

## THE 12<sup>TH</sup> CONFERENCE OF THE ASIAN OMBUDSMAN ASSOCIATION

Paper Transcript

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The nowadays ombudsmen have multiple, but changing roles and functions matching to the 21<sup>st</sup> century's new and transforming requirements. The Ombudsman is a trusted person who acts as an intermediary mediator between organizations within a broad scope of constitutional concept as well as representing the public interests.

The legal basis, his/her jurisdiction and the institutional forms can be diverse in every different country following traditions and the state structure. Observing Hungary, we can see that this country has gone through huge political and economic change since 1989. Although, the (old) Constitution was adopted in 1949, and later comprehensively amended in 1989, Hungary was the only former communist country in Eastern Europe that did not adopt an entirely new basic law after the fall of Communism. This situation has changed in 2011, when the Hungarian Parliament adopted a new Fundamental Law, which has also brought significant amendments in relation to the previous ombudsman-system in the country.

The Hungarian ombudsman institution came to life during the democratization process of the early 1990s and the office was formally established in 1995. The overall organizational structure with a range of ombudsman institutions was complex, with a general civil rights ombudsman (Parliamentary Commissioner for Civil Rights, sometimes referred to as the human rights ombudsman/commissioner) and three independent and equally ranked specialized ombudsmen assigned to guard specific constitutional rights (including data protection and freedom of information, the rights of national and ethnic minorities, and environmental rights). In accordance with the Fundamental Law of Hungary (adopted in April 2011), the new Act on the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights will create a unified ombudsman system with new mandate and new challenges.