

Brief profile

Contact details

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Overview

The Office of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Latvia is an independent institution. The Ombudsman of the Republic of Latvia is an official elected by the Parliament, whose main tasks are encouragement of the protection of human rights and promotion of a legal and expedient state authority, which observes the principle of good administration. The Ombudsman is independent in its actions and is governed only by law.

Type of equality body

The *Office of the Ombudsman* is a predominantly promotion-type and legal support 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	◆	◆

¹ According to a [European Commission study on Equality Bodies](#), predominantly promotion-type equality bodies “spend the bulk of their time and resources on a broader mix of activities that include supporting good practice in organisations, raising awareness of rights, developing a knowledge base on equality and non-discrimination, and providing legal advice and assistance to individual victims of discrimination” (page 44).

Detailed profile

Brief history

The Ombudsman Office of the Republic of Latvia was established in 2007. The legal foundation is based on the Ombudsman Law. The Ombudsman Law was passed on 6 April 2006 and became effective on 1 January 2007. Ombudsman's Law was adopted by Saeima and proclaimed by the President of the Republic of Latvia. The Ombudsman shall be approved in the office by the Saeima pursuant to the proposal of not less than five members of the Saeima. The office of the Ombudsman may not be combined with a membership in a political party. The Ombudsman shall be independent in his or her activities and shall be governed exclusively by the law. No one has the right to influence the Ombudsman in the performance of his or her functions and tasks.

Mandate

- **Powers:** the *Office of the Ombudsman* is a predominantly promotion-type and legal support body;
- **Litigation powers:**
 - Representing in front of courts;
 - Formally deciding on complaints (decision or recommendation) – *not legally binding*;

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 *		♦			

* *Material and social status, occupation and place of residence.*

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: **3953**

Structure

1. Management structure

- Type: single headed equality body (led by an ombudsman);
- Details:
 - The Head of the institution is the Ombudsman. Then there are divisions and each division has a head of division. There are 6 divisions and a separate Deputy Head of Office and Chancellery. Together there are 39 staff members in the office.

2. Institutional structure

- Type: the equality body is part of another structure (i.e. office of ombudsman).

3. Nomination of senior staff and board:

The Ombudsman shall be approved in the office by the Saeima, pursuant to the proposal of not less than five members of the Saeima. The Ombudsman can be a citizen of Latvia who has an unimpeachable reputation, has attained 30 years of age, has a higher education, has knowledge and work experience in the field of law enforcement and who in accordance with the requirements of the Law on Official Secrets (Article 9) is entitled to receive a special permit for accessing official state secrets. A citizen with dual citizenship may not be approved as the Ombudsman. Other staff members are approved by public advertisement or nominated by the Ombudsman (for example from existing lawyers).

4. Number of staff (dealing with equality issues): in the Division of Equal Treatment there are 2 lawyers (including the Head of Division) and 2 legal assistants.

Operating budget

The general budget of the office for 2012 is 681.149 LVL (approx. 975.000 €).

Accountability (reporting to)

The Ombudsman has to submit annual reports to the Saeima and the State President. (Ombudsman Law, Section 15, Article 1). These reports are general, for entire office activities and not for separate divisions.

Contact details (address, key contact person, website)

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