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PRESS RELEASE

Annual Report of the Ombudsman for the year 2017

The issue of the rule of law and the legality of administrative action in Greece is at the heart of the Ombudsman's Annual Report for the year 2017.

The 19th consecutive Independent Authority's report submitted in Parliament on Monday, March 26, records the complex reality of a public administration which is at times inadequate, trapped in a chaotic regulatory framework, inclined towards overregulation and occasionally even vengeful towards the citizen.

The fact alone that in 2017 the number of complaints to the Ombudsman has increased by approximately 30% highlights the magnitude of the problem as well as the extent of the Independent Authority's interventions. It is recalled that this year, the Independent Authority completes its 20 years of constitutionally regulated operation by having handled more than 240,000 complaints and its mediations involving a further multiplied number of citizens.

The serious failure to manage the effects of the fiscal crisis and the resulting stringent budgetary constraints have intensified complaints against public administration, reflecting, at the same time, a deepening lack of confidence to the state and its services.

"The rationalization of the functioning of the administration and the consolidation of the principles of the rule of law are not only conditions sine qua non of a modern, European, democratic state, but also key pillars for solid, sustainable economic growth and social cohesion", stated the Greek Ombudsman, Andreas Pottakis, at the ceremony of submitting the report to the Speaker of Parliament Nikos Voutsis.

The sources of problems and maladministration have been identified for yet another year in those areas where rapid changes have taken place recently, but also in areas where state agencies are unable to respond due to the perpetuated inadequate staffing, problematic procedures and, undoubtedly, cuts in financial resources

In brief, and as it transpires from citizens' complaints, the characteristics of maladministration are described as follows: non-application of the existing legislation, misconstruction of the law, selective or problematic implementation of the legislative framework, overregulation combined with ambiguity and mismanagement, regulation beyond the limits of public interest and administrative malfunctions in the implementation of the legislation.

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