

European Ombudsman meets colleagues from accession countries

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The European Ombudsman, **P. Nikiforos Diamandouros**, will meet his ombudsman colleagues from the accession countries on May 29-30 in Warsaw. Commenting on the upcoming meeting, Mr. Diamandouros said "I want to work closely with my colleagues in the run-up to accession. We need to prepare the ground so that citizens can make use of their Community law rights from day one of membership."

The European Ombudsman is in Poland to attend "The Ombudsman and EU law" seminar organised by the Polish Ombudsman, Mr. Andrzej Zoll. On 30 May, he will make a speech on "The role of ombudsmen in ensuring the rule of law and protection of fundamental rights, in the light of the Convention's work on the draft Constitution of the European Union". Other speakers at the seminar include Mr. Zoll, who will speak on the rights of foreigners, Mr. Otakar Motejl, Public Defender of Rights in the Czech Republic, who will talk about access to public information, and Mr. Jerzy Świątkiewicz, Deputy Ombudsman of Poland whose topic is the protection of human rights.

Background

The European Ombudsman has been working with his colleagues in the accession countries for some time. Since April 2002, these ombudsmen have been part of the European Ombudsman's liaison network that exchanges information about Community law and shares information about best practice among ombudsmen.

Earlier this month, Mr. Diamandouros invited the accession country ombudsmen to nominate liaison officers who will act as contact points for their colleagues in the Member States. This follows the resolution passed at the Athens seminar of national ombudsmen of the European Union that took place in April 2003.

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