

Athens, January 17th 2004

PRESS RELEASE

Greek-Austrian Consortium, Twinning Partner with the future Turkish Ombudsman

The consortium created by the Greek Ombudsman as senior partner and his Austrian counterpart as junior partner was selected by the Turkish Ministry of Justice, among other candidates from E.U. countries, in order to implement the Twinning Project together with the Turkish Ombudsman.

For the purposes of this project of 26-month duration and a budget exceeding 1 million euro, the Greek and Austrian Ombudsmen will support the creation of the initial phase of operation of their counterpart institution in Turkey. In order to implement the project, a coordinating unit has been created. The Greek Ombudsman, Mr. *Yorgos Kaminis*, appointed Dr. *Dimitri Christopoulos*, lecturer of Panteion University in Athens and Manager of the Eunomia project for the promotion of ombudsman institutions (www.synigoros.gr/eunomia) as *Project Leader*. Mr. *Miltos Pavlou*, senior investigator at the Greek Ombudsman, will provide the key services of the *Resident Twinning Advisor* for two years in Ankara. From the Austrian side, Dr. *Michael Maurer*, director at the office of the Austrian Ombudsman, will be in charge.

This unit, with the necessary secretarial and logistics support, will coordinate the activities of a team comprising Greek, Austrian and foreign investigators, which will undertake *in situ* visits to Turkey, for the medium and long term support of the institution there. The Greek Ombudsman, for the requirements of the Eunomia project, has already formed a 30-member team of senior investigators, which has already effected a series of study visits and educational seminars to neighbouring countries in South-Eastern Europe and can immediately start corresponding activities in Turkey when the Ombudsman is appointed there.

The choice of the Greek-Austrian collaboration at the present juncture presents a particular significance exceeding the institutional requirements of the Ombudsman in Turkey, which is currently in the process of being established. Contrary to all common stereotypes and the suspicions which dominate the Greek-Turkish relations, it rewards the to date constant presence of the Greek Ombudsman in institution building activities in South-Eastern Europe and also sends a positive message on the way that Turkey sees its institutional integration in the European Union.