

I.O.I. Newsletter

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William Angrick

Your I.O.I. continues working toward fulfilling the promise of a new invigorated member oriented association. Recently the I.O.I. list serve was restored to operation; the list serve can be a useful information and communication resource for our community. The General Secretariat has established regular publication of an electronic quarterly newsletter. A redesigned membership application form has been produced and the application process itself clarified and refined. And our website is operating and has contemporaneous informative news and calendar pages. As anticipated and hoped for, the City of Vienna provided a significant financial contribution toward the website.

The General Secretariat has been active, responding to questions and requests, including the timely expression of concerns to our colleagues in earthquake struck

Haiti, expressions of congratulations and welcome are routinely made to the newly appointed and reappointed ombudsmen, and newly created offices are informed about the I.O.I., our services and the criteria for membership.

Individually your officers and the General Secretariat have received official visitors, undertaken visits, participated in conferences, anniversaries and other ombudsman related events.

The General Secretariat and Ontario Ombudsman André Marin and his staff are proceeding towards realization of a Sharpening Your Teeth investigative training to be offered in Vienna.

The Nominations and Elections Committee I named before our annual Board meeting this past November in Vienna has submitted its report to the Board. I wish to thank Tom Frawley and the members of that committee for their hard work and thoughtful contributions.

Your Executive officers, the General Secretariat and meeting host Arlene Brock, Ombudsman of Bermuda, are actively communicating about the content and structure of the Board's 2010 annual meeting which will be held in October. If you have issues,

requests or topics for Board consideration please communicate with an officer, your regional vice president or a member of the General Secretariat staff.

On this occasion I would also like to share with you that I have decided to accept the opportunity to take early retirement from my position of Iowa Citizens' Aide/Ombudsman. This is a one time offer being made to state officials and employees to meet a revenue shortfall. My last day in office will be June 24, 2010. On that day I will also cease to be eligible to serve as President of the I.O.I. Art 23(2) of the I.O.I. bylaws provides "The Vice-President shall, in the absence or disability of the President, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the President" Accordingly I.O.I. Vice-President Mats Melin will perform the President's duties for this transitional period until the next annual Board of Directors meeting this coming October in Bermuda when a new President will be elected.



William Angrick

President of the I.O.I.

I.O.I. World Conference 2012

The I.O.I. Board of Directors is now accepting expressions of interest in hosting the I.O.I.'s 10th World Conference. The Conference will be held in 2012.

Expressions of interest from Institutional Members should be sent to the General Secretariat.



Peter Kostelka

During spring 2010 the I.O.I. enhanced its representation in international key events and was able to strengthen its international networks. I.O.I. Vice-President Mats Melin was present at the 3rd General Assembly of the African Ombudsmen and Mediators Association (AOMA) in Angola that took place in mid-April. He addressed the participants of the conference and was able to meet with all African I.O.I. members as well as with representatives of the Commonwealth Secretariat. The I.O.I. African Chapter met on that occasion to fill the place of its former Regional Vice-President Enock Chibwana from Malawi who had earlier left office. The African I.O.I. institutions elected the Ombudsman of Namibia, Advocate John R. Walters, as its third board member and its Regional Vice-President.

In March 2010, the I.O.I. was represented at the 23rd meeting of the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (ICC) in Geneva. Several I.O.I. members from all regions are active partners of the ICC which has an observer status in the UN Human Rights Council. The ICC has new policy priorities that are reflected in its new statutes. There is an explicit reference to an enhanced cooperation with the I.O.I. In their addresses the UN High Commissioner and the ICC Chairperson stressed the interest of the ICC in strengthening the cooperation with the I.O.I. A side event focused on the relations between National Human Rights Institutions and ombudsman institutions. The General Secretariat has suggested follow-

up talks to the ICC and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Communication with another potential international partner organization, the World Bank, has intensified. The World Bank Institute has renewed its interest in an enhanced cooperation with the I.O.I. and suggested concrete project cooperation possibilities. When realizing these projects, the Regional Vice-Presidents have been and will be key partners of the General Secretariat in order to strengthen the regional approach of the I.O.I.

This also applies to the communication project of the General Secretariat on which you can find further information on the next pages. I would like to invite all members to actively participate in this process as the new I.O.I. website and information platform will certainly constitute the main service tool that the General Secretariat will be offering to its members in the future.

Following the landmark decisions of the Stockholm conference, member institutions

have supported this new service-oriented approach of the I.O.I. and its General Secretariat. This is reflected in the high number of memberships that have been renewed in economically difficult times as well as in the growing number of applicant institutions. I.O.I. President Bill Angrick has been a driving force in this internal reform process over the past couple of years. His contributions and his commitment to the ombudsman community have been outstanding and like all other Board members I have therefore learned with regret that he will leave office soon. The General Secretariat will certainly do its best to support the acting President and the Board during this transition period.



Dr. Peter Kostelka
Secretary General of the I.O.I.

NEW COMMUNICATION PLATFORM

As an independent and non-political organization, the I.O.I. focuses on the promotion of the concept of ombudsman, the close cooperation of ombudsman institutions worldwide, as well as the exchange of experience and best practice models. As a consequence, a comprehensive communication platform is essential for such an internationally active organization.

Both the previous I.O.I. website hosted by the University of Alberta, as well as the interim website launched by the new General Secretariat in September 2009, are not able to meet the necessary requirements. Based on a decision by the Board of Directors the General Secretariat is currently working on an interactive communication and service platform.

Essential data, such as the legal basis of member institutions, will be collected. The first virtual library with an ombudsman focus, containing member publications as well as research work in this field, will become available to a wider public. A membership register will offer comprehensive information on member institutions and an interactive calendar will help members to share information on regional, national and international events. An electronic newsletter system will improve the regular information flow between member institutions but at the same time the successful list serve mailing system will also be maintained.

The communication platform will be operated by the General Secretariat but will have a strong regional focus and will involve all I.O.I. regions to the same extent. All members are welcome to contribute actively and independently to the website content.

The communication platform will be available at www.theioi.org. The website is scheduled to go online within the next couple of months. Its more extensive part, including the membership register and database, will constitute the second stage of this project.

The I.O.I. wishes to involve its members in this project by inquiring the needs and expectations of membership institutions. The General Secretariat therefore asks all members to submit their suggestions as well as provide their annual reports in electronic form to ensure a suitable platform for all users.

ANNUAL REPORTS

Do you wish to spread information about your institution and work? We provide our members with the possibility of including your institution's annual report on our website.

Please send a short introductory note in one of the three I.O.I. languages and the PDF version of your institution's annual report to the I.O.I. General Secretariat at ioi@volksanw.gv.at

OMBUDSMAN CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AOMA MEETING IN ANGOLA, April 2010

The African Ombudsman and Mediator Association held its 3rd General Assembly in Luanda, Angola from 10 to 15 April 2010. The General Assembly was preceded by a meeting of the Executive Committee.

The conference dealt with the work of ombudsman institutions in the field of Good Governance. In addition to the 50 countries participating in this event, invitations have also been extended to the I.O.I. which was represented by its Vice-President Mats Melin.

2nd ICOAF MEETING, 25-27 April 2010

The second International Conference of Ombudsman Institutions for the Armed Forces will be held in Vienna from 25 to 27 April 2010. The conference will bring together institutions responsible for oversight of armed forces on an international level.

BIOA: ANNUAL MEETING IN CARDIFF (UK), 13-14 May 2010

The Annual Meeting of the British and Irish Ombudsman Association will be held in the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff, UK from 13 to 14 May 2010 and chaired by Emily O'Reilly, Ombudsman for Ireland. The workshops and presentations will explore how ombudsman institutions can learn from the experience of complaints, focusing on the citizens as such.

For more details please contact: secretary@bioa.org.uk

I.O.I. EUROPEAN MEETING, 3-6 October 2010

The European Region of the I.O.I. will hold a conference in Barcelona from 3 to 6 October 2010. The conference will focus on "Europe as an open society: A global and inclusive vision of the migration phenomenon within our countries".

For further information, please contact: ioieurope@sindic.cat

I.O.I. BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, 16-20 October 2010

The I.O.I. Board of Directors meeting to be held from 16 to 20 October 2010, will be hosted by Ms. Arlene Brock, the Ombudsman for Bermuda.

For more information, please contact the General Secretariat at ioi@volksanw.gv.at

USOA ANNUAL CONFERENCE, 6-8 October 2010

The 2010 Annual Conference of the United States Ombudsman Association will be held at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Dayton, Ohio, from 6 to 8 October 2010.

For more details contact Diane Welborn at welborn@dayton-ombudsman.org

OMBUDSMAN NEWS

GERMANY: NEW CHAIR OF THE SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN PARLIAMENT PETITIONS COMMITTEE

Katja Rathje-Hoffmann was nominated Chairperson of the incoming Parliament Petitions Committee of Schleswig-Holstein and will replace the previous chair holder Detlef Buder.

Ms. Rathje-Hoffmann started her political career as a member of the German Christian Democrat Party (CDU). Together with deputy chairman Jens-Uwe Dankert, she will preside the Parliament Petitions Committee with its 13 members, which is responsible for the processing of complaints filed to the Schleswig-Holstein Parliament.

<http://www.landtag.ltsh.de>

UK: NEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN APPOINTED

Dr. Jane Martin has been appointed as Local Government Ombudsman. She took up her post in the Coventry office on 11 January 2010 joining the two other Local Government Ombudsmen, Tony Redmond and Anne Seex.

Dr. Martin brings many years' experience of local government and the wider public sector to the post. Dr. Martin was Director of Policy & Engagement and Deputy Chief Executive at the Local Better Regulation Office. Prior to her move into the public sector, she had an academic career at the University of Birmingham and, more recently, was a senior research fellow in public leadership at Warwick Business School.

<http://www.lgo.org.uk/>

EUROPE: I.O.I. RVP MEETS PRESIDENT OF THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC

Mr. Rafael Ribó, Regional Vice-President of the European chapter of the I.O.I., attended the annual coordination meeting of the Italian Ombudsman held in Rome on 25 January 2010.

Mr. Ribó took the opportunity to meet with the President of the Italian Republic, Mr. Giorgio Napolitano. He expressed the I.O.I.'s concern regarding the abolishment of the local Ombudsman institutions in Italy. The President showed great interest and assured a close observation of this matter.

<http://www.sindic.cat>

ITALY: NEW REGIONAL OMBUDSMAN IN THE TRENTINO

Dott. Raffaello Sampaolesi was appointed new Regional Ombudsman of the autonomous province of the Trentino and will replace the previous ombudswoman, Prof. Donata Borgonovo.

http://www.consiglio.provincia.tn.it/consiglio/difensore_civico.it.asp

ITALY: NEW REGIONAL OMBUDSMAN OF PIEDMONT

Avv. Antonio Caputo was appointed new Regional Ombudsman of the region of Piedmont in January 2010 following Dott. Francesco Incandela.

Mr. Caputo previously worked as a lawyer and also practised as a honorary judge in the Civil Magistrates Court of Turin.

http://www.consiglioregionale.piemonte.it/organismi/dif_civico/index.htm

EUROPE: EUROPEAN OMBUDSMAN RE-ELECTED

Mr. Nikiforos Diamandouros was re-elected European Ombudsman by the members of the European Parliament on 20 January 2010 by 340 votes out of 648.

After his re-election Mr. Diamandouros ensured that he was very grateful for this vote of confidence in his work and that he was looking forward to continue his efforts for the benefit of European citizens.

<http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu>

IN MEMORY OF NORA SALOMONS

In 1987 Nora Salomons became the first Municipal Ombudsman of Amsterdam. She has laid the foundation of the institute and performed her task in a strong and convincing way. 'Nora' became a phenomenon for authorities and for citizens. From her social democratic background, she fiercely fought injustice and maladministration. We will remember Nora's striking personality and dedication.

*Ulco van de Pol, Municipal Ombudsman
Petra Visscher, Executive Officer
(former) staff*

SLOVAKIA: NEW LIAISON OFFICER

In February 2010 Ms. Katarína Ďurišová has been assigned as new Liaison Officer for the Office of the Public Defender of Rights of Slovakia. She succeeds Ms. Lenka Bodnarova, who will change her field of activity to the area of children's rights within the Office of the Public Defender of Rights in Slovakia.

<http://www.vop.gov.sk>

SPAIN: CATALAN OMBUDSMAN REAPPOINTED

On 10 February 2010 the Catalan Parliament reappointed Mr. Rafael Ribó as Catalan Ombudsman by a vast majority.

Mr. Ribó, who has also been elected as Regional Vice-President of the European chapter of the I.O.I., will fill the position as Catalan Ombudsman for a term of 9 years.

<http://www.sindic.cat>

TUNISIA: NEW OMBUDSWOMAN

On 19 February 2010 Ms. Saida Rahmouni was appointed as the new Ombudswoman of the Republic of Tunisia. She will replace former Ombudswoman Alifa Farouk, who has been nominated as ambassador to Berlin, Germany.

Ms. Rahmouni, who is a former professor of sociology has longstanding experience as director of a research and training centre for woman. She has been nominated as Ombudswoman for a term of five years.

<http://www.ombudsman.tn/>

NEW ZEALAND: CHIEF OMBUDSMAN REAPPOINTED

Ms. Beverley Wakem has been reappointed as Chief Ombudsman of New Zealand by his Excellency the Governor General in effect 1 March 2010.

As Regional Vice-President of the Australasia and Pacific chapter of the I.O.I. Ms. Wakem contributes highly to the I.O.I.'s work.

<http://www.ombudsmen.parliament.nz>

AUSTRALIA: COMMONWEALTH OMBUDSMAN ON THE MOVE

Professor John McMillan, Commonwealth Ombudsman since 2003, has taken leave from his role as he has been appointed Information Commissioner Designate.

In his new function Professor McMillan will have a significant role in implementing the Government's information policy reforms and in promoting and leading a pro-disclosure culture across government

<http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/>

AZERBAIJAN: COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS RE-ELECTED

On 5 March 2010, Prof. Elmira Suleymanova has been re-elected for a second term as Human Rights Commissioner of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

<http://ombudsman.gov.az/az/>

GERMANY: CITIZEN'S COMMISSIONER RESIGNED FROM OFFICE

The Citizen's Commissioner of the State of Rhineland-Palatinate and President of the European Ombudsman Institute (EOI) Mr. Ullrich Galle, resigned from office on 31 March 2010. The office of the Commissioner will temporarily be run by the Deputy Commissioner Peter Schöpflein.

<http://www.landtag.rlp.de>

AUSTRALIA: MEETING OF THE APOR REGION

The annual meeting of the members of the Australasia and Pacific Region of the I.O.I.

was held from 18 to 19 March 2010 in Canberra, Australia.

Elections were held in which Hong Kong Ombudsman Alan Lai and his Papua New Guinea colleague Chronox Manek were re-elected as members to the I.O.I. Board of Directors. New Zealand's Chief Ombudsman Beverley Wakem was confirmed in her function as Regional Vice-President to the Australasia and Pacific Region of the I.O.I.

OMBUDSMAN COMMUNITY MOURNS POLISH HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER'S TRAGIC DEATH

On behalf of all its members, the I.O.I. would like to express its deepest sympathy on the tragic death of the Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Poland, Dr. Janusz Kochanowski, who was killed in a plane crash on 10 April 2010.

Colleague Kochanowski was a distinguished member of the I.O.I. and a brilliant law expert who stood proudly and defiantly for human rights and the rule of law. His passing is a great loss for the international ombudsman community.

Our thoughts go out to Mr. Kochanowski's family, his friends and his colleagues from the Polish Ombudsman institution.

ANGOLA: NEW REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT FOR THE AFRICAN REGION OF THE I.O.I.

I.O.I. Members of the African region took the opportunity of the 3rd General Assembly of the AOMA held in Angola from 10 to 15 April, to schedule a meeting of the African chapter of the I.O.I.

During this meeting, elections were held to fill the vacancy created by the departure of former Regional Vice-President Mr. Enoch Chibwana. Namibia Ombudsman Mr. John Walters has been elected new Regional Vice-President to the African chapter of the I.O.I.

IN MEMORY OF HENRIQUE NASCIMENTO RODRIGUES

It is with great regret that the I.O.I. has learned about the passing of former Portuguese Ombudsman, Mr. Henrique Nascimento Rodrigues on 11 April 2010 at the age of 69.

Mr. Nascimento Rodrigues, who served two terms as Portuguese Ombudsman, has been a valuable member of the international ombudsman community. During his impressive career he was elected twice Vice-President of the Iberoamerican Federation of Ombudsman (FIO) and therefore significantly contributed to an enhanced cooperation between ombudsman institutions in Europe and South America.

The I.O.I. would like to express its deepest sympathy to his family, his friends and colleagues in these days of mourning.

KYRGYZSTAN: OMBUDSMAN INJURED DURING RIOTS IN THE CAPITAL

Kyrgyz Ombudsman, Mr. Tursunbek Akun had been attacked and seriously injured during the unrest in the Kyrgyz capital Bishkek. Mr. Akun was hospitalised but is said to be on his way to recovery and to have taken up work again.

As a first reaction, a letter by President William Angrick and Secretary General Peter Kostelka has been sent to Mr. Akun to express their concern on behalf of the I.O.I. and all its members.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE OMBUDSMAN NEWS

The I.O.I. General Secretariat is trying to monitor all changes in I.O.I. member offices and partner institutions. In case your institution wishes to contribute to this section of the newsletter please send a brief text to the I.O.I. General Secretariat at ioi@volksanw.gv.at

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