



# European Ombudsman Internal Charter of Good Practice

The purpose of the internal Charter of Good Practice is to set out the standards and principles that guide our activities and our interactions with stakeholders.

We commit to providing a service that demonstrates:

- Leadership in problem solving
- Independence and neutrality
- Innovative approaches to dispute resolution
- Systemic thinking
- External awareness and curiosity
- Responsiveness
- Empathy
- Openness and engagement

## 1. Leadership in problem solving

This means that we show willingness to identify and resolve problems and complaints by taking initiatives, being persistent and working as a team that is able to anticipate consequences and make decisions that take account of diverse perspectives.

## 2. Independence and neutrality

This means that we are neutral as between the parties and are guided in our work solely by the Treaties, the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the Statute. It also means that the language used in all communications is unbiased and that our final decisions in particular are worded in a manner which reflects our independence.



### **3. Innovative approaches to dispute resolution**

This means that we are creative in seeking solutions to complaints and instances of maladministration, that we are ready to take risks and are open to finding new ways to achieve the best outcomes within the limits of our remit and in accordance with our governing rules and principles.

### **4. Systemic thinking**

This means that we try to understand the wider context of an issue. In doing so, we look beyond the complaint or particular concern to the bigger systemic issue if appropriate and consider the public interest impact of the issue.

### **5. External awareness and curiosity**

This means that we are proactive in informing ourselves of external events and trends through media, internet, and other sources and are alert to new facts and issues that may have implications for our work. This naturally may extend beyond the working day.

### **6. Responsiveness**

This means that our internal processes are set to achieving the best possible outcome in the shortest amount of time. It means that we recognise that we work in a dynamic environment where changes or new events may have implications for case prioritisation or case handling.

### **7. Empathy**

This means that we appreciate the dignity of everyone who comes to seek our help recognising that there is a background and context to every complaint we receive and that we may provide the last opportunity for a complainant to have their problem, if possible, solved. It means that we ensure that every communication is respectful and kind while being mindful of the need to protect ourselves and our colleagues from demonstrably abusive or inappropriate communications from complainants or others.



## 8. Openness and engagement

This means that we communicate in a way that assures complainant and institution that we are listening to, and evaluating, their submissions and observations in an engaged and open-minded way. It means listening to the complainant, understanding the complaint, and listening to, and understanding, the position of the institution. It implies the withholding of final judgment until all appropriate procedural steps have been taken. It also implies an understanding that a complainant's confidence in our service can be strengthened by appropriate communication even if we cannot finally deal with the complaint or ensure redress. It also means that some complainants may struggle to articulate their complaint and that we have a role in helping them to identify it.

Emily O'Reilly

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