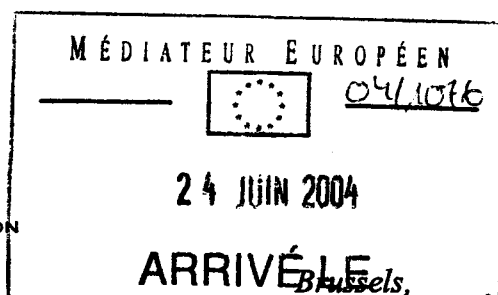


ROMANO PRODI  
PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION



18-06-2004

PRODI(2004)AT3719  
SG-PRODI(2004)D/3719

*Leentje. Co by: Diamandouros,*

*Thank you for your letter of 5 May 2004 concerning the improvement of the service provided to citizens by the institutions of the European Union in relation to access to documents.*

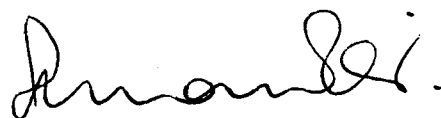
*As you indeed point out, the purpose of Regulation 1049/2001 is to ensure that citizens enjoy the widest possible access to documents within a reasonable time frame.*

*The two-stage procedure established by the Regulation for handling applications ensures that the documents to which access is requested are thoroughly examined, and that all interests at stake are duly taken into consideration. Under normal circumstances the Commission should thus be able to give its opinion on a complaint against a refusal of a confirmatory application within a shorter period of time than is required for other complaints.*

*I am therefore pleased to inform you that the Commission accepts your proposal to reduce to two months the time limit for giving an opinion on such complaints. In certain cases where a longer time limit appears necessary to assess the complaint, the Commission's services will avail themselves of your offer to grant an extension of the deadline.*

*This arrangement will, I am sure, serve the purpose of improving the transparency of our institutions vis-à-vis the citizens.*

*En votre service,*



Mr. P. Nikiforos DIAMANDOUROS  
The European Ombudsman  
1, Avenue du Président Robert Schuman  
F - 67001 STRASBOURG CEDEX