

European Ombudsman to emphasise the right to good administration during visit to the Netherlands

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The European Ombudsman, **P. Nikiforos Diamandouros**, will visit the Netherlands from 15 to 17 September, at the invitation of the National Ombudsman of the Netherlands, Mr. Roel Fernhout. During his visit, Mr. Diamandouros will meet with Mr. Atzo Nicolaï, Minister for European Affairs of the Netherlands, address the 3rd Quality Conference for Public Administrations in the EU, hold discussions with Dutch Members of the European Parliament and meet with Mr. Pieter van Dijk, Member of the Council of State of the Netherlands. Mr. Diamandouros will give a lecture at the Erasmus University, Rotterdam, on the role of the ombudsman in promoting citizens' rights, including the right to good administration and will make a presentation on the EU Constitution at the University of Leiden.

The visit is part of the European Ombudsman's Information Tour 2003-2004, which aims to increase citizens' knowledge of their rights at the European level and of their right to complain to the European Ombudsman in particular.

Programme

On Thursday 16 September, Mr. Diamandouros will give a keynote speech to the 1200 participants at the 3rd Quality Conference for Public Administrations in the EU. The speech, entitled *"The dual role of the ombudsman"*, will highlight the work of ombudsmen in promoting democracy, accountability and non-judicial means of redress. The European Ombudsman will then continue to the Faculty of Law of the Erasmus University, Rotterdam, to give a public lecture on *"The European Ombudsman: the guardian of good administration"*. During the afternoon, Mr. Diamandouros will meet with Mr. Atzo Nicolaï, Minister for European Affairs and Mr. Pieter van Dijk, Member of the Council of State and former Judge of the European Court of Human Rights.

On Friday 17 September, Mr. Diamandouros will meet with his national counterpart in the Netherlands, Mr. Fernhout, and his staff to explore ways of further developing co-operation between their offices. He will then attend a working lunch with Dutch Members of the European Parliament, the Head of the European Parliament Information Office in The Hague, the Head of the European Commission Representation in the Netherlands and the Director of the European Movement in the Netherlands. During the afternoon, the European Ombudsman will make a presentation about the EU Constitution to the faculties of law and political sciences at Leiden University, before meeting with the Municipal Ombudsman of Rotterdam, Mr. Migiel Van Kinderen.



Background

EU citizens who need to complain to the European Ombudsman about maladministration in the Union's institutions and bodies should be informed of how to do so. The general public should equally be aware of the existence of the European Ombudsman and of the role he plays in promoting the rule of law, good administration and respect for human rights. Since taking up the post of Ombudsman in April 2003, Mr. Diamandouros has pursued a programme of information visits to raise awareness among citizens and has already visited 23 of the 25 Member States.

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