European Ombudsman. 2002 annual report

2003/2068(INI) - 10/06/2003

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Lord STOCKTON (EPP-ED, UK) on the European Ombudsman's annual report for 2002. It commended the Ombudsman's efforts to make his role known to an ever wider public and to establish links with regional ombudsmen in both the Member States and the applicant countries. MEPs welcomed the success of the Ombudsman over the last year in cutting the amount of time taken to deal with complaints and encouraged him to continue doing so. To this end, they called on all institutions and bodies to provide rapid replies to citizens when the Ombudsman is called upon to investigate an alleged instance of maladministration in their activities. The report also noted with satisfaction that EU authorities had frequently taken action to settle a complaint once they had been made aware of the problem and that in other cases an amicable solution had been achieved. It urged the relevant Community authorities to comply with the Ombudsman's draft recommendations to remedy cases of maladministration following an inquiry and to follow up the Ombudsman's further critical remarks in order to prevent similar cases arising in the future. The committee said that, in examining cases of maladministration and in enforcing the right of citizens to good administration pursuant to Article 41 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, the principles enshrined in the EU Code of Good Administrative Behaviour should always be applied. It regretted the failure by the Commission and other institutions so far to adopt and apply the Code of Good Administrative Behaviour as approved by Parliament. Lastly, the report said that it would be appropriate to reinforce the necessary cooperation between Parliament's relevant committee and the Ombudsman, with due regard for their respective powers. The committee therefore pledged to initiate a review, without delay and at the most appropriate level, of Parliament's Rules of Procedure and the Ombudsman's Statute with a view to making any changes which may be needed by the end of the present legislature.