

## Ombudsman asks Commission to report on progress in Spanish post case

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The European Ombudsman, **P. Nikiforos Diamandouros**, has asked the European Commission to inform him of any progress in a case involving slow postal deliveries in Spain. This follows a complaint from a German citizen living in Spain whose numerous contacts with both the Commission and the Spanish authorities have, in his view, proved unsuccessful.

The case concerns the way in which the Spanish postal authorities fulfil their obligation to provide a universal service, including deliveries on not less than five days a week. The complainant submits that his village is not properly served and that the intervals between deliveries reach up to two weeks.

In its opinion on the complaint, the Commission took the view that it had provided “an appropriate attention to this case”. It referred to a formal request for information regarding the complainant’s case that it had sent to the Spanish authorities on 2 June 2004.

In response, the complainant argued that it appeared that the Commission was powerless towards the Spanish postal authorities.

The Ombudsman found it notable that the Commission had not provided him with any information on its letter to the Spanish authorities of 2 June 2004, particularly as regards the deadline it presumably set for the reply. He therefore asked the Commission to provide a copy of this letter and to inform him as to (a) whether a reply has been received from the Spanish authorities in the meantime and (b) how the Commission proposes further to proceed in this case. The Commission should reply to the Ombudsman by 30 September 2004 at the latest.

### **Background**

Already in January 2003, the German citizen contacted the Commission about the problem. It advised him to contact the Spanish ministry in charge (the Ministry of Development), saying that the Commission would only intervene if the approach to the ministry should fail to solve the problem. When the Spanish ministry failed to reply, the Commission sent a letter to the responsible deputy director general within the ministry asking for a speedy reply to the complainant. In the absence of any reaction and further to repeated requests from the complainant, the Commission wrote again to the relevant person in Spain, asking for a reply within 15 days. According to the Commission, this letter was not answered.



The complainant then turned to the European Ombudsman, alleging that the Commission had failed to comply with its duties in the matter. He also complained to the Spanish Ombudsman about the problem.

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