

## Ombudsman calls for good administration by the European Schools

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The European Ombudsman, **Jacob Söderman**, has called on the Commission to promote good administration by the European Schools. In a draft recommendation, the Ombudsman asks the Commission to outline concrete measures which it will take in the future to do this. The Commission should respond by 31 March 2003.

The Ombudsman's draft recommendation follows a complaint from 50 parents of children at the European Schools in Brussels about the way places were allocated between the three Schools for the academic year 2002-03. This led to over 200 internal appeals. According to the parents, the distribution among schools without a thorough evaluation of the children's needs was an example of the worst administrative practice. The Commission argued that the Schools had made every effort to take the parents' choice of School into account and that many of the individual appeals had been successful.

The Commission acknowledged that the right to good administration and the rights of children, as laid down in the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights, apply in full to the European Schools. The parents called for a comprehensive review of the administration of the Schools to ensure that these rights are respected.

The Ombudsman said "the Commission's response to the events in this case fails to show that it fully recognises its responsibility to promote good administration by the Schools. When a particular area of administration generates an unusually large number of appeals it is good practice to examine whether there is an underlying problem and, if so, to take measures to deal with it for the future."

The Ombudsman's draft recommendation can be found on his website at:  
<http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/recommen/en/020845.htm>

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