

## **Note: the Ombudsman receives report from the Commission on the integration of children with special educational needs (SEN) by the European Schools**

Correspondence - 13/07/2009

**Case** OI/3/2003/JMA - **Opened on** 19/11/2003 - **Decision on** 04/07/2007

On 19 November 2003, the European Ombudsman opened an own-initiative inquiry into the subject of the integration of persons with disabilities (OI/3/2003/JMA), in particular as regards the measures implemented by the European Commission to ensure that persons with disabilities are not discriminated against, in their relations with the institution.

On 4 July 2007, after a lengthy inquiry, in which all persons concerned were given the opportunity to participate, the Ombudsman closed this own-initiative inquiry. The Ombudsman concluded that the Commission had taken a number of positive measures to ensure that people with disabilities are not discriminated against in their relations with the institution. Among the positive measures he identified were those to provide easier access to information via the Commission's website and to improve recruitment and promotion conditions. The Ombudsman underlined, however, that more should be done to sensitise the Commission's staff to the needs of people with disabilities, but since the Commission had made a number of commitments in that regard, the Ombudsman came to the conclusion that no further action on his part appeared to be necessary.

As regards the situation of pupils with disabilities in the European Schools, the Ombudsman took a critical view of the Commission's approach and considered that it was inadequate. In particular, the Commission had failed to explain how it intended to assess the results of the European Schools' new policy for the integration of children with special educational needs (SEN children) and to indicate a timetable for such assessment. In order to monitor how the situation would evolve in the near future, the Ombudsman asked the Commission to report, by the end of 2007, on the progress accomplished. The Ombudsman undertook to publish this report on his website, so as to inform citizens of its contents.

On 21 December 2007, the Commission submitted its report on the integration of SEN children by the European Schools. The Commission's opinion in English is now available on the Ombudsman's website, and shall also be posted in all the official languages of the EU shortly. The Ombudsman will decide whether any further action is necessary on the basis of the content of that report and in light of any comments which the public may submit on it. After having



received and analysed potential contributions from citizens, the Ombudsman will inform the Commission of his conclusions by means of a letter, which shall be posted on his website.