

## Untangling the web of bureaucracy -The European Ombudsman launches a re-designed Internet Site

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This week in Strasbourg, the European Ombudsman, **Jacob SÖDERMAN**, presents his third Annual Report to the European Parliament. In 1997, the Ombudsman dealt with over 1400 complaints and initiated 200 inquiries into alleged maladministration in the institutions of the European Union. The 320-page Report sets out the results of the Ombudsman's work over the last year and describes each of the inquiries that was closed during the year. The new Annual Report, like its predecessors, is being placed on the Ombudsman's Web Site this week. Mr SÖDERMAN, is taking the opportunity to launch his re-designed Site. The 11-language Web Site is packed with new features. These should help explain the work of the Ombudsman, facilitate the complaints procedure, and make the results of the Ombudsman's work available to as large a number of people as possible. New Site features include the regular publication of all Decisions made by the Ombudsman as from 30.06.1998 (in the language of the complainant and in English), a press releases section highlighting the activities of the Ombudsman, a new complaints form in electronic format, and bibliographical references regarding the work of the Ombudsman. Mr SÖDERMAN hopes that the Web Site will help explain the work of the European Union's newest institution to the citizens of Europe, and will show what is being done to combat maladministration in the EU : "An ever growing number of EU citizens have access to the Internet at home, at work, or through schools, colleges, public libraries and Cyber-Cafés. The Internet offers a means of communicating directly with citizens and providing them with the information that they want. It makes it possible for my Reports, Decisions, speeches and press releases to be available anytime, anywhere, and to anyone in the EU who has Internet access. However my Web Site is intended to complement rather than replace traditional means of communication. All information available on the Web Site will also be available in paper format upon request." The Web Site of the European Ombudsman can be found at the following address: <http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu> [Link] For further information, please contact Ben Hagar, Internet Communications Officer, tel. +33 3 88 17 2424