



Together to promote human rights

Minutes of the 12th General Assembly of the Mediterranean Ombudsman Association (12)

Ambassador Mushira Khattab participated (remotely) in the twelfth General Assembly of the Mediterranean Ombudsman Association, which was held in Kosovo on May 25, 2023.

Ambassador Mushira Khattab spoke about the National Council for Human Rights (NCHR) and that it has received the highest rating since its inception, and works to receive complaints from citizens. She asked about the feasibility of having an “ombudsman” separate from NCHR while the NCHR enjoys full powers covering the whole state has the right to receive complaints, address them, and issue recommendations. It also has a good relationship and continuous communication with Parliament for the benefit of citizens, in addition to its work in spreading the culture of human rights.

Mr. Andreas Botakis, Ombudsman of Greece and the current president of the association, stated that the most important thing is the existence of a strong institution capable of providing its services to citizens and listening to them, and that, given the NCHR and its broad powers - compared to many national human rights institutions - it plays a role The mediator or ombudsman communicates with citizens and solves their problems, and the association affirms its absolute support for the institution that carries out this role, whatever its name.

- The “Pristina Declaration” was adopted after agreeing on its final version. Ambassador Moushira Khattab requested adding the word human rights in general (paragraph 7). This request was supported by the Albanian human rights defender and was approved by the audience. (Attached)



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The work of the General Assembly began: with the announcement of the completion of a quorum with the participation of 17 members as follows: Participation in attendance: 11 members: Greece, Albania, Malta, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Israel, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Palestine, Slovenia and Turkey. Online presence: Egypt and Monaco. Proxy attendance: Andorra, Croatia, France and Georgia.

A- Financial report:-

The association's treasurer presented the financial report, including total revenues and expenses. He pointed out that the association has created a new website that provides all information to members and all news about the activities of each institution.

- The Executive Office announced the decision to reduce the value of the annual subscription for a participating member from 900 euros to 650 euros and to maintain the same subscription value for an active member, which was praised by Ambassador Moushira Khattab, President of the National Council for Human Rights, in her intervention in this regard, stressing the importance of taking into account Economic conditions that may be more difficult in the southern Mediterranean countries.

B - General Secretariat report:

The three main activities that the association organized during 2022 were presented:

A- A conference on “The Rights of the Elderly”, in cooperation with the People’s Defender of Georgia in September 2022, in the presence of 61 participants from 32 countries, and in which the two colleagues Asmaa Fawzi from the Social Committee and Yasmine Ezz El-Din from the International Committee participated (remotely).



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2- The twelfth Rabat training, on the mechanisms of intervention by Ombudsman institutions, in the presence of 31 participants from 20 countries. Dr. Ismail Abdel Rahman, a member of NCHR, spoke about the mechanisms of NCHR in dealing with illegal immigration. It is expected that the same training will be organized this year 2023.

3- A conference on “the rule of law and the protection of human rights” in cooperation with the Human Rights Commission in Cyprus, with 27 participants from 16 countries in actual attendance.

Website :

Arabic-speaking member states were invited to contribute to the translation of the website materials. Mr. Ammar Al-Dweik, Director General of the Independent Commission for Human Rights in Palestine, confirmed that his organization is communicating with the association’s secretariat in translating texts, data, etc., and that they are still fully prepared to cooperate with the Arabic-speaking members in this regard, given that it is a huge work and requires the solidarity of everyone.

Newsletter:

It was issued twice in May and December 2022, and the General Secretariat asked members to contribute news materials about their activities.

C- Action Plan 2023: The upcoming activities in which the association contributes were reviewed and are as follows:

- 1- Contributing an amount of 15,000 euros to the annual training in Rabat in cooperation with the organization’s Ombudsmen and Francophone Ombudsmen, November 2023.



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- 2- Contributing an amount of 15,000 euros to organizing a conference on good management in cooperation with the Ombudsman of Malta, October 2023.
- 3- Ambassador Moushira Khattab, By inviting members of the association to participate in an international conference that the National Council for Human Rights will organize with the House of Representatives at the end of this year.
- 4- The Ombudsman of Slovenia was elected to the position of Vice President, succeeding the Defender of the Spanish People.
- 5- The membership of the Ombudsman of the Latsia Region in Italy was accepted as an associate member, given that his mandate is regionally specific.
- 6- Announcing that the Annual Conference and the Thirteenth General Assembly in 2025 will be organized in Malta in cooperation with the Ombudsman of Malta to coincide with the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Foundation.

Suspension of Russia's membership:

- The president of the association reported that the International Ombudsman Institute expelled Russia from its membership due to the war between Russia and Ukraine. He stated that on the personal level he tried more than once to bring the Russian and Ukrainian institutions together at one table for the public good, but due to the failure of the High Commission for Human Rights in Russia to carry out its role impartially, in accordance with the powers granted to it, and not adhering to the standards of independence and integrity, it decided The association said some step must be taken about this. In accordance with clauses 7.8.2/ 7.8.5.



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- Immediate suspension of Russia's membership and notification of the Russian High Commission thereof. - Discussing the issue of expelling Russia, which will be presented to the next General Assembly with the initiation of procedures, and issuing a report in this regard to be carried out by both Slovenia and Albania. The Ombudsman of Turkey stated that he communicated with both sides and organized the transportation of families and humanitarian aid, and that things went well, and that he regrets this decision, the consequences of which citizens bear.

The President of the Association thanked all the participants and announced the end of the General Assembly's work without postponing any file to the next General Assembly.