

## Note to the Reader

### WITH A VIEW TO BETTER READABILITY OF THE REPORT:

- the masculine form is intended to be gender inclusive;
- the acronyms for certain agencies and institutions are used when they are familiar to the public and make the text clearer.

### INTEGRATION OF THE ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE QUÉBEC OMBUDSMAN

The *Public Protector Act* requires that the annual report and the annual management report of the Québec Ombudsman be tabled together in the National Assembly as integrated documents. This enables the Québec Ombudsman to report simultaneously in two separate documents on the outcome of its activities related to its mission as well as its internal management.

Given this special situation, and so that reporting is as comprehensive as possible and both documents can be read separately, some information may overlap.

### PROCESSING SERVICE REQUESTS

Different terms are required to describe each of the steps involved in service-request processing.

Individuals' service requests to the Québec Ombudsman may consist of a third-party *complaint* or *report* (only situations in the health and social services sector can be reported), a *request for assistance*, a *request for information*, or a *request referred to another organization* by the Québec Ombudsman, which can launch an investigation only if a report or complaint is made.

A complaint or report can be based on more than one ground for dissatisfaction. The Québec Ombudsman examines each of the grounds, which enables it to determine whether a complaint is substantiated. Substantiated complaints confirm the legitimacy of the citizen's position, while unsubstantiated complaints confirm that of the government department or public agency or the health and social services body concerned.

The final step entails informing the citizen of the Québec Ombudsman's conclusions by phone, letter, or any other means of communication. This officially closes the file. Some conclusions contain recommendations that are forwarded to the government department, public agency or health and social services body concerned. In such cases, the Québec Ombudsman follows up on the file until the situation has been rectified. Then, and only then, is the file deemed to be closed.

Readers must therefore bear in mind the distinction between "received" requests, compiled based on the number of requests, and "closed" requests, compiled based on the grounds for the complaint.