

European Ombudsman proposes a new provision to the EU Treaty

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At a conference held in Vienna on 9 and 10 October 1998, the European Ombudsman **Jacob SÖDERMAN** proposed a new provision to the EU Treaty to require that the European Union's institutions and bodies respect the existing Human Rights Conventions that the Member States have ratified. The theme of the conference was "A European Union Human Rights Agenda for the year 2000". According to the European Ombudsman, a new provision requiring respect of the existing Human Rights Conventions would give the Union more clear and precise human rights standards. In the Ombudsman's view, it would also be of great importance for citizens that the new provision would give clear information of what remedies they have under Community law. At the moment there is no provision which informs citizens of the vital role played by national courts in ensuring respect for Community law, including human rights principles. Also, national and regional ombudsmen and similar bodies, such as Parliamentary petitions committees, should be mentioned in the Treaty as having a responsibility to help citizens in the case of conflicts with the administration involving Community law. Each Member State should have an obligation to ensure that there is an effective and appropriate non-judicial body to which citizens may apply for this purpose. According to the European Ombudsman, the Union should also cooperate closely with the Council of Europe in human rights matters, especially when drafting new regulations and directives relating to immigration, visas, asylum and other areas of law where human rights are of major importance. *For further information, please contact Mr Peter DYRBERG, Principal Legal Advisor of the European Ombudsman, tel. 32-2-284 2003*