

INTERNATIONAL OMBUDSMAN CONFERENCE

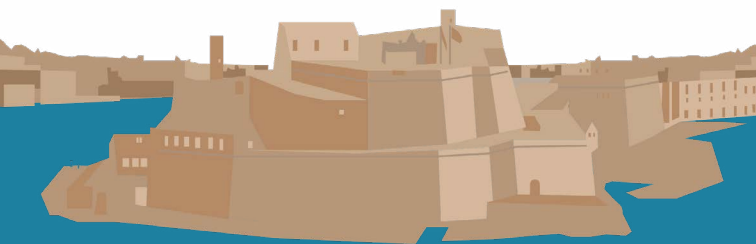
UPHOLDING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN CHALLENGING TIMES

The role of the Ombudsman

Delegate Handbook

MALTA

14 – 16 OCTOBER 2025



UPHOLDING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN CHALLENGING TIMES

The role of the Ombudsman

Delegate Handbook

MALTA

14 – 16 OCTOBER 2025



Contents

Official Programme	7
Tuesday 14th October 2025	7
Wednesday 15th October 2025	9
Thursday 16th October 2025	14
Conference Information	18
Useful Information	21
Valletta, The Capital City	23
The Parliament building of Malta	25
The Grandmaster's Palace	27
The Conference Branding	29



Official Programme

Tuesday 14th October 2025

- 1. Arrival of Delegates**
- 2. Welcome Reception and inauguration of Arts for Rights Exhibition**

1. Arrival of Delegates

The Office of the Ombudsman of Malta will be organising airport transfers between the Malta International Airport and the Radisson Blu Resort and Spa – Golden Sands.

An official from the Office of the Ombudsman will be waiting at the arrivals lounge of the Malta International Airport to welcome delegates. This official will hold a sign displaying the conference logo and the name of the delegation.

2. Check-in at the Radisson Blu Resort and Spa – Golden Sands

Delegates and guests are responsible for their own check-in at the Radisson Blu Resort and Spa – Golden Sands. Upon arrival, rooms will be available from 3:00 p.m., and check-out is scheduled for noon on the day of departure. Guests are expected to settle all room charges and any additional expenses.

A Hospitality Desk managed by the Office of the Ombudsman will be set up in the hotel foyer. Delegates may approach this desk should they require any information or assistance.

3. Welcome Reception and Inauguration of the Arts for Rights Exhibition

On the evening of the 14th October, the Office of the Ombudsman will host a Welcome Reception to mark the start of the 30th Anniversary International Ombudsman Conference. The event will be addressed by the Speaker of the House, **the Hon. Anglu Farrugia**, and the Parliamentary Ombudsman of Malta, **Judge Joseph Zammit McKeon**.

The reception also includes the inauguration of *Arts for Rights*, an exhibition showcasing paintings by students from the Institute for the Creative Arts at the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST). Set within Malta's highest democratic institution, the exhibition gives young artists the opportunity to interpret and present their vision of human rights through visual expression.

7:00pm - Departure from Radisson Blu Resort and Spa
– Golden Sands

7:30pm - Welcome Reception and opening of Arts
Exhibition

9:00pm - Departure from House of Representatives to
hotel

DAY ONE

Wednesday 15th October 2025

Radisson Blu Resort and Spa – Golden Sands

8:30am – 08:50am

Registration – Welcome Coffee

9:00am – 10:00am

Opening Ceremony

Speeches:

- **Welcome Speech by the Parliamentary Ombudsman of Malta**
Judge Joseph Zammit McKeon
- **Speech by the President of the Association of Mediterranean Ombudsmen (AOM)**
Ms Erinda Ballanca, People's Advocate of Albania
- **Speech by the President, IOI European Regional Board**
Mr Reinier van Zutphen, National Ombudsman of the Netherlands
- **Speech by the European Ombudswoman**
Ms Teresa Anjinho
- **Speech by the Speaker of the House of Representatives,**
the Hon. Anglu Farrugia

10:00am – 10:30am

Coffee Break

10:30am – 11:45am

Plenary Session 1

Building People's Trust:

The Ombudsman as a pillar of democracy in times of change

Panel:

- Ms Margaret Kelly, **Public Services Ombudsman of Northern Ireland**
- Dr Michael Frendo, **Venice Commission, Council of Europe**
- Ms Anahit Manasyan, **Human Rights Defender of Armenia**
- Prof Anne Marie Thake, **Academic, University of Malta**
- Mr Mehmet Akarca, **Chief Ombudsman of Türkiye**

Panel discussion and interventions from participants

Moderated by

Mr James Cummings

Journalist at The Times of Malta

11:50am – 1:30pm

Plenary Session 2

Protecting the Vulnerable:

The role of the Ombudsman in upholding human rights.

Panel:

- Ms Debbie Kohner, **Secretary General, ENNHRI**
- Mr Mykhailo Spasov, **Deputy Commissioner for Human Rights of Ukraine**
- Ms Marina Ceyssac, **High Commissioner for the Protection of Rights, Liberties and for Mediation of Monaco**
- Judge Lorraine Schembri Orland, **Judge at ECHR**
- Dr Dijana Možina Zupanc, **Deputy Human Rights Ombudsman of Slovenia**
- Dr Tamar Gvaramadze, **First Deputy Public Defender of Georgia**
- Mr Andreas Accardo, **Head of Institutional Cooperation and EU Charter Unit, FRA**

Panel discussion and interventions from participants

Moderated by

Mr Matthew Xuereb

Editor-in-Chief, RTK103 and newsbook.com.mt

1:30pm – 2:30pm **Buffet Lunch**



Official 30th Anniversary Reception

under the auspices of

H.E Myriam Spiteri Debono, President of Malta

The Palace, Valletta

The official commemoration will be held at the Grand Master's Palace, the historic seat of the President of the Republic and a landmark in the heart of Valletta's St George's Square. Built by the Knights of St John as the first edifice in the new capital, the Palace has served as a centre of power for over 450 years, including as the Governor's Palace during the British period and the seat of Malta's first constitutional parliament in 1921.

Guests will enjoy a private tour of the Palace Armoury, one of the world's finest collections, and the State Rooms before the ceremony.

Dress Code: Formal

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 6:00pm | Delegates will be met by an official from the Office of the Ombudsman at the hotel reception. A number of mini buses will provide transport from the Radisson Blu Golden Sands Resort to the Palace in Valletta. |
| 6:30pm | Arrival at the Palace in Valletta |
| 6:40pm | Private tour of the Palace Armoury |
| 8:00pm | 30th Anniversary Commemoration |
| 10:00pm | Departure to hotel |

DAY TWO
Thursday 16th October 2025

8:30am

Welcome Coffee

9:00am – 10:15am

Plenary Session 3

Advancing Ethical Governance: Strengthening integrity and the principles of good administration

Panel:

- **Ms Maria Stylianou-Lottides, Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights of Cyprus**
- **Mr Charles Deguara, Auditor General of Malta**
- **Ms Sabina Aliyeva, Commissioner for Human Rights of Azerbaijan**
- **Ms Maija Sakslin, Deputy Parliamentary Ombudsman of Finland**
- **Mr Vit Alexander Schorm, Deputy Ombudsman of Czech Republic**

Panel discussion and interventions from participants

Moderated by

Mr Kurt Sansone

Executive Editor of MaltaToday

10:20am – 11:40am

Plenary Session 4

Embracing Technological Innovation: The Ombudsman's role in the age of digitalisation and artificial intelligence.

Panel:

- Ms Tena Šimonović Einwalter, **Ombudsman of the Republic of Croatia**
- Ms Ulle Madise, **Chancellor of Justice of Estonia**
- Mr David Bondia, **Ombudsman of Barcelona**
- Ms Simona Granata-Menghini, **Director, Secretary of the Venice Commission, Council of Europe**
- Prof Alexiei Dingli, **Academic on AI, University of Malta**

Panel discussion and interventions from participants

Moderated by

Ms Rachel Bondi Attard

Head of Media and Communications Strategy,

The Malta Chamber

11:40am – 12:00pm

Coffee Break



Closing Session
12:00pm – 1:30pm

12:00pm – 12:20pm

Conference Rapporteur's Report

Prof Anne Marie Thake, Conference Rapporteur

12:20pm – 12:40pm

Concluding Remarks by

the Parliamentary Ombudsman of Malta

Judge Joseph Zammit McKeon

12:40pm – 12:50pm

Concluding Address by the Leader

of the Opposition,

the Hon. Alex Borg

12:50pm – 1:00pm

Concluding Address by the Prime Minister,

the Hon. Robert Abela

Family Photo

1:15 pm – 2:30 pm

Stand-up Lunch

Association of Mediterranean Ombudsmen

Open only for AOM Members

2:30pm - AOM General Assembly -

Informal Dinner

hosted by the Parliamentary Ombudsman of Malta

7:00pm - Informal Dinner

Nenu - The Artisan Baker - Mġarr

(Return transport from the hotel will be provided)

Conference Information

Working Languages

The seminar will be conducted in four working languages: English, French, Spanish and Arabic.

Moderation

A designated moderator will oversee each session to ensure strict adherence to the scheduled timings, preventing any delays or overruns. Cooperation is encouraged to prevent the moderator from interrupting or drawing the speaker's attention to conclude.

Speeches

Speeches will be delivered from the podium on the main stage, with panellists seated onstage. During interventions, delegates may ask questions from their seats, and panellists will respond from their respective seats onstage.

Dietary and Health Considerations

Participants with specific dietary needs, food intolerances or health conditions that the organisers should be aware of are kindly requested to inform the organisers prior to the conference.

Conference Badges

All delegates will be provided with a distinctive conference badge that will serve as their means of identification.

The conference badges are not transferable and must be worn at all times during the event. They should also be worn while using the conference transport and must be clearly displayed at all times.

Media and Photography

Local media will be invited to the opening and closing ceremonies. The conference will be filmed throughout, and a copy of the footage will be provided after the event.

An official photographer has been contracted for the duration of the conference and its associated official events. Photos and video clips will be made available promptly.



Useful Information

Climate & Time zone

In mid-October, Malta enjoys pleasant autumn weather, with average temperatures ranging between 22 and 26 degrees Celsius. The islands follow GMT +1 hour.

Banking Services and Currency

The official currency of Malta is the EURO. Most major international currencies can be exchanged at local commercial banks and currency exchange offices (bureaux de change).

Electricity Supply

The standard electricity supply in Malta is 230 volts +/- 10%. The typical plug configuration features flat prongs in an inverted "V" position along with an earth connector. Delegates are recommended to bring suitable plug adaptors if necessary.

Driving Regulations

Malta recognises International Drivers' Permits as well as driving licences from specific foreign countries. If you plan to drive, ensure you always have your licence with you. Kindly be aware that motorists in Malta drive on the left-hand side of the road.



Valletta

The Capital City

Valletta, commonly termed as The Fortress City or Citta' Umilissima, truly embodies the phrase, "a city built by gentlemen for gentlemen." This capital acts as Malta's heartbeat, representing not only the administrative and commercial heart of the Islands but also standing as a vibrant testament to its rich tapestry of history. Named after Grand Master Jean Parisot de la Valette of the Chivalric Order of Knights Hospitallers of St. John, the majestic city unfolds atop the rugged contours of the Mount Sceberras peninsula, overlooking the two stunning harbours of Marsamxett and the Grand Harbour. Its first stone was set down in 1566, and within a few years, the landscape was transformed with robust bastions, forts, and an imposing cathedral.

Valletta's rich historical tapestry has not gone unnoticed. Celebrated as the "modern" city forged by the Knights of St John, it gleams as a beacon of Baroque architecture. Furthermore, its status as a European Art City, a UNESCO World Heritage City, and notably, the EU Capital of Culture in 2018, highlights its global significance. In today's world, Valletta stands as one of the densest historic centres globally.

Buzzing with activity during the day, the city seamlessly maintains its timeless allure. As you traverse its streets

which are laid out in a grid pattern, you are greeted by Europe's cherished artworks, awe-inspiring churches, and regal palaces. A journey through Valletta unveils a myriad of historical gems, from votive statues and intricately designed fountains to proud coats of arms adorning ancient parapets. The city's narrow lanes offer a trove of quaint shops and cosy cafés, while its main thoroughfares present a mix of both contemporary international brands and traditional treasures, seamlessly weaving the past into the present. Not to be missed is the modern addition by architect Renzo Piano: the iconic Valletta Entrance, which includes the contemporary Parliament Building and the evocative ruins of the British-built Royal Opera House, juxtaposing the city's historic and modern facets.



The Parliament building of Malta

Malta's Parliament Building, situated at the entrance to Valletta, is one of the most distinctive landmarks of the capital. It was inaugurated in 2015 and designed by the world-renowned Italian architect Renzo Piano as part of a larger City Gate project that redefined Valletta's gateway. The project included the Parliament Building, the redesign of City Gate, and the open-air theatre on the site of the former Royal Opera House.

Constructed primarily in local limestone, the building combines modern design with a strong respect for Malta's architectural heritage. Its two massive stone blocks rest on slender columns, creating an impression of solidity while allowing for openness and transparency, values symbolic of a modern democracy. The blocks are cut with a pattern of geometric apertures that provide both natural shading and visual interest, echoing the traditional Maltese use of stone for cooling and ventilation.

Inside, the building houses the Chamber of Representatives, committee rooms, and offices for members of Parliament. It is designed to be environmentally sustainable, making use of natural light, ventilation systems, and energy-efficient technologies.

Beyond its function as the home of Malta's legislature, the Parliament Building has become a symbol of the country's democratic renewal in the 21st century. Located within Valletta, itself a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the structure bridges Malta's historic identity with a forward-looking vision of governance rooted in transparency, accountability, and service to the people.



The Grandmaster's Palace

The official 30th Anniversary commemoration event hosted under the auspices of the President of Malta will be held at the Grandmaster's Palace, the seat of the President of the Republic.

Proudly dominating St George's Square in the heart of Valletta, the newly restored Grand Master's Palace invites visitors to explore its 450-year history as a center of power and a symbol of the nation. As the first building constructed by the Knights of St. John in the new capital city, the Palace has evolved over the centuries into a 'state within an edifice.'

Throughout its rich history, the Palace has served multiple pivotal roles. During the British period, it functioned as the Governor's Palace and was the seat of Malta's first constitutional parliament in 1921.

The Palace houses the Armoury which is considered one of the finest in the world, featuring the armour suits of Grand Masters Alof de Wignacourt and Jean de la Valette, Ottoman armour and weapons, as well as a selection of artillery pieces.



The Conference Branding

Fort St. Angelo and the Ombudsman: Guardians of Malta's integrity

Fort St. Angelo, majestically positioned at the tip of the Birgu peninsula overlooking the Grand Harbour, has been a stalwart defender of Malta throughout its storied history. As the 'sentinel of the Grand Harbour,' this formidable fortress has withstood countless sieges and stood as a symbol of strength, resilience, and protection for the Maltese people. It safeguarded the nation against external threats, serving as a critical bastion during pivotal moments like the Great Siege of 1565.

Metaphorically, the Office of the Ombudsman embodies the same principles in the realm of public administration.

Just as Fort St. Angelo protected the physical well-being of the nation, the Ombudsman safeguards the integrity of Malta's democratic institutions and the rights of its citizens. Acting as a watchful guardian, the Ombudsman addresses grievances against public administration, ensuring transparency, accountability, and fairness, core tenets of good governance.

INTERNATIONAL OMBUDSMAN CONFERENCE

UPHOLDING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN CHALLENGING TIMES

The role of the Ombudsman



The fort's enduring presence and historical significance mirror the Ombudsman's role in modern society. Both stand as pillars of vigilance and protection:

Defence against injustice: Fort St. Angelo defended against invading forces; the Ombudsman defends citizens against administrative injustices.

Symbol of trust: The fort symbolized safety for the Maltese people; the Ombudsman fosters trust in public institutions.

Steadfast Commitment: Both represent unwavering dedication to safeguarding the nation's well-being, whether in times of war or within the complexities of contemporary governance.

By featuring Fort St. Angelo as the conference logo, we celebrate this profound connection. The fort is not just a historical monument but a powerful metaphor for the Ombudsman's mission to uphold good public administration. It reminds us that the vigilance, strength, and commitment required to protect a nation's integrity are timeless virtues, whether guarding its shores or championing the rights of its people.

Together, Fort St. Angelo and the Ombudsman symbolise a legacy of protection and service to Malta, reinforcing our dedication to 'Upholding Good Governance in Challenging Times.'

Key Contacts Telephone Numbers

The key point of contact during the event for all delegate enquiries are as follows:

For overall co-ordination and logistics

Mr Jurgen Cassar

Head of Communications and Research

Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman – Malta

Tel: +356 9944 6214

Email: jurgencassar@ombudsman.org.mt

For AOM matters

Mr Paul Borg

Director General

Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman – Malta

Tel: +356 9947 0070

Email: paulborg@ombudsman.org.mt

Hotel

Radisson Blu Resort and Spa – Golden Sands

Golden Sands Bay, Il-Mellieħa MLH 5510

Tel: +356 2356 1000

INTERNATIONAL OMBUDSMAN CONFERENCE

UPHOLDING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN CHALLENGING TIMES

The role of the Ombudsman

