



P. Nikiforos Diamandouros
European Ombudsman

Mr Ilkka Laitinen
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Operational Cooperation at the
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Dear Mr Laitinen,

On 24 February 2013, I received Frontex's reply to my report dated 7 February 2013, in which I shared with you the results of my visit to Frontex and made some suggestions for further improvement in the quality of administration by Frontex.

I am grateful for your prompt and largely positive reply. In particular, I highly appreciate the fact that Frontex took on board most of the suggestions in the report and took constructive action in relation to them. This clearly shows Frontex's firm determination to nurture and foster an administrative culture of service to citizens.

I believe, however, that some clarifications are still required in respect of two of my suggestions, on which I would like to give Frontex the opportunity to provide further thoughts and comments.

Availability of the homepage of Frontex's website in all EU official languages/explanation of Frontex language policy

Suggestion e) was that "Frontex could consider making available in all 23 EU official languages, at least the homepage of its website, as well as information concerning its language policy". In reply, Frontex stated that it already publishes documents fundamental to its work planning and annual reporting in all official EU languages on its website under the 'Governance Documents' section. Frontex is currently working on a new brochure explaining what it is and how it operates. If the budget permits this, the publication will subsequently be translated into more languages. Frontex will also be working on providing subtitles to the basic movie about the agency in a number of languages, starting with Italian, Greek, Spanish, French, German and Polish. As a next (mid-term) step, once translation is carried out, new language subpages will be created on



the website.

I would like to thank you for having provided the above useful information on a number of praiseworthy initiatives. However, in its reply, Frontex did not state whether it could make its homepage available in other languages besides English, and whether it intends to include on its homepage information about its language policy.

I trust that this will indeed be possible and, if Frontex were to confirm that it has followed these suggestions, it would join all the agencies which have already decided to do so (ENISA, EMA, Cedefop, CEPOL, EBA).

An agency like Frontex, whose work has such a strong human impact, should certainly, on its website, welcome all EU citizens in their own languages and indicate to them which sections or documents are available in all EU languages and which, on the contrary, may only be consulted in selected languages. The selection of languages could, in addition, be explained in terms of Frontex's language policy, thus enabling citizen's to understand, if necessary, the reasons why particular documents are available only in certain languages.

Information to tenderers on the possibility to complain to the Ombudsman

Suggestion j) was that "*Frontex letters to rejected tenderers could contain information on the European Ombudsman's role in receiving complaints*". In its reply, Frontex agreed with this suggestion. It stated, however, that any document used for the purposes of procurement procedures is based on the Commission's relevant template. As soon as the Commission amends its template, Frontex will be happy to use the amended template.

I would appreciate it if Frontex could confirm its readiness to follow my suggestion even in absence of a revision of the Commission's template. I would like to point out that other agencies, which also use the same templates (Cedefop, EEA), have agreed to include the information in question in their letters rejecting tenders, following my suggestion to that effect.

I would be grateful to receive a further reply from Frontex concerning the above two suggestions by 30 June 2013. Please feel free to contact the responsible person in my services to discuss the suggestions, if you think it would be useful to do so: Marta Hirsch-Ziembinska, tel. 33 388 17 27 46, marta.hirsch-ziembinska@ombudsman.europa.eu

Finally, I would also like to inform Frontex that I have decided to pursue my **suggestion f)** that Frontex "*could consider adopting a decision that the names of selection board members ... be disclosed ... as regards each selection procedure*" through a separate own-initiative inquiry, which will be addressed to all EU agencies, including Frontex, at a later date. The issue thus no longer forms part of the visit agenda.



Yours sincerely,

P. Nikiforos Diamandouros