Glossary of summaries

OMBUDSMAN
The position of Ombudsman was established by the Treaty on European Union (Maastricht, 1992) to ensure the sound administration and transparency of EU institutions. On 16 December 2014, Emily O’Reilly was re-elected as European Ombudsman by the European Parliament for a 5-year term.
The Ombudsman is completely independent and impartial in the performance of her duties. Her main objective is to support the EU institutions in becoming more effective, transparent and accountable.
The Ombudsman can open an investigation on her own initiative or following a complaint, if an institution or body of the European Union fails to respect:
- fundamental rights,
- legal rules or principles,
- the principles of good administration.

Any EU citizen, resident or enterprise or association in an EU country, can lodge a complaint with the Ombudsman about maladministration.
Complaints may relate to:
- access to information,
- administrative delay,
- unfairness or discrimination,
- lack of transparency.

Where the Ombudsman finds maladministration, she refers it to the institution concerned, and, where necessary, submits draft recommendations to which the institution must reply within 3 months. If the institution does not agree to the proposed recommendations, the Ombudsman may not impose a solution but is able to submit a report on the question to the Parliament so that it can take the appropriate measures.
The Ombudsman cannot investigate:
- complaints against national, regional, or local authorities in EU countries, even when the complaints are related to EU matters;
- the activities of national courts or ombudsmen;
- complaints against businesses or private individuals.

SEE ALSO
- Citizenship of the Union
- Court of Justice of the European Union
- European Parliament
- Petitions
- European Ombudsman's website