



Ombudsman: Pressure mounts for Council to open more debates to the public

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The European Ombudsman, **P. Nikiforos Diamandouros**, has welcomed the decision by the European Parliament (EP) to call on the Council to open more of its debates to the public. Parliament's vote follows the Ombudsman's special report, submitted in October 2005, which called on the Council to review its refusal to meet publicly whenever it is acting in its legislative capacity. "Taking decisions as openly as possible is the best way to bring citizens closer to the European Union", said Mr. Diamandouros. "Citizens have a right to know what national governments decide in their name in Brussels."

In December 2005, the Council agreed to open proceedings under the *co-decision procedure* (whereby the EP adopts legislation jointly with the Council) to the public. Mr. Diamandouros welcomed this move as a step in the right direction: "However, it seems the Council still intends to keep some legislative debates secret. I hope that the political pressure from Parliament will encourage the Council to ensure full transparency."

To see the full special report of the Ombudsman, please visit:
<http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/special/pdf/en/032395.pdf>

For information about the special report: Mr Gerhard Grill, Principal Legal Advisor, tel: +33 388 172423