
Does Poland really need the National Ombudsperson for Pupils?

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Central ombudspersons operating in Poland

- 1) the general Ombudsperson;
- 2) the Ombudsperson for Children;
- 3) the Ombudsperson for Patients;
- 4) the Ombudsperson for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises;
- 5) Financial Ombudsperson.

There are ideas to establish the ombudspersons for employees and farmers.
Historically, there was the Ombudsperson for Graduates (2011–2018).



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Ombudsperson for Pupils?

In March 2024, Minister of Education B. Nowacka held a press conference and announced that the ombudspersons for pupils are going to be established. She also appointed 11 people to the Pupil Rights and Duties Team with giving it a task to prepare the recommendations and a bill.



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The bill proposes establishing:

- 1) the National Ombudsperson for Pupils appointed by the Minister of Education on 4-year-long term;
- 2) the 16 Regional (Voivodeship) Ombudspersons for Pupils appointed by the National one on a motion submitted by Polish regional school superintendent;
- 3) subregional (in lower local government units, like cities, counties...) – optional level, at the discretion of, e.g., city council;
- 4) the School Ombudspersons for Pupils elected in every school in Poland



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Does Poland need it at all?

Pros:

- the Children and General Ombudspersons are central and far away from everyday life, especially outside the capital;
- the competencies of the two above are not tailored for schools and their specificity;
 - some pupils in high schools are over 18 years old, so the Children Ombudsperson legally cannot help them



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Does Poland need it at all?

Cons:

- Polish pupils already may seek help from the General and Children Ombudspersons;
- this reform creates additional costs in terms of the big budgetary deficit;
- the ombudspersons should be impartial, while the National Ombudsperson for Pupils will be appointed by the government



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Does Poland need it at all?

All in all:

- we should differentiate pupils from children, since the first ones are both under and over 18 years old;
- it seems that the people, especially at school and regional levels, will be helpful and the a number of problems could be resolved without complaining to the external from the school itself bodies;
- thus, the idea of the whole pupils' ombudsperson system should be assessed positively.



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