BRIEFING: Ombudsman Calls for Extended Remit

THE REQUEST

On 22 September 2026, Ombudsman Ger Deering called for his office's remit to be extended to investigate complaints about the administration of immigration and naturalisation law.[1]

THE STATEMENT: EXCERPTS[2]

"We are not seeking to interfere with any decisions in relation to whether somebody is entitled to citizenship or residency. […] We are looking at how people get treated in the system."

"We also received **143 complaints** about the Department of Justice, largely in areas which are not within my statutory remit […] namely, those concerning immigration and naturalisation matters."

"I believe we are currently **failing** some of the most **vulnerable** in our society."

"Currently, where a complaint relates to actions taken in the administration of the law in relation to immigration and naturalisation, our governing legislation **prohibits us from investigating**."

"Many of these **people make a major contribution** to our society, including through their work and tax contributions, yet they are still **denied access** to the services of the Ombudsman."

"I am aware of circumstances where some people **experience significant difficulties** engaging with the Department or receiving responses to important communications."

"There is a **portal** but the issue we hear about sometimes is that people go to that portal and try to engage, but there are **no responses** coming back."

"It would require only a **very minimal legislative change** to permit us to deal with such complaints."

"I believe the **othering of these people** is not just **morally wrong and unjustified but dangerous.**"

"Denying any cohort of people the right of access to the Ombudsman undermines that principle and is a poor reflection on our democracy."

"As legislators, I ask the members to use their considerable influence to ensure we can deliver fairness, dignity and respect for all those affected."

THE FURTHER CONTEXT

The European Migration Network glossary prefers "third-country national" to "alien" in the EU context.[3] [4]
The Ombudsman Act 1980, revised, is available to read in full.[5]

THE UNKNOWN

Receipt Brief has not identified if the request is being considered.

Receipt Brief

SOURCES

01 **Opening Statement**
Office of the Ombudsman · Statement, 22 September 2026 LINK

02 **Joint Committee on Public Petitions and the Ombudsmen debate - Tuesday, 22 Sep 2026**
Houses of the Oireachtas · 22 September 2026 LINK

03 **EMN Asylum and Migration Glossary**
European Commission · 2025 LINK

04 **EMN Asylum and Migration Glossary: Alien**
European Commission · 2025 LINK

05 **Ombudsman Act 1980 — Revised**
Law Reform Commission · Updated to 2 April 2025 LINK

USEFUL RESOURCES

06 **Overestimating immigration linked to negative attitudes**
Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI)· 2026 LINK

07 **Ombudsman Reports**
Office of the Ombudsman LINK

08 **Ombudsman News**
Office of the Ombudsman LINK

09 **40 Years of the Ombudsman: Commemorative Book**
Office of the Ombudsman LINK