



The international activity of the Ararteko

European and International Affairs
Department
October 2021



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THE INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY OF THE ARARTEKO

The Ararteko's international activity is conducted through international networks of ombuds institutions to which it belongs and through partnerships with international human rights institutions. The Ararteko's international activity involves sharing and contributing information and best practices; conducting research and producing reports in conjunction with other foreign ombuds institutions; organising meetings with other international stakeholders or to disseminate related issues in the Basque Country; participating in preparing reports and statements; and participating in events, including presenting papers, intervening in seminars or moderating workshops in the international arena. The networks and institutions with which the Ararteko cooperates and in which the Office participates are set out below.

International networks of ombudsmen

The [International Ombudsman Institute](#) (IOI) is an association that brings together 200 independent ombudsmen from around the world. The Ararteko has been involved in different ways within the IOI. In 2018, the Ararteko organised a congress in Vitoria-Gasteiz on the role of the ombudsman in protecting the environment. In 2019 and 2020, the Ararteko prepared a report on protection services for unaccompanied children and adolescents in Europe, as part of a larger project conducted with the ombudsmen of the Netherlands and Greece. The result of the work was presented as a paper during the IOI Assembly in May 2021 and at the Fundamental Rights Forum, organised by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, in October 2021.

The [European Network of Ombudsmen](#) (ENO) connects the ombuds institutions of countries of the European Union and of the candidate countries for EU membership. It is coordinated by the [European Ombudsman](#). The Ararteko has been involved in different ways in this network's activities: moderating workshops at some of the annual meetings organised by the European Ombudsman, taking part in the Ombudsman's investigations by providing information and giving papers at workshops.

The [Ibero-American Federation of Ombuds institutions](#) (FIO) links the ombudsmen of Latin America, the Caribbean and Spain, Portugal and Andorra. The Ararteko's involvement in this network includes contributions in some of its meetings and in working groups on the state of women's right.

The [European Network of Ombudspersons for Children](#) (ENOC) brings together ombudspersons specialising in working with children and young people, or those with a department dedicated to those issues. It is open to the countries of the Council of Europe. The Ararteko has given presentations at the annual meetings. The Ararteko office has also frequently helped to prepare studies and the statements that the Network publishes annually on specific themes. The main participation is through the

[European Network of Young Advisers](#) (ENYA), coordinated by ENOC. The Network consists of young people from the Youth Advisory Panels of the ENOC members. Its mission is to ensure that the work of ENOC includes the point of view of European young people. The Ararteko Youth Advisory Panel has been part of ENYA for the last four years.

The [International Association of Language Commissioners](#) (IALC) links up eleven ombuds institutions from different countries specialised in the rights of the speakers of coexisting official languages or of minority languages, or which include the defence of those rights among their activities. The Ararteko's involvement in this organisation includes speaking at round tables and a chapter in a collective book.

Cooperation with other institutions

- **United Nations:** The Ararteko has worked with different offices and bodies of the United Nations occasionally. For example, the Ararteko's Office has contributed information to the [Committee on the Rights of the Child](#) during one of the supervisory cycles of compliance by the Spanish State with the obligations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The office also provided the [Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing](#) with information for two of its studies, and has answered questionnaires created by [Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) to study the situation of ombuds institutions around the world.

- **European Union:** The Ararteko has contributed to European Union consultations. For example, it contributed to the consultations launched about the European Commission's new strategy for the Charter of Fundamental Rights. The Ararteko's contribution stressed the internal training of the Ararteko case processing staff to familiarise them with the use of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. The training provided by the Ararteko was considered to be a promising practice in the contribution summary that is part of the Commission's final report. The Ararteko also contributed to the European Commission's project to create a Child Guarantee and was invited to take part in a consultation as part of preparing the Communication by the European Commission on the Rule of Law.

- **[European Union Fundamental Rights Agency](#):** The Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) is the European Union's reference centre regarding human rights. The Agency prepares Europe-wide studies and surveys to discover the situation of certain groups of interest (Romani people, LGTBIQ+, women victims of gender-based violence), or to study how European legislation regarding fundamental rights is being applied, such as data protection legislation, legislation on the rights of victims of crime and anti-terrorism legislation. The FRA also advises other institutions of the European Union on fundamental rights and leads the study into new human rights areas, such as the correct use of artificial intelligence. The FRA is very interested in being in

close contact with the institutions tasked with ensuring human rights compliance in the field, such as the Ararteko. The Ararteko has thus taken part in different FRA consultations regarding the Agency's work plans, and has also contributed to its study, as yet unpublished, into the application of the Directive on combating terrorism.