

## CANDIDATE FOR THE POST OF CHAIR OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

(Election 29 June 2017)



### Presentation

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Simon Matthijssen</b>
<b>Date of Birth:</b>	<b>13/12/1956</b>
<b>Nationality:</b>	<b>Dutch</b>
<b>Working languages:</b>	<b>Dutch, English, German, passive French</b>
<b>Position in the INGO:</b>	<b>External advisor to the Board - EOI representative at the Conference of INGOs</b>
<b>Full title and acronym of the INGO:</b>	<b>European Ombudsman Institute (EOI)</b>
<b>Year participatory status was granted to the INGO:</b>	<b>1997</b>

### Motivation

Dear all,

For many years populist, nationalist, fear-mongers were winning in Europe. Weasel governments, have been smothering civil liberties, oppositional- and non-traditional groups, threatening NGOs and independent judiciary in a rat race for votes from the discontent and the victims of globalization and economic collapse.

Now we see signs of revival of democratic values and the defense of democratic institutions: people are standing up against fact-free politics, populism and xenophobia, their empty rhetoric, exploitation of fear, denial of climate change, cultivation of an obscure past. Human Rights (HR), cornerstone of democracy, are not the privilege of the establishment. The outcasts, the stranger, the beggar, asylum seeker, prostitute and junkie are entitled to the same rights.

NGOs - having direct contact with the outcasts - are the blood vessels of society, they know the man in the street, his needs and worries and narratives, they foster trust and social cohesion.

Our HR committee is a small vehicle that helps to give a voice to civil society and bring fresh oxygen to revive our democracies. I would be honoured to chair this committee.

Current situation:

- Affiliated with universities in Utrecht and Moscow
- Reporter
- Coordinating HR lessons (Amnesty)
- Living in Rotterdam (NL), La Bachellerie (FR) and Moscow (Russia)

Past occupations:

- (Substitute-)ombudsman in Rotterdam metropole
- Borough alderman
- Legal advisor for Rotterdam
- Lecturer at the Law Faculty of Leyden