

The Office of the Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman) – Cyprus



Brief profile

Contact details

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Overview

The Commissioner for Administration is the Ombudsman of the Republic of Cyprus, whose mandate has been extended in May 2004 to also act as National Equality Body (NEB). Within the Body, 2 departments operate: *The Equality Authority* – dealing with discrimination in the field of employment and occupation, and gender issues in all fields – and *The Anti-discrimination Body* – dealing with all other grounds except gender, in all fields except employment/occupation.

Type of equality body

The *Office of the Commissioner for Administration* is a predominantly quasi-judicial body¹.

Grounds and fields of discrimination covered

Grounds	Fields	
	Employment	Beyond employment (education, goods & services, housing, etc.)
Gender	◆	◆
Race and ethnic origin	◆	◆
Age	◆	◆
Disability	◆	◆
Sexual orientation	◆	◆
Religion and belief	◆	◆
Other *	◆	◆

* National origin, community, language, social class, wealth and any other ground. These are not covered by specific national laws, but the NEB's mandate covers all rights protected by the Bulgarian Constitution, which provides protection on all grounds of discrimination.

¹ According to a [European Commission study on Equality Bodies](#), predominantly quasi-judicial bodies are "impartial institutions which spend the bulk of their time and resources hearing, investigating and deciding on individual instances of discrimination brought before them" (page 43);

Detailed profile

Brief history

The Office of the Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman) is an Independent Public Authority, established with Primary legislation in January 1991 (*The Commissioner of Administration Law of 1991*). Based on this Law, the Commissioner (Ombudsman) exercises control over decisions and actions taken by public administrative authorities.

In April 2003, in compliance with article 13 of the Racial Directive (No 2000/43/EC), the Cypriot Government decided to designate the Ombudsman's Office as the National Equality Body (NEB) for combating discrimination. For this purpose, a new Law was put in effect on May 1st, 2004 (Law 42(I)/2004) which extended the Ombudsman's mandate to combat all forms and grounds of discrimination forbidden by Directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC, as well as other forms/grounds of discrimination forbidden by:

- The Cypriot Constitution;
- The International Conventions ratified by Cyprus;
- Other national Laws (e.g. Law 205(I) 2002 forbidding gender discrimination in employment).

With regard to issues/cases relating to discrimination, the Ombudsman's mandate was extended to cover also the private sector.

Mandate

- **Powers:** the *Office of the Commissioner for Administration* is a predominantly quasi-judicial body;
- **Litigation powers:** formally deciding on complaints (decision or recommendation) – *legally binding* (i.e. in the sense that the Ombudsman has powers to issue decrees to end discriminatory actions or practices and, then, impose monetary fines on non-compliant individuals/ organizations).

Grounds and fields of discrimination covered

Grounds	Fields				
	Employment	Education	Housing	Social protection	Goods and Services
Gender	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Race and ethnic origin	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Age	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Disability	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Sexual orientation	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Religion and belief	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Other *	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆

* National origin, community, language, social class, wealth and any other ground. These grounds, together with the grounds covered by Directives 2000/43 and 2000/78, are covered by Cyprus's Constitution and, therefore, according to Law 42(I)/2004, also covered by the equality body. The protection from non-discrimination is not limited to specific fields but extends to the enjoyment of all constitutional rights and freedoms.

Activities

- Promotional activities aimed at duty bearers (by way of trainings, guidance material, etc.);
- Promotional activities aimed at potential victims (trainings, awareness raising, etc.);
- Communication activities;
- Publications and research projects;
- Number of inquiries / complaints lodged and cases handled per year: **279** complaints submitted and **244** complaints handled in 2010. The figures include the complaints submitted to/handled by both Departments/Authorities of the NEB (The Anti-discrimination Body and the Equality Authority).

Structure

1. Management structure

- Type: single headed equality body (led by director or ombudsman/commissioner);
- Details: the Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman), Ms Eliza Savvidou, is by law the head of the National Equality Body. In her work she is assisted by two high ranking Officers of the Office – Mr. Aristos Tsiartas, Acting Head of the the *Anti-discrimination Body*, and, Ms. Eleni Hadjittofi, Acting Head of the *Equality Authority*.

2. Institutional structure

- Type: equality body consists of offices of ombudsmen;

3. Nomination of senior staff and board: the Commissioner (Ombudsman) is appointed by the president of the Republic on the recommendation of the Council of Ministers and with the prior consent of the majority of members of Parliament. The Ombudsman serves for a six year term and may be re-appointed.

4. Number of staff: nine (9) Officers and 2 persons from the administration/clerical personnel deal with equality issues. All these people also carry out duties that fall under the Office's other competences not related to equality issues.

Operating budget (for the parts of the organization dealing with equality issues)

The General Budget of the Ombudsman's Office that was approved by Parliament for the year 2011 was 2.083.502 €. However, as stated above, the NEB does not have a separate budget. The overwhelming majority of this budget is allocated to cover the salaries of the staff.

Accountability (reporting to)

The Commissioner is required to issue an Annual Report regarding the activities of the NEB. The Report is submitted firstly to the President of the Republic and then to Parliament.

Contact details (address, key contact person, website)

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Websites:

www.no-discrimination.gov.cy (website of the NEB – available in Greek, English and Turkish)

www.ombudsman.gov.cy (website of the Ombudsman's Office)