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Press release

Abolishment of age discrimination provisions in a draft law of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ombudsman welcomes the recent legislative initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to abolish all age discrimination provisions for its staff in the bill recently sent to Parliament, as an important step towards combating age discrimination. This initiative responds to the standing recommendations of the Independent Authority as early as 2007.

The Ombudsman hopes that this positive development will mark the abolishment of all corresponding, inadequately justified, age discrimination provisions and will make a decisive contribution to the effective fight against stereotypes and prejudices.

The draft law amends provisions of the Bylaws of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (L. 3566/2007) and removes the upper age limit for access to all staff branches of the Ministry. At the same time, officials of the diplomatic branch are allowed to remain in service beyond the 65th year - but in any case not beyond the 67th year - by analogy with employees in other branches of the Ministry.

Already as early as 2007, **the Ombudsman had sent** a Findings Report, recommending abolishment of the upper age limit for access to all branches of the Ministry. Also, since 2015, **the Ombudsman had stated** that compulsory retirement of diplomatic officials at the age of 65, was contrary to the principle of equal treatment on grounds of age, to the extent that it was not justified by any special conditions faced by diplomatic officials *vis-à-vis* other categories of Ministry staff.

The text of the explanatory memorandum of the draft law makes special reference to the Ombudsman's recommendations.

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