

Ombudsman receives complaints from citizens about death of illegal immigrants in Spanish waters

Press release no. 27/2003 - 18/12/2003

The European Ombudsman, **P. Nikiforos Diamandouros**, has received a large number of complaints from citizens about the death of immigrants who were being illegally transported from the North African coast to the South of Spain. The complainants mainly refer to the responsibility of the Spanish and Moroccan governments for the deaths resulting from this illegal immigration. They suggest that these authorities and, by extension, the EU authorities, should address the problem of illegal immigration and adopt the appropriate measures.

The European Ombudsman investigates complaints about maladministration by the institutions and bodies of the European Community. He cannot deal with complaints concerning national, regional or local administrations of the Member States. Complaints concerning the need for, or merits of, Community legislation fall beyond the scope of his powers.

The European Ombudsman has therefore advised the complainants to turn to the Spanish national ombudsman insofar as the activities of the Spanish administration are concerned. As regards the complainants' suggestion that the EU authorities should take a stance, they have been advised to petition the European Parliament, which has both investigatory and legislative powers that could be used in relation to this matter.

For further information, please call Mr. José Martínez Aragón, Principal Legal Officer; tel : 00 33 3 88 17 24 01.