

# 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).