



Nikiforos Diamandouros re-elected as European Ombudsman

Nikiforos Diamandouros (EL) was re-elected European Ombudsman on Wednesday. Mr Diamandouros, who has held the position since 2003, was backed by 340 MEPs in a secret plenary vote. The European Ombudsman investigates citizens' complaints of maladministration by EU institutions. The other candidates, Pierre-Yves Monette (BE) and Vittorio Bottoli (IT), received 289 and 19 votes respectively.

Mr Diamandouros' priorities for his mandate, which runs until 2014, are to ensure that EU delivers the benefits for citizens promised by the Lisbon Treaty, strengthen constructive dialogue with EU institutions and bodies and improve service to citizens, by using resources more efficiently. He also plans to step up co-operation with national and regional ombudsmen and communicate more effectively with citizens.

The Ombudsman election procedure is supervised by the Petitions Committee, which checks that applications are admissible and that candidates fulfill all the conditions required for the post. EU rules establish, inter alia, that the Ombudsman must "offer every guarantee of independence". The Ombudsman is elected by Parliament in a secret vote at the start of each parliamentary term.

The role of the Ombudsman, established in 1995, is to investigate cases of maladministration by the EU institutions, including lack of transparency and refusal to provide information or documents.

Nikiforos Diamandouros was elected in January 2003 for the remainder of the 1999-2004 legislative term, following the retirement of the first European Ombudsman, Jacob Söderman. He was re-elected in January 2005.

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