

# ENOHE

## The European Network of Ombudsmen in Higher Education 11th Annual Conference

University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland  
15-17 MAY 2014

### “Higher Education Ombudsmen and Empowerment”

\*\*\*FIRST CALL FOR PAPERS\*\*\*

The role of Ombudsmen in higher education is to make a difference to the lives of students and other users through informed, independent, impartial, evidence-based interventions. This is an issue of **Empowerment** of parties and affected interests – students, universities, and ombudsmen themselves. The aim is to harness creatively the possibilities for resolving disputes wherever they arise. Empowerment is more than ever a key ingredient of dispute resolution, where disputes emerge from the labyrinth of conflict, rising tuition costs, rising expectations and diminishing resources in times of mass higher education. While that is a truism, what is more difficult is how to create Empowerment through affordable, sensible action. That is the theme of this Conference. The Conference has three strands:

#### ➤ **Empowering Students**

High quality student experience is moving to the heart of university education both in terms of student expectations and university offerings. What are the rights and responsibilities of students in ensuring this ambition is achieved? How should students engage with ombudsmen? How should ombudsmen seek to meet rising expectations without undermining academic judgement? What role does mediation and other conflict resolution strategies have in empowering parties to a dispute?

#### ➤ **Empowering universities**

How are universities empowered by ombudsmen? What are the benefits to universities in having access to ombudsmen services for students and staff? How does a university collate and disseminate this information? How do people in charge (presidents, rectors, deans etc) react to ombudsmen surveying the deficiencies in daily university life and how should they? Does the existence of ombudsman services enhance the Trust that students (and the wider public) have in universities?

#### ➤ **Empowering ombudsmen**

In the context of the marketization of universities and reduced available resource how and why do ombudsmen come into existence? What can ombudsmen do to maximize their impact and utility? What is the role of networking, training and development in ensuring a sustained approach? What is the role of transparency and effective dissemination of case histories and public suggestions for improvements? What can higher education ombudsmen learn from other ombudsmen in this regard? How is the concept of empowerment related to the developing mandate of university ombudsmen?

In this call for papers, the Conference Planning Committee of ENOHE 2014 has the pleasure in calling for proposals for papers to be delivered at the Conference. At this stage, potential contributors should confine themselves to a synopsis of no more than 300 words to summarise their presentation.

The absolute deadline for suggested paper titles and synopses will be **28 February 2014** but earlier submission would be very welcome. Please send synopses to Charlotte Wootton at [enohe@oiahe.org.uk](mailto:enohe@oiahe.org.uk).

Further information about the Conference (how to book and so forth) will be sent out in the next few weeks.

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