

Online discussion "The role of the European Ombudsman: Helping to improve relations between the EU and its citizens"

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The real-time online discussion starts at **11.00 a.m. Bulgarian time (10.00 a.m. - Brussels time) on Thursday, 4 September, 2008**, and will be attended by experts from the office of the European Ombudsman - Mr P. Nikiforos Diamandouros.

Main guest of the debate will be Ms Rosita Agnew who is in charge of the public and media relations with the European Ombudsman. Her colleagues will also join the forum.

The online discussion will take place at <http://chat.europe.bg> within the framework of the initiative "Now - interacting with the European Parliament!" (see <http://parliament.europe.bg>).

The event is open for all citizens of the European Union; working language - English. We are looking forward for your questions and comments in Bulgarian, English, French and German - in real time at <http://chat.europe.bg>, as well as in advance at info@europe.bg. After the end of the discussion our team will publish its full text.

The initiative "Now - interacting with the European Parliament!", which is implemented with the financial support of the EP, organizes a series of Internet-discussions with representatives of EU institutions on diverse topics of current interest to European citizens.

Additional information:

The European Ombudsman deals with complaints concerning cases of maladministration, late payment under EU projects, refusal of access to EU documents and delays in procedures in the activity of the EU bodies and institutions. He gives only recommendations for good administration and cannot interfere in ongoing court proceedings or after the adoption of court decisions. The ombudsman does not consider cases of maladministration by national, regional and local governing bodies or institutions.

The European Ombudsman is elected by the European Parliament and reports annually to the EP about his work.. This year the Bulgarian MEP Ms Dushana Zdravkova is the Rapporteur on the Ombudsman's 2007 Annual Report. According to the data of the European Ombudsman's administration in 2007, Bulgaria ranked sixth out of the 27 EU Member States in terms of complaints to the European Ombudsman.

Complaints and signals to the European Ombudsman may be submitted electronically at the Ombudsman's website: <http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu>.