site
 19. no travel restriction
 20. “facilitator and knowledge manager” to assist research, and to support Board in coordinating IOI commissioned research if so decided. Secretariat itself not to undertake direct research.
 21. Accounts must be kept separate from the host office.
- Dean Percy to try to explore with Alberta University for latter to maintain IOI's library and to be a depository for ombudsmanship publications and materials.

IOI World Conference 2009

The preparations for the 2009 World Conference in Stockholm are progressing well. As the Swedish Ombudsman regards the Programme for the three-day Conference as a significant matter of interest for the IOI membership, he invites you, as IOI members, to indicate which themes you would like to see addressed during the Conference. The themes identified in the draft programme are as follows:

- Plenary Session I: Current Global Trends Affecting the Work of Ombudsmen
 - Challenges Ahead in the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights
 - The Rule of Law and the Threat of Terrorism
 - Immigration and the Right to Political Asylum – a Forecast
 - Deregulation and Privatization – Dismantling Public Authority
- Workshop 1: The Ombudsman as a Human Rights Defender
- Workshop 2: The Ombudsman Reaching into the Private Sector
- Workshop 3: Without a Residence Permit – How to protect Asylum Seekers and Illegal Immigrants
- Plenary session II: Developing the Working Methods and Tools of the Ombudsman
 - Special Ombudsman Response Teams
 - Reaching out to Citizens
 - Inspections as a Pro-active Method of Combating Maladministration
- Workshop 4: Protecting Those Who Cannot Complain (prison inmates, persons under guardianship, children...)
- Workshop 5: Is Omnipotence Necessarily an Asset? – Problems facing Ombudsmen with Multiple Mandates
- Workshop 6: Enforcing the Law on the Law Enforcing Authorities – Supervising the Police
- Proposal by OM Rafael Ribó: The role of regional and local Ombudsmen

On the Day of Celebration of the world's first ombudsman institution (200 years of existence), the following topics are scheduled to be on the agenda:

- Back to Roots: Tracing the Swedish Origin of Ombudsman Institutions

- The Original Recipe – 200 Years of Swedish Experience
- Adjusting the Recipe – Creating a Danish Ombudsman Office
- The Further Spread of the Ombudsman Idea in Europe
- The Ombudsman Travels to the Anglo-Saxon World
- Mediation as a New Ombudsman Tool
- Protecting the People – the Iberoamerican Approach to Ombudsmanship
- The Diversity of Ombudsmen in Asia
- The Diwan al Madhalim as Ombudsman – the Islamic Tradition of Complaints Handling
- Establishing a New Institution at a Time of Transition – Experiences from Two Continents
- Leaving the National Arena – Adopting the Recipe to the Supranational Level

The IOI Board in Sydney also suggested some of the following themes might be included in the Stockholm Conference:

- Using IT as a platform to support the work of ombudsman
- Identifying and acknowledging best practice among Ombudsmen
- Securing and maintaining the independence of ombudsman
- Anti-corruption initiatives
- A Treaty on Torture as part of the human rights framework
- The citizen watchdog a challenge or an opportunity

We would be very grateful if you made proposals and let us know your preferred themes by e-mail to peter.kostelka@volksanwaltschaft.gv.at , it would be helpful to have your ideas before 31st March 2008.

International conference in Ghent (Belgium)

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the ombudsman institution of the City of Ghent, Belgium, OM Rita Passemiers will host a conference on 'The Impact of the Ombudsman',

14 – 15 April 2008. IOI members are very welcome to take part in this event (see attachment 2).

Co-operation with the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights

As you know from previous newsletters, a considerable number of European ombudsmen want to establish closer co-operation with the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights. Meanwhile, a network of correspondents, so-called focal points, has been set up. At their first meeting on 6 – 7 November 2007 in Strasbourg, these correspondents worked on a programme of technical co-operation activities and information exchange. (For additional information see:

http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/Activities/event_files/071106focalpointmeeting_en.asp)

Good administration

Good administration was not only the general topic of the ‘Sixth Seminar of the National Ombudsmen of EU Member States and Candidate Countries’ organized by the European and the French Ombudsman, it is also the focus of the new section of the IOI Europe-website. Visit www.ioi-europe.org to learn more about your colleagues’ approach to good administration and best practices.