

Article – Parliament re-elects Emily O'Reilly as European Ombudsman



She was re-elected by MEPs in a secret ballot in Strasbourg on 18 December 2019. She received 320 votes out of 600.

O'Reilly has served as European Ombudsman since [1 October 2013](#). Previously, she had been Ireland's first female ombudsman and information commissioner, commissioner for environmental information from 2007 and also worked as a journalist and broadcaster.

The vote followed a public hearing on 3 December, where [MEPs questioned the five candidates](#) on what they intended to bring to the post of EU Ombudsman by way of impartiality, visibility and transparency, if elected.

About the European Ombudsman

At the start of each new parliamentary term, MEPs elect an ombudsman for a five-year term.

The European Ombudsman investigates complaints from citizens, EU residents and EU-based [organisations](#) about poor administration by EU institutions or other EU bodies, such as unfair conduct, discrimination, unnecessary delays or incorrect procedures.

The ombudsman's office can also launch investigations on its own initiative.

It reports back to the European Parliament each year.

Get the facts and figures about the Ombudsman's work in 2018 in the infographic below:

[Press release – Emily O'Reilly re-elected European Ombudsman](#)



The Ombudsman conducts inquiries into cases of maladministration by EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies, acting on their own initiative or on the basis of complaints from EU citizens.

Emily O'Reilly was elected in three rounds of voting. O'Reilly is a former journalist and served as the first female Irish Ombudsman for ten years prior to being elected European Ombudsman in 2013.

Four candidates, Giuseppe Fortunato (Italy), Julia Laffranque (Estonia), Emily O'Reilly (Ireland) and Cecilia Wikström (Sweden), took part in the second ballot, following Nils Muižnieks' (Latvia) withdrawal.

In the third ballot, Members had to choose between Julia Laffranque and Emily O'Reilly, the two candidates with the most votes, as set out by the [rules](#). Julia Laffranque received 280 votes, Emily O'Reilly – 320.

During the Petitions Committee public hearing on 3 December, Emily O'Reilly pledged to continue working to make the EU administration a role model for the whole of the EU, by putting citizens and their rights at the centre of its actions.

“What the EU administration needs is to re-earn the trust of its citizens. I

believe that this trust can be earned through increasing the institutions' accountability and transparency. Only when you are allowed to see how a decision is taken, can you start to understand why it was taken and only then can you start to trust", she told MEPs on [3 December](#).

Background information

The European Ombudsman is an independent and impartial body, established in 1995, to hold the EU's institutions and agencies (excluding the Court of Justice) to account and to promote the principles of good administration. The watchdog's office exercises 'soft powers' by dealing with complaints from people and legal entities, concerning maladministration in EU institutions, but also proactively looks into broader systemic issues, such as transparency and service-oriented behaviour.

The incumbent EU Ombudsman is Irishwoman [Emily O'Reilly](#). She first took office in July 2013 and was the first female European Ombudsman. She was preceded by [Jacob Söderman](#) (1995-2003) and [Paraskevas Nikiforos Diamandouros](#) (2003-2013).

[Press release – Malta: investigation risks being compromised while Prime Minister is in office](#)



In a resolution adopted with 581 votes to 26 and 83 abstentions, Parliament stresses that “any risk of compromising the investigations (...) must be excluded by all means” and warns that this risk will persist for “as long as the Prime Minister remains in office”.

The text points to the allegations of corruption and money laundering against the Maltese Prime Minister, and in particular his Chief of Staff and the former Minister for Tourism, other government members and private companies and individuals connected to them, regretting that parallel investigations “have not advanced or have not even been launched”.

Protect democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights

“Developments in Malta in recent years have led to serious and persistent threats to the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights”, says the EP, highlighting its concerns over freedom of the media, the independence of the police and judiciary, the freedom of peaceful assembly and the separation of powers.

MEPs welcome recent comments by Commission Vice-President Jourová, stating that Malta’s failure to enact judicial reforms could serve as a basis for triggering an Article 7 procedure. They reiterate the need to establish a permanent, independent EU-wide mechanism on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights to safeguard the EU’s values.

Parliament also asks for Malta’s investor citizenship and residence schemes to be abolished, as these effectively sell EU citizenship and pose a threat to anti-money laundering efforts, the fight against cross-border crime and

the integrity of the Schengen area.

Finally, the text welcomes the creation of an annual “European Daphne Caruana Galizia prize for outstanding investigative journalism”. The necessary arrangements to set this prize up should be finalised as soon as possible.

Background

Following the latest revelations about the murder of investigative journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia in 2017 and subsequent political instability in Malta, a [European Parliament delegation travelled to the country from 3 to 4 December](#) to assess the situation on the ground. Its [draft mission report](#) will be discussed in the Civil Liberties Committee early next year.

Denmark: EIB to support hearing aid innovation with Demant

- **EIB signs DKK 900 million (EUR 120.5 million) loan agreement with Demant A/S.**
- **Demant to use financing for research, development and innovation.**

The European Investment Bank (EIB) has signed a DKK 900 million financing agreement with Demant A/S to support its investments in research, development and innovation (RDI) in the hearing healthcare sector.

On a technical level, the RDI investments will target the current and the next generation of hearing healthcare technology on both a software and hardware level, as well as doing prospective research into Artificial Intelligence, connectivity and deep learning.

*“This type of investment is music to our ears,” said EIB Vice-President **Alexander Stubb**. “Hearing aids play an important role in the wellbeing of many European citizens, not only through a reduction in hearing impairment-related illnesses, but also through social inclusion for those affected. Having EU-champions in this field is a major asset for European business and know-how.”*

Background information:

Demant A/S

Demant is a world-leading hearing healthcare group that offers solutions and services to help people with hearing loss connect with the world around them. In every aspect, from hearing devices, hearing implants and diagnostics to intelligent audio solutions and hearing care all over the world, Demant is active and engaged. The Demant Group operates in a global market with companies in more than 30 countries and employs more than 14,500 employees.

Enhanced front office goes live at the Estonia Patent Office

December 18, 2019 [General](#)

Enhanced front office goes live at the Estonia Patent Office



The Estonian Patent Office (EPA) has now fully implemented the upgrade of its front office IT system, increasing functionality and performance for users, with the support of the European Cooperation programme at the EUIPO.

The upgrade represents a further step forward in the successful transposition of Directive (EU) 2015/2436 in Estonia and compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) completed earlier this year.

The EUIPO and its stakeholders are working together on five major [European Cooperation Projects](#) (ECP), with the main aim of benefiting users across the EU by providing modern, state-of-the-art tools and services for EU IP offices.