





practices; (j) creation of the Working Group; and (k) 9<sup>th</sup> AOM Meeting in Malta].<sup>3</sup> The Secretary General remarked that the AOM Program 2016 presented by the President is comprehensive and forward-looking.

With regard to the issue of the financial resources of the Association, the Secretary General underlined the importance of gathering of all membership fees, as well as the leveraging of external financial resources through projects and partnerships with various institutions and organizations (such as the Council of Europe, Venice Commission etc.). Concerning the particular case of the Russian Commissioner on Human Rights, given that since joining the Association in 2008 no membership fees have been paid and no participation has been insured in any AOM meetings and activities, it is was proposed to proceed with the withholding of the membership status.

With no comments or reservations, the Report of the Secretary General was adopted by the Assembly.

---

### Report by the AOM Treasurer

#### Parliamentary Ombudsman of Malta, Chief Justice Emeritus Mr. Joseph Said Pullicino

---

In the capacity of AOM Treasurer, the Parliamentary Ombudsman of Malta made note to the 2015 Financial Report submitted to the General Assembly, including financial statements and narrative reporting on the administration of the Association's funds.<sup>4</sup> In follow up, the Maltese delegate in charge of the financial folder at the institution presented in detail the contents of the report.

With regard to the financial standing of the Association, the Treasurer underlined that AOM continues to remain dependent on membership fees to finance its activities and identified the predicament of the decline in membership fees payments during 2015. Besides the issue of non-payment of fees, it was highlighted that there is a need to attract contributions from outside sources (including from international organizations and EU Commission) linked to specific projects initiated or promoted by the Association.

### Notes

- (i) **Membership fees** / Out of 27 member institutions, 15 paid their annual subscription of € 750 for 2015 and one member institution paid its backdated membership fee for 2014. The Office of the EU Ombudsman paid an associate membership fee of € 600. Member subscriptions are accounted in the year received.
- (ii) **Travel Costs** / Travel costs consisted of air travel to Morocco for the attendance of the AOM Training course by two participants and for once participant representing AOM at the 'Meeting of the Implementation of the Marrakech Declaration' held in Morocco.
- (iii) **Cash and cash equivalents** / € 60,942 constitute the balance in the AOM bank account as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015. No petty cash is held.

---

<sup>3</sup> Annex III, *Report of the AOM Secretary General*.

<sup>4</sup> Annex IV, *AOM Financial Report of 25 January 2016, Summary of 2015 Financial Report (Statement of income and expenditure), and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2015*.



---

## Modification of the AOM Statutes

---

The President introduced to the General Assembly the propositions received regarding the adoption of amendments of the AOM Statutes regarding the length of the tenure of elected AOM governing bodies/offices and the establishment of the Adhesion Committee.

The modification of provisos regulating the terms of office entail: (a) amendments to Article 9.4.2, Article 10.2.1 and Article 10.2.2 for the prolongation of the mandates from two to three years for the office of the President, the first and second Vice-Presidents, the Secretary General, the Treasurer, as well as of the Executive Committee and of the Governing Board; and (b) amendments to Article 11.1 for the eligibility for renewal of the offices of the Executive Committee.<sup>5</sup> The Secretary General remarked that the extension by one year of the mandates of the AOM governing bodies/offices and their renewability provide for more time for the fulfillment of objectives and activities of the Association. The President invited delegates to floor comments on the proposed amendments, which were endorsed without any reservations by the voting members of the General Assembly.

With regard to the regulation of modalities for the adhesion of new member/observer institutions in the Association, the Secretary General remarked that, as discussed and agreed at the Governing Board meeting held prior to the session of the General Assembly, standing membership requests shall be processed according the standing stipulations of the AOM Statutes given that the Adhesion Committee has yet to be formally constituted.

Insofar as the establishment and prospective functioning of the Adhesion Committee is concerned, the proposed amendments entail Article 7.7.2, Article 7.7.3 and Article 7.7.4 of the Statutes. The proposed changes foresee that (a) the Sectary General submit the membership applications to the Adhesion Committee; (b) in keeping with the principle of geographical representation, the Adhesion Committee shall be chaired by the First Vice-President and will comprise of two other members: one from the North and one from the South, elected by the General Assembly and enjoying a three-year long mandate; and (c) the capacity of the Adhesion Committee to make justified recommendations and submit them alongside the full application documents to the Executive Board, which in turn evaluates and submits its own justified recommendation to the Governing Board (in case of lacking consensus, it is foreseen that the Adhesion Committee endorses a positive or negative recommendation with a majority of its members).<sup>6</sup>

The President invited delegates to floor comments on the proposed amendments on the establishment of the Adhesion Committee, which were endorsed without any reservations by the voting members of the General Assembly.

---

<sup>5</sup> Annex V, *Modification of the AOM Statutes*, Part II.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, Part I.

---

## Applications for membership

---

The representative of the First Vice-President presented summary comments on the applications for membership received since the previous AOM General Assembly, including:

- Application for membership as *associate member* by the Ombudsman of Catalonia;
- Application for membership as *associate member* by the Office of the President of the Coordination of Italian Regional Ombudsmen;
- Application for *full membership* by the People's Advocate of Kosovo;
- Application for *full membership* by the High Commissioner for the protection of rights liberties and for mediation of the Principality of Monaco;
- Application for *full membership* by the Ombudsman of Turkey.

The Secretary General underlined that as also discussed and earlier in the Governing Board meeting, the candidatures shall be treated according to the standing provisos of the AOM Statute, since the Adhesion Committee has not been formally constituted yet. The AOM Treasurer underlined that in assessing membership applications and the outreach of the Association, it is of importance full membership is allowed not just for national but also supranational status, given that the latter also have all the attributes for becoming members by virtue of their capacity to receive complaints, issue recommendations etc. The President fielded the General Assembly for comments and with consensus agreement was reached to proceed with these terms of reference for the evaluation of the applications.

For each of the membership requests, the following issues were brought up and respective decisions were taken by the General Assembly:

- By consensus the application of the Ombudsman of Catalonia was endorsed, granting the institution the status of *associate member*;
- Regarding the application from the Italian institution, it was remarked that the ambiguities in the statutes of the Office of the President of the Coordination of Italian Regional Ombudsmen need to be cleared prior to granting the status of full membership, whereas by consensus the General Assembly decided to grant the status of *associate member*.
- Regarding the application from the People's Advocate of Kosovo, various delegates at the General Assembly discussed on the eligibility for full membership. The AOM Treasurer and Parliamentary Ombudsman of Malta made note that the application of the Kosovar institution is in compliance with the AOM Statutes and that particularities of political issues are of no consequence for the Association. The AOM President and Albanian Ombudsman also underlined that the application by Kosovo is in full compliance with the criteria for full membership. Reservations were expressed by Georgia, Spain and Israel, which confirmed their vote not in

favor of full membership. The floor was taken by Macedonia confirming the vote in favor of full membership, including the proxy voting in favor of full membership on behalf of Montenegro<sup>7</sup>; France also confirmed its vote in favor of full membership, including the proxy voting on behalf of Andorra. Tunisia also took the floor to remark on the importance of expanding the outreach of the Association and confirm its vote in favor of the application. The AOM President invited delegates to present further comments and/or reservations. In the absence of further objections and in keeping with the procedures for admission, by a majority vote the General Assembly decided to grant the People's Advocate of Kosovo the status of *full member*.

- By consensus the application of the High Commissioner for the protection of rights liberties and for mediation of the Principality of Monaco was endorsed, granting the institution the status of *full member*.
- With regard to the application by the Chief Ombudsman Institution of Turkey, the AOM General Secretary underlined that as also valued by the AOM Governing Board, the full membership of the Turkish institution is commendable. Delegates remarked that, notwithstanding the need to affirm the dissolution of the former member institution in light of changes to the legislative framework regulating Human Rights Commission at the Prime Minister's Office, the application for membership should be endorsed. By consensus the Chief Ombudsman Institution of Turkey was granted the status of *full member*.

The AOM President congratulated the decisions taken by the General Assembly for new associate and member institutions and invited representatives of these institutions to take the floor. The representative of Monaco and the People's Advocate of Kosovo thanked the General Assembly for welcoming their respective institutions in the Associations, remarking the importance of membership in AOM from a regional and international perspective.

---

### Presentation of the new website of AOM

---

The AOM liaison officer at the General Secretariat presented the new website platform of AOM carried out in keeping with the decision of the General Assembly of 2014 held in Tirana. The preparations for the launching of the upgraded official website has been carried out in close partnership between the office of the AOM President, the office of AOM Honorary President and Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco (in charge of administering the site until the start of the project) and the office of the AOM General Secretary. Based on a decision endorsed by the Executive Board, the web project was entrusted to the France-based ICT company 'Ideal Productions' and will be completed by April 2016. The

---

<sup>7</sup> Prior to the holding of the General Assembly, the AOM Secretariat received the following voting member institutions delegated their voting powers in keeping with Article 9.1 of the AOM Statute : Mediator of the Principate of Andorra (delegated to the French Defender of Rights); Protector of Justice of Portugal (delegated to the Spanish Defender of People); Ombudsman of Human Rights and Liberties of Montenegro (delegated to the Macedonian Ombudsman institution).

presentation of the upgraded website focus on the various design and content features of the various sections. The platform is both computer- and smartphone-friendly. The offices of the AOM President and General Secretary shall administer the website upon its official launching.

The AOM President congratulated the work carried out and emphasized its importance for the communications strategy of the Association and its visibility. Member institutions were invited to utilize the web-platform as a medium to present their work, to share information, to facilitate exchanges and to promote AOM-related activities. The website shall feature content in the four languages of the Association, viz. English, French, Arabic and Spanish.

---

### **AOM Trainings**

The AOM Honorary President and Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco Mr. Benzakour underlined the importance of the continuance of the Rabat training program, which has established a significant tradition for AOM with the 6 training sessions carried out thus far over the years. Mr. Benzakour confirmed the commitment of the Moroccan institution to continue contributing with the organization and facilitation of these training activities.

The upcoming edition of the Rabat training shall be held in October 2016, focusing on the general theme of migration and in particular on issues related to the deontology of security. Member institutions were invited to ensure the wide participation in these training activities, in order to support the continued enhancement of organizational capacities and exchange of know-how.

The AOM President Mr. Totozani expressed appreciation on behalf of the Association for the contribution by the Moroccan institution under the leadership of Honorary President Mr. Benzakour. With reference to resources and programs supporting institutional capacity-building, the AOM Treasurer and Parliamentary Ombudsman of Malta Mr. Pullicino made note of the progress regarding the establishment of the Malta Institute as a financially self-sustaining institution, in partnership with AOM though the latter shall no bear any financial implications.

---

### **Presentation of the AOM study on good practices**

In keeping with the initiative launched in the 2012 General Assembly in Malta and its further endorsement in the 2014 General Assembly in Albania, the compendium of AOM good institutional practices has been compiled under the aegis of the office of the AOM Honorary President and Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco. The thematic approach of this AOM study has focused on displaying diverse good practices developed by member institutions in promoting good governance and institutional mediation, as well highlighting the importance of synergies and cooperation.

With a view to enriching the compendium of good practices, member institutions that have yet not participated in the study were invited to contribute with information on the various feature sections. AOM members avail of preliminary versions of the compendium in French, Arabic and English.



