

## Legislative Initiatives of the Ombudsman 2021

The Ombudsman uses the powers to influence the regulatory framework in the interest of the citizens when referred to with complaints and alerts, some accompanied by collections of signatures. The Ombudsman also takes steps *ex officio* when, in the course of support for citizen actions, it is established that there is a legislative gap or that the provisions create prerequisites for violations of the citizens' rights.

In 2021, the number of citizens' requests aimed at changing the legislation decreased sharply. The trend of a small number of requests for referrals to the Supreme Courts for interpretative decisions continued. Requests for referrals to the Constitutional Court remained at almost the same level as in the previous year.

### 1.1. Legislative proposals:

- The Ombudsman's proposal for an explicit normative provision on **non-sequestration of compensations granted in connection with COVID-19** under the "Save Me" programme was accepted. At the beginning of 2022, an explicit text was voted and adopted, which protects the Covid supplements of pensioners in cases of seizure in enforcement proceedings.
- Through a change in the **Road Traffic Act**, cars sold before 27 December 2017 can be written off by the seller in the traffic police agency until the end of 2023 only with the **contract of sale**.
- An opinion was sent to the Minister of the Interior, stating a strong disagreement with the proposed provisions in the **draft amendment to the Rules of Procedure of the Ministry of Interior**, concerning **the possibility for border police officers to check whether travelling citizens have unpaid fines and unpaid tickets for traffic violations**, and, accordingly, to collect and deliver them at the border.
- Opinions and recommendations were sent in connection with the **voting rights of citizens** in view of complaints and signals sent to the Ombudsman.
- A recommendation was made to the Chairman of the National Statistical Institute and to the Chairperson of the Parliamentary

Committee on Digitalization, Electronic Government and Information Technology in connection with the received complaints concerning **Census 2021**.

- In connection with the numerous letters, petitions, objections and opinions on the model of **judicial optimisation reform**, the Ombudsman sent a recommendation to the Supreme Judicial Council with a position on **the proposed closure of courts**, which restricts the right of access to justice.
- A letter was sent to the Chairperson of the Association of Collection Agencies in Bulgaria with a call not to allow **misleading practices for citizens by debt collection companies**, members of their association, in connection with the newly adopted provisions on prescription in the **Contracts and Obligations Act**.
- An opinion was sent on a bill to support the introduction of the possibility for **remote participation of the members of the general meeting of non-profit legal entities**.