

Ombudsman urges EU leaders to agree to more transparency in the Council

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The European Ombudsman, **P. Nikiforos Diamandouros**, has welcomed the initiative of the Austrian EU presidency proposing that the Council open more of its debates to the public. According to the Ombudsman: "The Austrian proposals are a step in the right direction but might still allow some legislative debates to be held in secret. We must recall that citizens will only be satisfied when *all* legislative debates are open to the public". He called on the EU Heads of State and Government to prove their commitment to making the Union more accessible to its citizens at the forthcoming EU summit on 15-16 June when these proposals will be discussed.

In December 2005, the Council agreed to open proceedings under the co-decision procedure (whereby the European Parliament adopts legislation jointly with the Council). At the time, Mr Diamandouros welcomed this move but made clear that this is not enough. In October 2005, he submitted a Special Report to the European Parliament, calling on the Council to meet publicly whenever it is acting in its legislative capacity. The European Parliament supported this call in its plenary session in April 2006.

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