



P. Nikiforos Diamandouros
European Ombudsman

Mr José Manuel Barroso
President
European Commission
1049 BRUSSELS
BELGIQUE

Strasbourg, 31-10-2011

Own-initiative inquiry OI/14/2011/BEH concerning practices in relation to unconsumed food.

Dear Mr President,

According to Article 228 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the European Ombudsman is empowered to conduct inquiries on his own initiative in relation to possible instances of maladministration in the activities of the Union institutions, bodies, offices or agencies.

Many institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the EU make available canteens, which are primarily aimed at catering for their staff.

It has come to my attention that there appears to be some divergence in the manner in which these canteens dispose of unconsumed food. Whereas some appear to donate such food to charities, at least one canteen seems to throw away such food.

It is good administrative practice to use the resources that have been allocated to the individual institutions, bodies, agencies and offices of the EU as economically as possible. In addition to that, the way in which unconsumed food is disposed of is likely to affect the manner in which citizens perceive the EU and, in some cases, may be of direct relevance to their daily lives.

I have therefore decided to open an own-initiative inquiry into the practices of canteens made available by the institutions and certain bodies of the EU, in relation to unconsumed food.

I would like to request your institution to submit an opinion on the issue outlined above. I would be grateful if you could, in particular, answer the following questions:

1. Does your institution make available a canteen to its staff?
2. If so, what practices are followed by that canteen to deal with unconsumed food?

In view of its subject matter, this own-initiative inquiry concerns the institutions and bodies of the EU mentioned in Article 13 of the EU Treaty, save for the European Council.



I would appreciate it if you were to submit an opinion on the above issue by 31 January 2012.

I would also like to inform you that, during my inquiry, I may consider publishing the opinions received and giving interested third parties the opportunity to make observations.

Should your services require any further information concerning this own-initiative inquiry, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Bernhard Hofstötter, the legal officer responsible for this case (+33 388 17 81 05).

Yours sincerely,

P. Nikiforos Diamandouros