

European Ombudsman continues accession tour with visit to Malta

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The European Ombudsman, **P. Nikiforos Diamandouros**, is in Malta this week to raise awareness of citizens' rights and remedies in the run-up to accession. During his visit, the Ombudsman will hold discussions with the Ombudsman of Malta. He will meet with the Prime Minister of Malta, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Leader of the Opposition, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Foreign Affairs Committee. He will speak to an extraordinary session of the Mini European Assembly and will deliver a public lecture entitled *"Building a Citizen-centred Europe - the Role of the European Ombudsman"*.

Commenting on the upcoming visit, Mr Diamandouros said: *"From 1 May next year, Maltese citizens will be citizens of the European Union and will enjoy the range of rights that go along with this. In order to make full use of their rights, they must be informed of their rights and how best to exercise them."*

Programme

On Tuesday 9 December, the European Ombudsman will meet with the Head of the European Commission Delegation in Malta, Mr Ronald Gallimore. He will then continue to the office of the Ombudsman of Malta, Mr Joseph Sammut, for meetings and discussions. This should help further develop co-operation between the two offices so as to ensure that citizens' rights in Malta are fully protected. On Tuesday evening, Mr Diamandouros will meet with the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives.

On Wednesday 10 December, Mr Diamandouros will meet with the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Onor. Anton Tabone, and then with the Leader of the Opposition, Dr Alfred Sant. At noon he will give a speech to an extraordinary session of the Mini European Assembly on *"Democracy, Accountability and the Institution of the Ombudsman"*. The speech will be followed by a meeting with Dr Joe Borg, Minister of Foreign Affairs. The European Ombudsman will then meet with the Prime Minister, Dr Edward Fenech Adami. On Wednesday evening, Mr Diamandouros will give a public lecture entitled *"Building a Citizen-centred Europe - the Role of the European Ombudsman"* at the Aula Magna, Foundation for International Studies, University of Malta.

Mr Diamandouros will complete his schedule of appointments by holding a press conference on the morning of Thursday 11 December 2003, at the European Commission Delegation in Malta.

Background



In the months leading up to the enlargement of the Union, the European Ombudsman will visit the ten accession countries in order to inform citizens of their rights. Malta is the third country on the Ombudsman's information tour, following his missions to Estonia in September and Hungary in October.

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