



AUSTRIAN  
OMBUDSMAN BOARD

# HELP

with problems  
involving public authorities



easily accessible  
citizen-friendly  
free of charge



## Preface

The Austrian Ombudsman Board was founded to support citizens who feel that they have been treated unfairly by an Austrian authority. As an independent monitoring body, it enables anyone to investigate the conduct and work of any public authority free of charge.

If mistakes have been made, the Austrian Ombudsman Board can help people to assert their rights. In many cases, the Austrian Ombudsman Board can ensure that unlawful actions by public authorities are corrected or that an acceptable solution is found for those affected.

Giving account of cases of maladministration, also helps improve the public administration in Austria, ensuring that laws are applied correctly and in a citizen-centred manner. At the same time, this enables people to better understand laws and administrative actions. In this way, the Austrian Ombudsman Board acts as a mediator between citizens and the public administration.

With this brochure, we would like to introduce you to the Austrian Ombudsman Board and its work.

We are your point of contact if you have an issue with an Austrian authority. Please do not hesitate to contact us.

Your Austrian Ombudsman Board



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## Who is the Austrian Ombudsman Board – the AOB?

The Austrian Ombudsman Board is an **independent monitoring body**. Based on laws, particularly the Federal Constitution, it monitors public administration in Austria. It supports all individuals who feel they have been treated unfairly by a public authority.

The Austrian Ombudsman Board consists of **three Ombudspersons** and about 90 employees – around 60 of them are women. One of its main tasks is to investigate **complaints from citizens**. Each year, it receives around 18,000 complaints.

A complaint may, for example, concern a problem with the school authority, the family allowance, the employment service, a municipality's building authority, a health insurance office, a grant agency, or the police. The Austrian Ombudsman Board investigates whether the relevant authority followed the law, but also whether it behaved in a citizen-friendly way.





Most of the time, cooperation with the authorities works very well. In many cases, the Austrian Ombudsman Board succeeds in getting the relevant authority to reconsider its decision for the benefit of the persons concerned.

Sometimes the situation is different: authorities decide correctly from a legal point of view, but not in the best interests of citizens **because the law itself leads to particular hardships**. In such cases, the law should be amended.



That is why the Austrian Ombudsman Board regularly reports to **Parliament**. The Ombudspersons discuss with members of the National Council, the Federal Council, and the Regional Parliaments of the Provinces (*Länder*) how these cases can be resolved. In this way, the Austrian Ombudsman Board advocates for the interests of the citizens.

The Austrian Ombudsman Board is also the **National Human Rights Institution of the Republic of Austria**. One of its main tasks is the **preventive monitoring of human rights**. This means ensuring that human rights violations do not occur in the first place.

For this reason, the Austrian Ombudsman Board sends experts to **institutions and facilities** such as retirement and nursing homes, prisons, or child and youth welfare facilities, or accompanies the police on their operations to monitor how they work and whether human rights are being respected.

The Austrian Ombudsman Board is open to everyone: **school classes** and **visitor groups** are very welcome at the office. During a visit, you can learn about the specific work of the Austrian Ombudsman Board.



## The AOB investigates when a public authority treats you badly.

An important task of the Austrian Ombudsman Board is to handle **complaints from citizens**. It checks whether an authority has made a mistake. This can be any **public authority**: a municipality, a mayor, a district authority, a provincial state administration, or a ministry.

**Mistakes can happen.** For example, the tax office might miscalculate taxes and fees, the public employment service may deny unemployment benefits, or the municipality may misapply a law when issuing a building permit. Sometimes, proceedings take far too long, or the authority fails to respond to questions.

In any case, the Austrian Ombudsman Board can investigate whether the authority acted correctly. It discusses the complaint with the authority. If mistakes have been made, the Austrian Ombudsman Board informs those affected and proposes a **solution**.



Many problems can be successfully resolved in this way, provided it is also legally possible. However, the Austrian Ombudsman Board is not always the right point of contact for all issues. What the Austrian Ombudsman Board can and cannot do, is outlined in **laws**, which the Austrian Ombudsman Board must also adhere to.

For example, it **cannot review court rulings**. Likewise, in disputes between private individuals or in case of problems with a company, the Austrian Ombudsman Board has no authority to intervene.

## Federal Constitution

### Article 148a

(1) Anyone can complain to the Austrian Ombudsman Board about alleged cases of maladministration by the federal public administration, including its activities as a holder of private rights, particularly regarding an alleged violation of human rights, provided that the complainant is affected by this maladministration and a legal remedy is not or no longer available to them. Each complaint must be investigated by the Austrian Ombudsman Board. The complainant must be informed of the results of the investigation as well as of any action taken.



## Examples of investigation procedures

### **Right to 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> school year for children with disabilities**

Children with disabilities require approval from the education authority after the end of compulsory schooling in order to be allowed to add a voluntary 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> school year. Parents who were unable to secure such a school place for their child turned to the Austrian Ombudsman Board.

The Austrian Ombudsman Board called for an amendment to the federal law to prevent such cases in the future. The law should establish a legal entitlement so that those affected are not dependent on available places.

Thanks to the intervention of the Austrian Ombudsman Board, at least in Vienna, all children whose parents had applied for an 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> school year were able to obtain a school place for the current school year.

### **Austrian Ombudsman Board secures approval for a home therapy for sick a eight-year-old**

A child was diagnosed with a rare disease. The boy therefore requires weekly therapy at the children's hospital. The infusion takes several hours and is only administered on weekday mornings. This means that the eight-year-old misses one out of five school days. Both of his parents work, making the therapy a significant time challenge for them.



Therefore, the parents were trying to have their child receive the infusions at home. They were supported in this effort by the doctor at the children's hospital. Home therapy seemed impossible because it was unclear whether the health insurance or the province (*Land*) should cover the costs.

The parents turned to the Austrian Ombudsman Board which was able to secure approval for home therapy and is now calling for a uniform, nation-wide solution in Austria. The provinces (*Länder*) and health insurance providers should enable home treatments when medically appropriate. The institutions involved should work out who pays how much behind the scenes.

### **Clear regulations for photovoltaic systems needed**

In times of climate crisis, many citizens want to contribute and switch to sustainable energy sources for the sake of the environment. For instance, the owner of a pizzeria wanted to install a photovoltaic system on the roof of her house. This was to significantly reduce her operating costs and also contribute to environmental protection. However, the mayor only approved the system for part of the roof, claiming that the house was allegedly a listed building.

The person concerned contacted the Austrian Ombudsman Board which found that the house was actually not subject to any protection as a historical monument. Proceedings are pending. In response to this case, the Austrian Ombudsman Board has called for urgent, clear wording and regulations for the expansion of renewable energy.



# Bundesgesetzblatt

für die Republik Österreich

Jahrgang 1920  
 Ausgegeben am 10. November 1920  
 1. Stück

Inhalt: (Nr. 1-3.) 1. Gesetz, womit die Republik Österreich als Bundesstaat eingerichtet wird (Bundes-Verfassungs-  
 gesetz). — 2. Verfassungsgesetz, betreffend den Übergang zur bundesstaatlichen Verfassung. — 3. Bundesmachung,  
 betreffend das Inkrafttreten des Gesetzes vom 1. Oktober 1920 (St. G. Bl. Nr. 450), womit die Republik Österreich  
 als Bundesstaat eingerichtet wird (Bundes-Verfassungsgesetz), und des Verfassungsgesetzes vom 1. Oktober 1920,  
 betreffend den Übergang zur bundesstaatlichen Verfassung.  
 St. G. Bl. Nr. 451, betreffend den Übergang zur bundesstaatlichen Verfassung.

I.  
 Gesetz vom 1. Oktober 1920, womit  
 Österreich als Bundesstaat

(a) Die für Niederösterreich-Land und Wien  
 geltenden Sonderbestimmungen enthält das vier-  
 te Hauptstück.  
 Artikel 4  
 (1) Das Bundesgebiet ist  
 in Abhängigkeit des Br  
 im Innerhalb des Br  
 folgende P



## BUNDESGESETZBLATT FÜR DIE REPUBLIK ÖSTERREICH

Jahrgang 1977  
 Ausgegeben am 11. März 1977  
 29. Stück

- 121. Bundesgesetz: Volksanwaltschaft  
 (NR: GP XIV RV 94 und 95 AB 421 S. 49, BR: AB 1624 S. 360)
- 122. Bundesgesetz: Änderung des Bezugsgesetzes  
 (NR: GP XIV AB 425 S. 49, BR: AB 1625 S. 360)

121. Bundesgesetz vom 24. Februar 1977  
 über die Volksanwaltschaft  
 Der Nationalrat hat beschlossen:

### I. ABSCHNITT (Verfassungsbestimmungen)

Einrichtung der Volksanwaltschaft  
 § 1. (1) Jedermann kann sich bei der Volksanwaltschaft wegen Missbrauches öffentlicher Ressourcen, Verletzung des Bundesverhältnisses oder Verletzung der Privatrechtsbeziehungen durch die Träger von Privatrechtsbeziehungen, sofern er von diesem Mittelstadium betroffen ist und soweit ihm ein Rechtsmittel nicht offen ist, an die Volksanwaltschaft wenden. Der Beschwerdeführer und das Ergebnis der Prüfung sowie die ebenfalls getroffenen Veranlassungen mitzuteilen.  
 (2) Die Volksanwaltschaft ist berechtigt, von dem Beschwerdeführer in der Vernehmung der Sache ein schriftliches Verlangen zu stellen, wenn dies im Interesse der Amtswirtschaft ist in Ausübung

§ 3. Die Volksanwaltschaft kann, den mit den obersten Verwaltungsorganen des Bundes, anderen Organen, Einrichtungen oder sonstigen Personen im Fall zu treffenden Maßnahmen ermitteln. Das betreffende Organ hat binnen einer angemessenen Frist zu entscheiden und die der Volksanwaltschaft mitzuteilen oder schriftlich zu begründen, warum der Empfehlung nicht entsprochen wurde.

§ 4. Die Volksanwaltschaft hat dem Nationalrat jährlich über ihre Tätigkeit zu berichten.

§ 5. Auf Antrag der Volksanwaltschaft erkennt der Verfassungsgerichtshof über Gewährung oder Verweigerung einer Bundesbeihilfe.

§ 6. Entstanden zwischen der Volksanwaltschaft und der Bundesregierung, oder einem Bundesminister der Bundesregierung, oder einem Landesminister der Landesregierung, oder einem Mitglied der Volksanwaltschaft der Verfassungsgerichtshof in nichtöffentlicher Verhandlung.

§ 7. (1) Die Volksanwaltschaft hat ihren Sitz in Wien. Sie besteht aus drei Mitgliedern, von denen jeweils eines den Vorsitz ausübt. Die Funktionsperiode beträgt sechs Jahre. Eine nicht als Wiederwahl der Mitglieder der Volksanwaltschaft wählbare Gesamtwahl der Mitglieder der Volksanwaltschaft ist in Ausübung



## What can the Austrian Ombudsman Board actually do?

**Anyone** can complain to the Austrian Ombudsman Board. This may be because it is suspected that a public authority has made a mistake, because it violated a human right, or because a court is taking too long to make a decision.

The **Federal Constitutional Law** stipulates that all authorities must assist the Austrian Ombudsman Board in investigating errors and provide it with documents. Public administration must not keep any secrets from the Austrian Ombudsman Board. After all, the Austrian Ombudsman Board is one of the 'supreme bodies' of the Republic, like the Federal President or the Austrian Court of Audit. Authorities must either implement the **recommendations** of the Austrian Ombudsman Board or provide a detailed explanation of why this is not possible.

The Federal Constitution forms the basis for the activities of the Austrian Ombudsman Board. It also defines its composition and tasks.



The three Ombudspersons are elected by the National Council for a six-year term. They are independent and not bound by any instructions. An Ombudsperson cannot be removed from office.

Already during the legislative process in Parliament, the Austrian Ombudsman Board provides **comments** and opinions. Furthermore, the Ombudspersons report to Parliament and the regional parliaments of the provinces (*Länder*) on the cases of maladministration they have identified. This enables the members of Parliament to see how the laws they have passed work in everyday life and how they are received by the people. The Austrian Ombudsman Board serves as an important **interface** between citizens on one side and Parliament on the other.

## Federal Constitution

### Article 148b

(1) All public federal, regional, municipal, and municipal association organs, as well as other self-governing bodies, must support the Austrian Ombudsman Board in performing its tasks, grant it access to files, and provide the necessary information upon request. Official confidentiality does not apply vis-à-vis the Austrian Ombudsman Board.





# Legal basis of the Austrian Ombudsman Board

## **Federal Constitutional Law (B-VG):**

Articles 148a to 148j define the legal status and the tasks of the Austrian Ombudsman Board.

## **Act on the Implementation of the OPCAT:**

The Federal Law on the Implementation of the Optional Protocol of 18 December, 2002, to the United Nations Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT), created the statutory basis for the work of the Austrian Ombudsman Board as National Preventive Mechanism for the protection and promotion of human rights.

## **Ombudsman Act 1982 – VolksanwG:**

The Federal Law on the Austrian Ombudsman Board regulates the organisation and procedures of the Austrian Ombudsman Board. It also defines its tasks and the legal framework for the protection and promotion of human rights.



## **Standing Rules of the Austrian Ombudsman Board:**

The Standing Rules regulate the internal organisation of the Austrian Ombudsman Board and the work processes in detail. They also specify which decisions the Ombudspersons make collectively, that is, together.

## **Allocation of Responsibilities and Duties of the Austrian Ombudsman Board:**

In the allocation of responsibilities and duties, the Ombudspersons determine who is responsible for monitoring which areas of law. The responsibilities of the chair are also listed in detail.

Further information, including the current legal provisions, can be found on the website of the Austrian Ombudsman Board.

**[www.volksanwaltschaft.gv.at/en](http://www.volksanwaltschaft.gv.at/en)**



## The history of the Austrian Ombudsman Board

As early as 1929, the legal expert **Hans Kelsen**, also known as the 'Father of the Constitution,' spoke about the necessity of establishing an 'attorney' or an advocate for the Constitution. A so-called ombudsman institution that helps affected individuals with problems involving authorities and which reports to Parliament on how laws work in practice.

However, it was only after the end of World War II that discussions picked up speed. Politicians repeatedly called for the establishment of an 'Ombudsman', often inspired by Scandinavian countries. Implementation took until the late 1970s: In **1977**, all members of the National Council finally voted in favour of an attempt to establish the Austrian Ombudsman Board and to see how it would work.

The first three Ombudspersons took up their work on 1 July, 1977. It was anticipated that the Austrian Ombudsman Board would handle about 1,500 complaints per year. However, it was very quickly better received by the population than expected.



Therefore, in July **1981**, the Austrian Ombudsman Board was permanently **enshrined in the Austrian Federal Constitutional Law**. Over the past decades, the work of the Austrian Ombudsman Board has earned its trust and acceptance from the public. This is also reflected in the **expansion of its competencies** in recent years.

In July 2012, the Austrian Ombudsman Board received an explicit constitutional mandate for the protection and promotion of human rights and became part of an international monitoring **system for human rights compliance**.

In July 2017, the Austrian Ombudsman Board was given a further responsibility. Since then, an independent Pension Commission has been dealing with applications for **pensions for victims of children's homes** under the Pensions for Victims of Children's Homes Act. This commission is responsible for individuals who have not yet been recognized as victims of **violence** and who suffered abuse between 1945 and 1999 in a home, a foster family, in a hospital, or a psychiatric or therapeutic institution. The same applies to persons who were victims of violence in a private institution, provided they were assigned to it by a child and youth welfare facility.



## Ensuring that human rights violations do not occur in the first place

Since 2012, the Austrian Ombudsman Board has had the additional task of protecting and promoting human rights.

Therefore, **seven expert commissions** of the Austrian Ombudsman Board monitor public and private institutions and facilities where **freedom is** or can be **restricted**, and where people are particularly at risk of human rights violations.

Across Austria, this includes around **5,300 institutions** and facilities, ranging from prisons and police institutions to retirement and nursing homes, as well as psychiatric wards in hospitals, youth welfare institutions, or facilities for persons with disabilities. The commissions also monitor whether human rights are being respected at assemblies, demonstrations, large events, or deportations.

The members of the commissions are **experts in many different fields**, such as human rights, children's rights, the rights of persons with disabilities, medicine, and nursing. They have unrestricted access to all institutions and facilities and can view all necessary documents.



Each year, around 500 institutions and facilities are inspected. To get as accurate an impression as possible, visits are usually **unannounced**.

## Federal Constitution

### Article 148a

(3) In order to protect and promote human rights, it is the responsibility of the Austrian Ombudsman Board and the commissions appointed by it (Art. 148h, para. 3) in the area of the Federation's administration, including its activities as a holder of private rights, to:

1. visit and inspect a place of deprivation of liberty.
2. observe and monitor the conduct of bodies authorized to exercise direct administrative power and compulsion, and
3. inspect or visit facilities and programmes for persons with disabilities.



When a commission identifies an issue, the Austrian Ombudsman Board investigates these cases and talks to the responsible ministries and supervisory authorities, and proposes improvements.

Many cases of maladministration and risks have already been eliminated this way, or at least a recognition of past injustices has been achieved.

## **Federal Constitution**

### **Article 148c**

The Austrian Ombudsman Board can issue recommendations to the bodies entrusted with the highest administrative matters of the Federal government on measures to be taken in a specific case or arising from a particular case. In matters of self-administration or administration by independent authorities, the Austrian Ombudsman Board can issue recommendations to the relevant self-government body or independent authority; such recommendations shall also be brought to the attention of the Federal government's supreme administrative body.



## Important legal foundations in the area of fundamental & human rights

- ▶ Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- ▶ UN Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT)
- ▶ UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- ▶ UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- ▶ European Convention on Human Rights
- ▶ Basic Law on the General Rights of Nationals from 1867 (StGG)
- ▶ Central fundamental rights are also included in the Federal Constitutional Law (B-VG) itself:
  - Article 7 – General Equality Clause
  - Article 83 para. 2 – Right to trial by a lawful judge
- ▶ Numerous other constitutional laws and provisions in ordinary laws



## Examples of monitoring visits

### Observation of the police during demonstrations

Through direct interactions with authorities when observing police behaviour, the commissions often manage to address ambiguities and resolve misunderstandings. The Austrian Ombudsman Board also regularly submits suggestions for improvement, such as:

- Police announcements should be clear and precise so that as many people as possible can hear and understand them.
- As pepper spray may be used at demonstrations, preventive measures should include calling-in emergency services to avoid injuries and health damage.
- Protesters should only be encircled in areas where it is safe for both the individuals being corralled and other uninvolved persons.

### Youth in detention

Adolescence is often a difficult time full of challenges. Some young people repeatedly come into conflict with the law. Once in custody, it is all the more important to give them a 'second chance': to catch up on previously neglected matters, to finish school, to complete an apprenticeship, to find stability in order to lead a crime-free life in the future without reoffending.



The Austrian Ombudsman Board examined the living conditions of detained adolescents and identified a great need for improvement. For example, at the juvenile prison in Gerasdorf, the young detainees are located far from their families, and visiting hours are limited to weekdays.

As a result of the criticism by the Austrian Ombudsman Board, the Ministry of Justice is working on improvements, and the juvenile prison will now be relocated to Vienna.

### **Austrian Ombudsman Board criticises accommodation of young people with disabilities**

What should actually be conceivable at most as a short-term emergency and transitional solution regularly becomes a permanent solution due to political failure to organise and finance suitable housing options for young persons with disabilities.

A commission of the Austrian Ombudsman Board repeatedly visited a residential home and found that it regularly accepts young people from psychiatric wards, even though it is a retirement and nursing home. In such cases, the Austrian Ombudsman Board puts pressure on those responsible to ensure that the young people affected are provided with age-appropriate accommodation in the future.



## Abused in a children's home – Entitlement to a Victim's Pension

For decades, children and adolescents were physically, emotionally or sexually abused and tortured in institutions and foster families. For too long, nothing was done to **protect these children**.

Many children and adolescents have suffered immense pain and injustice due to state care. The least the state can do is **to provide financial support** to those affected. The Austrian Ombudsman Board plays a crucial role in this.



Under the **Pensions for Victims of Children's Homes Act**, so-called 'home victims' receive a monthly supplementary pension. 'Home victims' are people who were physically, emotionally, and/or sexually abused between 1945 and 1999 in institutions such as children's homes.

**Victims of violence** in a children's or youth home, boarding school, a medical facility, or foster family have the opportunity to report the abuse to the Pension Commission of the Austrian Ombudsman Board and to apply for a supplementary pension.

The Austrian Ombudsman Board informs those affected about their options. It receives the case files from the youth welfare authority or the hospital records. The applicant is invited to a meeting with an expert. The Pension Commission of the Austrian Ombudsman Board assesses whether the persons's accounts are credible and finally **makes a decision proposal**.

Through this process, victims of children's homes receive at least a symbolic **compensation** from the State for injustices that, regrettably, can never be fully rectified.



## How to file a complaint with the Austrian Ombudsman Board?

Complaints to the Austrian Ombudsman Board can be submitted **free of charge** at any time. It does not matter how old you are, what country you come from, or where you live. The complaint must be about a problem with an **Austrian public authority**. It is important that you are personally affected.

A complaint can be submitted either electronically, by post, or in person. A **complaint form** can be found on the website of the Austrian Ombudsman Board, where those affected can briefly describe their problem.

Only a few details are required:

- ▶ the name of the authority,
- ▶ what has been done so far and
- ▶ how this was responded to,
- ▶ as well as your own contact details.

Affected individuals can also hand in documents related to their complaint in person.



The Austrian Ombudsman Board is easily accessible. Located at **Singerstraße 17 in Vienna**, just a short walk from Stephansplatz, the staff at the information centre accept complaints on weekdays from **Monday to Friday, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.**

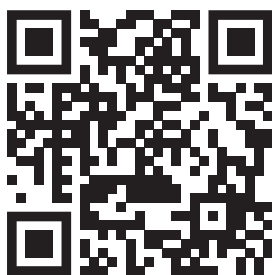
You can also contact the Austrian Ombudsman Board by post at:

▶ Singerstraße 17, 1015 Vienna

or by email at:

▶ [post@volksanwaltschaft.gv.at](mailto:post@volksanwaltschaft.gv.at).

If individuals would like to discuss their concerns in person, they can describe their problem directly to one of the Ombudspersons during a **consultation day**. Current **appointment dates** in all provinces (*Länder*) can also be found on the website.



## What does the Austrian Ombudsman Board do at the international level?

By promoting good governance and protecting human rights, parliamentary oversight bodies like the Austrian Ombudsman Board strengthen the rule of law. To support and strengthen ombudsman institutions in other countries, international **cooperation and exchange are crucial**.

The Austrian Ombudsman Board maintains close contact with the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions, the EU institutions, the Council of Europe, the United Nations, and the OSCE.

Since 2009, the Austrian Ombudsman Board is the seat of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI), which was established in 1978.



INTERNATIONAL  
OMBUDSMAN  
INSTITUTE



The IOI is an organisation for independent institutions monitoring public administration at national, regional, and local levels. With more than 200 Ombudsman members from approximately 100 countries worldwide, the IOI became an **international institution** in accordance with the Austrian Act on Headquarter Locations (*Amtssitzgesetz*) in 2022.

The Austrian Ombudsman Board is committed to ensuring that all IOI members can perform their duties effectively. It **supports members** in various ways, including training, research, and regional subsidies for projects, as well as assistance when an ombudsman institution gets under threat in its country.

To this end, the IOI enters into agreements with like-minded organisations. This further deepens cooperation and expands **training opportunities** in areas such as administrative oversight, anti-corruption, and torture prevention.

IOI members can access training free of charge, and scholarships are also provided.

Additionally, the IOI finances regional and **research projects** related to ombudsman work to share knowledge on specific topics, exchange experiences, and strengthen mutual understanding.



The IOI also regularly issues statements on current issues, especially when ombudsman institutions are hindered in the independent exercise of their duties or are exposed to other threats and pressures.



## What is the ORF “Bürgeranwalt”?

The television programme “Bürgeranwalt” (‘Advocate for the People’) is based on a collaboration between the ORF – the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation – and the Austrian Ombudsman Board and has been running for many years. More than 2,000 cases have already been featured on the programme.



Every Saturday at 6 p.m., the ORF, and the Austrian Ombudsman Board, provide information on current investigative proceedings. In the studio, the ombudspersons discuss the concerns directly with the people affected for an hour.



Regularly, the show thus **highlights injustices and misconduct by authorities**, leading to good solutions.

For many the “Bürgeranwalt” is a fixture on Saturday evenings. The programme increases the visibility of the Austrian Ombudsman Board and also results in good ratings for the ORF, with an average viewership of nearly half a million people. In 2020, the peak number of viewers was around 800,000.

Thus, the programme “Bürgeranwalt” has become a success story. To maintain this success, it is important to persevere and keep asking questions. Open cases are therefore revisited in subsequent episodes.

Almost always, this leads to a **resolution** to the benefit of the persons concerned or at least to an improvement. Those affected see that they are not alone with their problems; someone is addressing their issues.









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Vienna, September 2024