

## Ombudsman pursues inquiry into action taken by Commission to integrate people with disabilities

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The European Ombudsman, **P. Nikiforos Diamandouros**, has called for more information from the European Commission regarding the actions it has taken to ensure the integration of people with disabilities. This follows the extensive response from members of the public, non-governmental organisations and national ombudsmen to the Ombudsman's own-initiative inquiry into the issue. The Commission should submit a report to the Ombudsman by 31 January 2006, on its actions in areas such as employment, accessibility of its premises and information policies.

### Background

People with disabilities constitute a significant proportion of the EU population. They face a wide range of obstacles preventing them from achieving equal opportunities, independence and full economic and social integration. In November 2003, the Ombudsman started an own-initiative inquiry into the Commission's measures to ensure that people with disabilities are not discriminated against in their relations with the European institutions.

In its response to the inquiry, the Commission stressed the high priority it attached to promoting equal opportunities for people with disabilities. It listed a number of initiatives it had taken in recent years, including the revision of the Code of Good Practice for the Employment of People with Disabilities.

The Ombudsman then invited comments from the public and received a total of 56 contributions. The concerns expressed in the replies are now taken up in the follow-up questions to the Commission.

Some examples: How accessible are recruitment procedures for candidates with disabilities? What has been done to make access to the Commission premises easier? How do people with disabilities get the best possible access to information, websites and EU documents? How does the Commission train its staff to deal with people with disabilities?

To read a summary of the Ombudsman's latest request to the Commission, and to view other documents related to the inquiry, please visit:



<http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/cases/correspondence.faces/en/3540/html.bookmark> [Link]

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