

Ombudsman concludes inquiry on how the Commission prevents conflicts of interest with scientific experts who give it advice

Case 560/2019/KR - Opened on 06/06/2019 - Decision on 30/03/2020 - Institution concerned European Commission (No maladministration found) |

The Ombudsman concluded an inquiry into how the European Commission ensures that scientific experts who advise it have no conflicts of interest. She found that the Commission has systems in place to verify the independence of experts that give it scientific advice, but made suggestions on how to improve these systems.

The inquiry was based on a complaint from a civil society organisation, which had raised concerns about the independence of experts who had contributed to a report on plant protection products (commonly known as pesticides).

The inquiry focused more generally on the systems by which the Commission verifies the independence of experts that contribute under its Scientific Advice Mechanism. The Ombudsman found these systems to be adequate but, with a view to improving them, she asked the Commission to ensure that, in future, all financial interests are included in experts' declarations of interests and that all such declarations are published.