

Bösch report a victory for recruitment candidates and for Ombudsman

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The European Ombudsman, **Jacob Söderman**, has concluded his own-initiative inquiry into the secrecy which forms part of the Commission's recruitment procedures and views it as a 100% success. He is delighted with the support that the European Parliament has given to the Bösch Report on the subject and sees it as an important victory not just for EU recruitment candidates, but also for his own working methods.

According to Mr Söderman:

"The Bösch Report goes even further than my Special Report in aiming to end the secrecy which forms part of EU recruitment procedures. It is a victory for all candidates who have been unfairly treated in the past. It is also the most successful Special Report that I have presented and shows the benefit of using such a possibility when other attempts to resolve a complaint are unsuccessful."

The Bösch Report was approved by the November Part-Session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg and follows the own-initiative inquiry that the Ombudsman conducted into the secrecy which forms part of the Commission's recruitment procedures. The Ombudsman presented his inquiry's findings in October 1999 having succeeded in getting the Commission to open up its recruitment procedures in three of the four ways that he had suggested. The Special Report included a formal recommendation that in future recruitment competitions, the Commission should give candidates access to their own marked examination papers on request.

The presentation of a Special Report to the European Parliament is the ultimate weapon at the disposal of the European Ombudsman if an EU institution or body does not comply with his recommendation. Once a Special Report is presented, the maladministration highlighted in it is discussed by the European Parliament, which then itself produces a Report on the matter.

The European Ombudsman has only had to resort to producing four Special Reports since he took office in 1995. This Special Report on recruitment is proof of the effectiveness of the system. Before the European Parliament had even finalised its Report, the Commission accepted the Ombudsman's formal recommendation and implemented it in all recruitment procedures starting as from July 2000. Then at the November Part-Session of the European



Parliament in Strasbourg, the Resolution voted by Parliament not only approved the findings of Mr Söderman's Special Report, but even went further by approving additional recommendations proposed by Parliament's draftsman Herbert Bösch MEP.

Most importantly, the Resolution calls on all European institutions and not just the European Commission to respect the Ombudsman's recommendations. The Resolution also makes a number of other recommendations, including the need to inform candidates of the possibility of complaining to the Ombudsman and the need to advertise all types of vacancy on the Internet.

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