



## AOM NEWS

June 2018  
NEW Edition

### No.10 | In this edition:

- AOM Activities: Meeting in Skopje & Election of the Board Members
- AOM Members News

#### AOM Activities

### Tenth Meeting of the Association of Mediterranean Ombudsmen at the Skopje Conference



The 2018 AOM Conference was held on May 30 and 31 in Skopje, Macedonia.

The year 2018 is the Macedonian Ombudsman Office's 20th anniversary and AOM's 10th anniversary. AOM Members were gathered to discuss the following topic : " The Ombudsman as the protector of the social, cultural and environment rights".

The AOM General Assembly elected the members of the Governing Board on May 31, 2018 for the 2019-2022 mandate.

The composition is as follows:

- President, Mr. Andreas POTTAKIS, the Greek Ombudsman ;
- 1st Vice-president, Mr. Francisco FERNÁNDEZ MARUGÁN, Defender of People, Spain ;
- 2nd Vice-president, Mrs. Erinda BALLANCA, People's Advocate, Albania ;
- Treasurer and Secretary general, Mr. Anthony C. MIFSUD, Parliamentary Ombudsman, Malta ;
- Member, Mr. Jacques Toubon, Defender of Rights, France ;
- Member, Mr. Ixhet MEMETI, People's Advocate, Macedonia ;
- Member, Judge (Ret.) Joseph SHAPIRA, State Comptroller and Ombudsman, Israel ;
- Member, Mr. Issam YOUNIS, General Commissioner of the Independent Commission for Human Rights, Palestinian Authority ;
- Member, Mrs. Vlasta NUSSDORFER, Ombudsman, Slovenia ;
- Member, Mrs. Maria STYLIANOU-LOTTIDES, Ombudsman, Cyprus ;
- Member, Mr. Abdessattar BEN MOUSSA, Administrative Mediator, Tunisia.

The General Assembly has adopted a **Declaration** that you can read below.

[Read the Declaration](#)

#### AOM Members News

### Albania | The People's Advocate Organized an Activity entitled "Stop The Use Of Children's Employment" on International Day Against Children's Employment



The People's Advocate, in cooperation with UNICEF Office and OSCE Office, Albania, organized the activity "Stop Child Labor Exploitation", on the occasion of June 12, International Day Against Child Labor.

This activity aimed at raising the awareness of the society and state institutions through the active identification of child labor exploitation cases and the priority treatment of each reported case of exploited child and taking concrete action to remove the child from the economic exploitation situation.

The People's Advocate presented the findings and challenges for the improvement of the work of the responsible state institutions at the central and local level for the identification, referral and protection of the children employed for work in the Municipality of Bulqiza.

Child labor is one of the most common violations in terms of protecting them from economic exploitation.

In the world, about 150 million children a year are engaged in one of the forms of paid or unpaid work (ILO, 2015). Even in Albania, the phenomenon of child labor exists and is widespread. About 200 children are used for work in the energy sector, mainly engaged in mines in the Bulqiza area.

[Read More \(in Albanian\)](#)

### France | The Defender of Rights issued an opinion on the draft law for controlled immigration, effective right of asylum and successful integration.



Heard on May 17, 2018 by the rapporteur of the Senate Law Commission, on the draft law for asylum and immigration, the Defender of Rights issued a new opinion. The Defender of Rights notes that the whole of the present bill adopted by the National Assembly is underpinned by a logic of suspicion tending to prioritize repressive considerations to the detriment of the most fundamental rights of foreigners.

Having been informed of the letter sent to the Commission on the Laws of the National Assembly by the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights, the Defender of Rights notices that he shares several of the reservations formulated in this opinion particularly with regard to the proposed asylum measures. The Commissioner also, like the Defender of Rights, recommends that the detention of minors be ended.

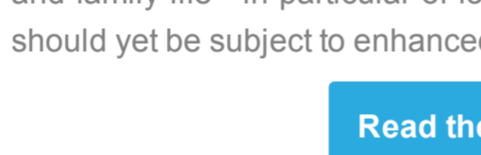
Regarding asylum, the measures considered by the government to achieve the objective of speeding up the processing of applications stand in a logic of criminalization and punishment of asylum seekers. These measures confine to an expeditious treatment of claims, to the detriment of the rights and procedural safeguards of asylum seekers.

In addition to these infringements of the right to asylum, which will lead to a greater number of "rejected" demands, the Defender of Rights notes that the same repressive logic tends to legitimize an unprecedented reinforcement of the coercive means to the service of the fight against irregular immigration and of deportation from the French territory.

Finally, in terms of residency, the Defender of Rights highlights that the improvements provided by the draft law and approved by the National Assembly – generally unfinished and related to the need to transpose European legislative texts into French law – must be qualified by the implementation of new restrictions likely to bring serious violations of the right to respect for private and family life - in particular of foreigners who, as members of French families, should yet be subject to enhanced protection.

[Read the Opinion \(in French\)](#)

### Greece | Reunification of alien minors, housed in a shelter, with their mother who was released from prison



A non-governmental organization (NGO), which deals with the support of prisoners and ex-prisoners, reported to the Authority that an alien mother was prevented from communicating and reuniting with her two minor children who, at the time of her detention, were housed in a child protection shelter, following the public prosecutor's order.

The investigation of the case showed that the impediment was mainly due to errors and shortcomings in the entry in civil records of the two infants who were born in Greece. Another serious issue was that the mother's deadline to leave the country had expired, which resulted in her illegal stay. Because of the above problems, the prosecutor rejected the reunification request, and the competent consulate did not issue travel documents for the family to return to their homeland.

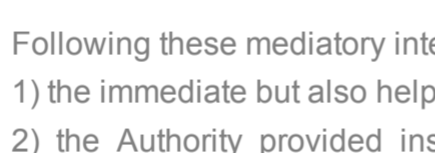
The Ombudsman instructed the NGO to carry out the necessary actions (administrative and judicial) for the settlement of the civil status of the minors, as well as the temporary legalisation of the mother's residence in Greece. The Authority also requested assistance from the relevant Embassy and the Ombudsman of the aliens' country of origin, regarding the issue of a temporary travel document to the younger child and also the social service's activation after the family's return. In the context of intensive co-operation with the competent Greek public prosecutor, the Authority's suggestion for a DNA test by was met with a positive response.

Following these mediatory interventions:

- 1) the immediate but also helpful reunification of the family was ordered;
- 2) the Authority provided instructions for the acceleration of the process of correcting the civil status of the younger child as soon as possible, aiming at the family's timely departure from Greece, even in case the foreign authorities failed to respond to the request for temporary travel documents issue.

[Read More](#)

### Malta | 2017 – An eventful and momentous year



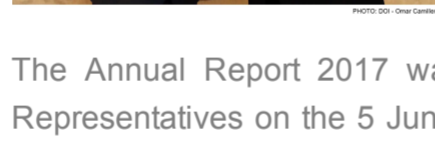
In his Annual Report the Maltese Parliamentary Ombudsman describes the 2017 as an eventful and momentous year and delves into issues of general interest such as the consensus on need for reform to strengthen the country's institutions and issues related to accountability and good governance.

The Annual Report 2017 was presented to the President of the House of Representatives on the 5 June and was subsequently tabled in Parliament on the same day.

During 2017, the Office of the Ombudsman received 520 complaints of which 336 were investigated by the Parliamentary Ombudsman, 83 were investigated by the Commissioner for Health, 62 by the Commissioner for Environment and Planning and the remaining 39 were investigated by the Commissioner for Education. The 2017 Annual Report also highlights the initiatives taken by the Parliamentary Ombudsman and the Commissioners in their role as defenders of the citizens' rights.

[Read the Annual Report](#)

### Monaco | Children's Rights - High Level Symposium – 25 June 2018



The High Commissioner took part, on Monday, 25 June 2018, in a High Level Symposium organized on the theme "Violence against children in the context of the family and of the school", at the invitation of Bernard Gastaud, member of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, and the Department of External Relations and Cooperation of the Principality of Monaco.

This topic enabled to address not only the abuse but also the "ordinary educational violence", covering the physical or psychological brutalities commonly inflicted on children for disciplinary purposes to compel or punish.

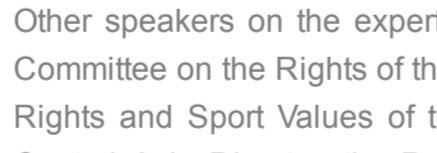
HRH Princess Caroline of Hanover, President of AMADE Mondiale, delivered the opening address of the Symposium whose work started with a global presentation of the world situation by Marta Santos Pais, Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in charge of violence against children.

Other speakers on the expert panel included members of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Head of the Department of Children's Rights and Sport Values of the Council of Europe, the UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Director, the President of the «Observatoire International de la Violence à l'Ecole» and the Director of the "Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children movement".

Anne EASTWOOD took the floor to conclude the Symposium, in the presence of HRH the Princess of Hanover, underlining that the Symposium had "been able to make everyone understand that the eradication of violence against children is everybody's responsibility and starts first with oneself".

[Read the Full Speech \(in French\)](#)

### Portugal | 2017 Ombudsman Report: Social Protection leads the number of complaints



In 2017, the Portuguese Ombudsman received a total of 40 939 complaints, almost 7% more than the previous year. The most addressed issues concern social protection. In 2017, there was a significant increase of complaints regarding this area (37%), resulting in 2052 cases, which is equivalent to 26.4% of the total number of proceedings opened at the Ombudsman's Office during 2017. Complaints on Public Employment and Taxation are the second and third most frequent groups of complaints. These three areas accounted for more than half (54%) of the total number of complaints that led to the opening of new cases in 2017.

In the 2017 report, the Ombudsman, Maria Lúcia Amaral, draws attention to "the delays in the allocation of pensions (including retirement, invalidity and survivors' pensions) and other social benefits (such as family allowances), as well as in sending the compulsory forms of pensions to foreign social security institutions".

Following the formal presentation of the report to the Portuguese Parliament, the Ombudsman, in a [large interview with two national media](#), highlighted four major areas of concern: Social Security, Taxation, Public Employment, and Urban Planning.

### Serbia | Discussion of the Draft Law on Gender Equality in the National Assembly



26 June 2018 - "The principle under which we are guided in the protection and promotion of the field of gender equality is that everyone has the right to develop their abilities and that no one has the right to prevent them from pushing them into predetermined gender roles", said Zoran Pašalić, the Ombudsman of the Republic of Serbia at the National Assembly in a public discussion on the Draft Law on Gender Equality. The desire to improve this area was also a cause and that the Working Group of the Ombudsman Office drafted the Model Law on Gender Equality, which in 2014 was sent to the Gender Equality Coordination Body. The model was the starting point for the drafting of the Law on Gender Equality.

The Ombudsman pointed out that the representation of women in decision-making in the authorities in local self-government units is insufficient and it is reduced with the increase in the level of authority and responsibility for making key decisions and policy making. This is also indicated by data collected in a survey conducted by the Ombudsman in 2018. Pašalić emphasized that, in order to contribute to the preparation of this regulation, the Ombudsman gave several opinions to previous texts of the Draft Law on Gender Equality. Of course, after the completion of the public hearing procedure, in the process of obtaining an opinion in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, the Ombudsman will give an opinion on this draft.

[Read More \(in Serbian\)](#)

