


Procedure file

Basic information		
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	1996/2074(COS)	Procedure completed
European Ombudsman. Annual report 1995		
Subject 1.20.04 European Ombudsman		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	PETI Petitions	V AHERN Nuala	19/03/1996
Council of the European Union			

Key events			
22/04/1996	Non-legislative basic document published	N4-0257/1996	Summary
20/05/1996	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
29/05/1996	Vote in committee		
29/05/1996	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0176/1996	
20/06/1996	Debate in Parliament		
20/06/1996	Decision by Parliament	T4-0369/1996	Summary
20/06/1996	End of procedure in Parliament		
08/07/1996	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1996/2074(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	PETI/4/07802

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		N4-0257/1996	22/04/1996	MED	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0176/1996 OJ C 198 08.07.1996, p. 0004	29/05/1996	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0369/1996 OJ C 198 08.07.1996, p. 0166-0215	20/06/1996	EP	Summary

European Ombudsman. Annual report 1995

OBJECTIVE: Report of the European Ombudsman for 1995. **SUBSTANCE:** On 12 July 1995, the European Parliament elected Mr Jacob Söderman the first Ombudsman of the European Union. He made the solemn undertaking before the Court of Justice that is required of an Ombudsman before taking up his duties on 27 September 1995. By the time the first European Ombudsman had been elected, 53 complaints had already been registered. By the end of 1995, the number of registered complaints had reached 298. By 31 March 1996, the number had risen to 537. Of the 298 complaints registered up to the end of 1995, 131 (some 45%) had been examined by 31 December 1995 to see if they were admissible and if there were grounds for further enquiries. Almost 80% of these complaints were inadmissible because they did not concern matters within the Ombudsman's mandate. None of the admissible complaints had been finally dealt with by the end of 1995. Of the total of 298 complaints, 20% originated from the UK, 16% from Germany, 13.5% from Spain and 10% from France. Complaints were usually made by private citizens and not by companies or associations. Of a total of 30 admissible complaints in 1995, 24 were against the Commission, 2 against the Council and 3 against the European Parliament. There were many complaints about lack of transparency within the institutions and refusal to provide information, such as Council minutes, the attendance register of Members of the European Parliament and figures relating to the funding of a Community programme. Other complaints concerned work relationships between the institutions and their staff (e.g. conduct of competitions and recruitment of temporary staff and trainees) or contractual relationships between the institutions and private firms (e.g. abrupt termination of contracts). The Ombudsman also stresses the importance of close cooperation with Community institutions and national ombudsmen. In this connection, the Committee on Petitions and the Ombudsman have cooperated closely in order to clarify their respective functions and to establish methods of cooperation. A procedure has been established for the transfer of cases between the Committee on Petitions and the Ombudsman, with the agreement of the petitioner or complainant. A harmonious working relationship with the Commission is also necessary if the problems are to be dealt with and solved quickly. With this in view, agreements have been reached on deadlines for answers and for the translation of documents. Cooperation with national ombudsmen is also of crucial importance for the full and fair application of Community law at all levels of the EU. Finally, it is vital that the public be informed of the existence and duties of the Ombudsman. A public information campaign (brochures, leaflets, press, etc.) is of crucial importance for the work of the Ombudsman in years to come. In conclusion, this new institution needs to acquire several years' experience before it will be possible to take stock of the mandate and powers of the Ombudsman. The report suggests that appropriate moments might be the end of the European Parliament's annual session for 1999, when the Committee on Petitions and Parliament receive the Ombudsman's annual report for the year 1998. ?

European Ombudsman. Annual report 1995

In adopting the report by Mrs Nuala AHERN (Green, IRL), the European Parliament welcomes the Ombudsman's report and calls on all Community institutions and bodies, and in particular the Council and Commission, to cooperate closely with the Ombudsman and, in particular to place at his disposal the information and documents he requires for the performance of his duties. While commending the quality of the report and the need for it to be distributed as widely as possible, Parliament requests that citizens and residents of the Union should also be able to apply to the Ombudsman via electronic communication systems, in order to make it easier to exercise their rights. Believing that the combined action of the Ombudsman and the European Parliament substantiates Articles 8d, 138d and 138e of the EC Treaty, given the number of complaints and petitions received, it undertakes to do all in its power to cooperate with the Ombudsman in assisting and guiding him in any difficulty arising from his dealings with the institutions. In this connection, it welcomes the decision by the Ombudsman and the Committee on Petitions to refer to each other any petitions and complaints which fall within each other's sphere of activity. It notes that the Ombudsman will declare inadmissible complaints about decisions of the European Parliament and the Committee on Petitions as these are decisions of a political nature, but assumes that this principle does not apply to all complaints concerning these bodies where they relate to maladministration or decisions taken on improper grounds. Finally, Parliament expresses its support for maximum transparency in the administrations of the European institutions and calls for the matter to be raised at the Intergovernmental Conference. ?