



Summary of the decision in case 454/2014/PMC concerning the European External Action Service's practice of offering unpaid traineeships in EU Delegations

The Ombudsman inquired into the European External Action Service's (EEAS) practice of offering only unpaid traineeships in EU Delegations. The inquiry arose from a complaint by a young EU citizen who had completed an unpaid traineeship. She argued that the EEAS's practice discriminates against young people from less well-off backgrounds.

The Ombudsman found that traineeships in EU Delegations should be made available to as broad a range of persons as possible - and not only to those who can afford it. In the Ombudsman's view, unpaid traineeships may lead to a discriminatory situation since persons from less privileged backgrounds are more likely to lack the financial means to undertake such a traineeship. The Ombudsman found that the EEAS's practice, of not paying trainees in the EU Delegations, constituted maladministration. She therefore recommended to the EEAS that it pay all its trainees, including those in EU Delegations, an appropriate allowance.

In reply to her recommendation, the EEAS informed the Ombudsman that it has now requested funds to pay its trainees in EU Delegations and that, in the meantime, it has suspended unpaid traineeships.

The Ombudsman understands from the EEAS' response that it is making a serious commitment to do all in its power to pay trainees in EU Delegations. Ultimately, according to the EEAS, its capacity to pay such trainees is now subject to the budgetary authorities granting it the necessary financial resources. The Ombudsman therefore closes the case with the conclusion that the EEAS has accepted her recommendation.