European Ombudsman. Annual report 2000

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The committee adopted the report by Herbert BÖSCH (PES, A) welcoming the European Ombudsman's annual report on the activities of his office for the year 2000. However, it called for improvements to the policy for informing the public about the right to submit petitions to the European Parliament and to lodge complaints with the Ombudsman. It also wanted to see better cooperation between the Ombudsman and the Petitions Committee. In addition, the report urged the Ombudsman to reduce the time taken to deal with complaints and to submit a special report on the confidentiality of documents in the possession of Community authorities. The committee believed that the definition of confidentiality should be as limited as possible so as to increase transparency. Since Article 41 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights covered the right of any citizen to good administration, the committee believed that the Charter should be incorporated in the Treaty. The Ombudsman should also encourage the candidate countries to establish their own ombudsmen in order to penalise maladministration. Lastly, the MEPs felt that the results of investigations into complaints concerning the institutions showed that the EU's administration was better than was often claimed.