

Council agrees to give access to marked exam paper

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The European Ombudsman, **P. Nikiforos Diamandouros**, has welcomed the agreement of the Council of the European Union to give a German citizen access to her own marked examination paper. This follows the Ombudsman's draft recommendation made in April this year.

The citizen had failed to obtain the pass mark in a written test in a competition for clerical assistants and asked to see her marked script. When the Council refused, she turned to the Ombudsman.

At first, the Council maintained its refusal, arguing that the Staff Regulations say that the proceedings of Selection Boards should be secret in order to guarantee their independence and the objectivity of the proceedings. The Ombudsman insisted that this did not mean that a candidate could not see her own marked script. He asked the Council to review its position, outlining the benefits of giving access: "The candidate gains the opportunity to discover her mistakes and thus to improve her future performance; her confidence in the administration is strengthened; if she feels that she has been wrongly assessed, she will be able to argue much more precisely".

The Ombudsman concluded: "Citizens who wish to work for the Communities receive a very bad impression if they are left in doubt as to whether they have been assessed fairly and correctly. To dispel such doubt it is essential that each candidate should have the possibility to inspect the marked copy of his or her own examination script".

This move by the Council brings it into line with the Commission and the Parliament who agreed in 1999 and 2000, respectively, to give access to marked examination scripts.

The Ombudsman's decision can be found on his website at:
<http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/decision/en/022097.htm> [Link]

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