European Ombudsman: access to the documents published by the European institutions. Special report

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The Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties lay down that all the activities involved in European integration must be pursued openly. The own-initiative inquiry conducted by the European Ombudsman in June 1996 resulted in a recommendation that all the European institutions and bodies except the Council and Commission adopt rules to facilitate public access to their documents. This recommendation was addressed to 15 institutions and bodies, ranging from the European Parliament to the Court of Auditors, from the EIB to the Economic and Social Committee, the European Monetary Institute to the Committee of the Regions. The committee adopted the report by Mrs Thors (ELDR, FIN) on the Ombudsman's initiative and a resolution encouraging all efforts to integrate transparent methods into the common heritage of the European integration process. 'As there is no participation without information', as the chairman, Mr Fontana (PPE, I) said, winding up the debate, public access to the documents of the Community institutions and bodies is of great democratic value.