



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

THE DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL

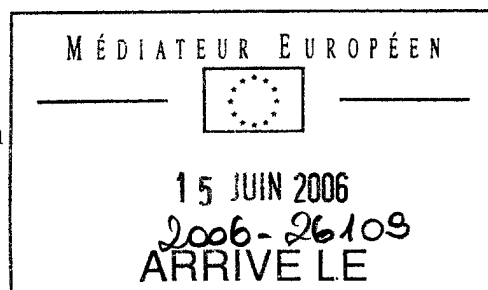
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Brussels, 07 JUN 2006

1487 / 2005 / GG

SGS6/06692

Mr P. Nikiforos DIAMANDOUROS
European Ombudsman
1, Avenue du Président Robert Schuman
B.P. 403
F-67001 Strasbourg Cedex



**Subject: Internet sites - Follow-up to complaint 1487/2005/GG
- your letter dated 21 March 2006**

Sir,

Thank you for your above-mentioned letter concerning complaint 1487/2005/GG in which you ask the Council to submit a detailed opinion on the above matter.

As a matter of procedure, the Council regrets that the Ombudsman already appears to have taken a final position on this matter by issuing a press release.¹ By doing so, the detailed comments which you ask the Council to submit, and which constitute a procedural guarantee laid down in Article 195(1) of the EC Treaty, largely lose their relevance.

As for the substance, the Council already explained in detail, in its previous comments to you on this matter, why it bears no responsibility for websites maintained under the authority of a Member State. Whilst the Council supports multilingualism as an important contribution to better communication with citizens, it stands ready to inform the relevant Member State authorities of the Ombudsman's views on the matter. However, the Council is not in a position to follow up the draft recommendation in any other meaningful way.

Lastly, the Council considers that, in the absence of any instance of maladministration by a Community institution or body, this issue falls outside the scope of the Ombudsman's competence.

Sincerely yours,


Pierre de Boissieu

¹“Ombudsman: Council should reconsider language regime for Presidency websites”, Ombudsman press release No 6/2006 of 30 March 2006.