

Ombudsfrau der Stadt Zürich
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Consultation by arrangement

Opening hours: Monday to Friday,
8–12 a.m. and 1.30–5 p.m.

Tram nos. 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, 15
to the “Bellevue” stop or train to
“Zürich-Stadelhofen” station

**If you are in doubt whether the
Ombuds Office is the right
place for your particular concern,
simply give us a call.**

What does the Ombuds Office do?

The Ombuds Office acts as mediator between citizens and the city authorities. When a complaint is lodged, it assesses whether the authorities in question have acted in accordance with their duties and the law, states its opinion on the matter and – where appropriate – strives to find a satisfactory solution for both sides.

The ombudsman or ombudswoman is elected by the City Parliament of Zurich (Gemeinderat) for a period of four years and is independent of the city authorities.

Free of charge

Services provided by the Ombuds Office are free of charge.

Confidentiality

If required, all information provided and complaints lodged will be dealt with confidentially (also in relation to the authorities).

Responsibility

The Ombuds Office is responsible for all matters concerning the government bodies or administration offices of the City of Zurich.

The Ombuds Office can be consulted at any stage of a procedure. The Ombuds Office does not, however, have the right to intervene in ongoing legal proceedings (e.g. appeals).

Staff of the city authorities are also entitled to approach the Ombuds Office with regard to employment matters.

Jurisdiction by the courts, however, does not come within the Ombuds Office's scope of responsibility.

Access to the Ombuds Office

The Ombuds Office is open to everyone, including foreign nationals, non-Zurich residents, minors, wards with a legal guardian and legal entities.

Anyone who wants to present their concerns in person can arrange for a consultation.

Grievances can, however, also be submitted in writing (post, fax, e-mail).

Assessment of complaints

The Ombuds Office assesses whether the authorities in question have acted in accordance with their duties and the law, and strives to find a fair solution.

To fulfil this role, the Ombuds Office has far-reaching investigative rights:

- unrestricted access to official documents
- the right to demand that the authorities at all levels provide information on request
- the right to carry out on-site inspections.

For its part, the Ombuds Office is obliged to maintain confidentiality.

The Ombuds Office is not empowered to take decisions or issue directives. Instead, it provides recommendations. Taking matters to the Ombuds Office – either in writing or orally – does not have the effect of extending any legally prescribed deadlines.

Information and advice

The Ombuds Office provides you with the legal facts relevant for your case, explains the legal situation and advises you on how best to proceed.

Mediation in contentious issues

If a contentious issue is within its area of responsibility, the Ombuds Office will help you find a solution that is satisfactory both to you and to the city authority with which you are in conflict. If appropriate, the Ombuds Office will adopt mediation techniques.

Conclusion

After investigation and mediation efforts have come to a close, the Ombuds Office will inform the parties of the opinion it has arrived at in an appropriate manner. As a rule, a final report is prepared, setting out the results of the case assessment and any agreements reached.

If the Ombuds Office does not reach a satisfactory agreement with the public office in question, it can issue a formal recommendation addressed to this office.

Annual review

Every year, the Ombudswoman submits a report on her office's activities to the City Parliament of Zurich (Gemeinderat) which, among other things, contains case examples in anonymous form. This report is published and can be downloaded from the Ombuds Office's website.