

Decision of the European Ombudsman on complaint 287/98/IP against the European Parliament

Decision

Case 287/98/IP - Opened on 07/10/1998 - Decision on 25/05/1999

Strasbourg, 25 May 1999 Dear Mr F., On 11 March 1998 you made a complaint to the European Ombudsman concerning the alleged failure of the European Parliament to reply to your application for a "Robert Schuman" scholarship. On 7 October 1998, I forwarded the complaint to the President of the European Parliament. The Parliament sent its opinion on 19 February 1999 and I forwarded it to you with an invitation to make observations, if you so wished. I have received no reply from you. I am writing now to let you know the result of the inquiries that have been made. **THE COMPLAINT** In September 1996, the complainant applied for a "Robert Schuman" scholarship from the European Parliament. The Parliament sent him an acknowledgment of receipt on 16 September 1996, in which it informed the complainant that a decision on his application would be taken during the selection procedure of the following November. In his letter to the Ombudsman, the complainant claims that he never received the aforementioned Parliament's decision.

THE INQUIRY

The Parliament's opinion The opinion of the European Parliament on the complaint is in summary the following: The Parliament stated that in September 1996, its services of the Directorate General of studies sent the complainant an acknowledgment of receipt of his application. In the same letter, the institution gave the complainant some information about the selection procedure. In particular, the complainant was informed that a decision on his application would be taken during the selection procedure of November 1996. The institution pointed out that a restricted number of applications that had not been selected in November because of the small number of scholarship, would be re-examined during the following three selections. Furthermore, the Parliament enclosed a copy of a letter that the complainant sent to the Parliament on 26 September 1996, in which he disagreed with the modality of the selection procedure and decided to withdraw his application. The Parliament stressed that in view of the above circumstances, it considered that no more exchange of correspondence with the complainant appeared necessary. In spite of this, the Parliament replied to a further letter of the complainant dated 26 February 1998, explaining that following the withdrawal, his application had not been examined. **The complainant's observations** The Ombudsman forwarded the European Parliament's opinion to the complainant with an invitation to make observations. No reply to this request was received.



THE DECISION

On the basis of the information provided in the complainant and the opinion of the European Parliament, the Ombudsman has reached the following conclusion: **1 Alleged failure of reply by the European Parliament** 1.1 Principles of good administrative behaviour require that public administrations properly reply to the queries of citizens. 1.2 In this case, the complainant applied for a "Robert Schuman" scholarship from the European Parliament. He claimed that the institution failed to communicate the decision of the outcome of the selection procedure to him. 1.3 The Parliament pointed out that its services had duly sent the complainant an acknowledgment of receipt of his application. Then, by letter of 26 September 1996, the complainant asked the institution to withdraw his application. The Parliament had therefore considered any further reply to the complainant to be unnecessary. 1.4 The Ombudsman considers that in its opinion, the Parliament had reasonably explained its failure to inform the complainant of the outcome of the selection procedure. 1.5 Furthermore, the Ombudsman notes that the Parliament also replied to a letter of the complainant dated 26 February 1998, explaining the reason why his application had not been examined. The Ombudsman has therefore concluded that there is no evidence of maladministration. **2 Conclusion** On the basis of the European Ombudsman's inquiries into this complaint, there appears to have been no maladministration by the European Parliament. The Ombudsman has therefore decided to close the case. The President of the European Commission will also be informed of this decision.

Yours sincerely, Jacob SÖDERMAN