

To the members of the  
International Ombudsman Institute (IOI)

Vienna, 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022

**Re: Invitation to participate in a comparative study on the role of ombuds institutions in the context of digitalization of public services worldwide**

Dear members of the IOI,

The IOI General Secretariat cordially invites you to participate in a research project led by Prof.(FH) Dr. Julia Dahlvik, socio-legal scholar at Department of Public Management at the University of [Applied Sciences Vienna \(FH Campus Wien\)](#) in Austria. Dr. Dahlvik, principal investigator, has studied ombuds institutions for several years and regularly publishes her work in international scientific journals. She has also led a sociological research study on the occasion of the Austrian Ombudsman Board's (AOB) 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

In her current study, Dr. Dahlvik investigates the role of ombuds institutions in the context of digitalization of public services worldwide. The main research question of this international comparative study is: "How is the digitalization of public services affecting (i) the work of ombuds institutions, (ii) citizens' complaint behaviour as well as (iii) the relation between citizens and ombuds institutions?" She would also like to analyse the variations in different world regions and thus in different socio-political and cultural contexts. The study aims to close a research gap as the impact of the digital transformation in public services on the work of Ombuds institutions has rarely been researched in the field of administrative science and sociology of law, a topic which is highly relevant amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, which has increased digitalisation in many countries worldwide.

To gain a good understanding of these issues in the different world regions, Dr. Dahlvik seeks to conduct short online or telephone interviews (approx. 30 minutes) with ombudspersons, complaint handling staff, or other competent ombuds staff. She would also appreciate member institutions' filling in a short online survey (approx. 5 minutes), which can be accessed via this [link](#). The survey should be filled in by a person who has knowledge about complaint behaviour.

All standard procedures for research ethics will be applied concerning the interviews; an informed consent form will be sent to participants by Dr. Dahlvik upon expression of interest for an interview. If you are interested in taking part in an interview, kindly contact Dr. Dahlvik [via email](#).

The study findings will be published in a research report that will be made available to IOI members, and in the form of a scientific paper.

I believe that the participation of your institution in this study can contribute to relevant insights and learnings to the benefit of all our member institutions in the context of current developments.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Werner Amon', written in a cursive style.

Werner Amon

Ombudsman of the Republic of Austria