



European Ombudsman

P. Nikiforos Diamandouros
European Ombudsman

Mr Andrew Duff
Member of the European Parliament
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Public consultation on the draft statement of public service principles for EU civil servants

Dear Mr Duff,

Thank you for your letter of 1 June 2011, in which you respond to the public consultation on the draft statement of public service principles for EU civil servants. You sent the letter in your capacity as President of the Union of European Federalists, which has Groupe Europe as an affiliate.

You explain that some disquiet has been raised as to the exact message which is emitted by the consultation. You also report that members of Groupe Europe feel that the EU institutions have already adopted a number of powerful instruments to ensure that personal misbehaviour among members of its staff is prevented, detected and punished.

I am grateful to you for giving me the opportunity to respond to these concerns.

I would like to emphasise that it was never my intention to suggest that the public service principles contained in the draft statement are not already observed and applied by EU civil servants. As mentioned in the consultation document itself, the main objective of drafting a straightforward and concise statement of these principles is to promote citizens' trust in the European civil service and the EU institutions that it serves.

Furthermore, the public service principles are not intended to impose additional legal or disciplinary obligations on civil servants. They complement the existing instruments which impose such obligations by focusing on the spirit in which they should be applied. For this reason, the public service principles have been drafted with an eye to expressing the highest aspirations for the conduct of civil servants, not to detecting and punishing misbehaviour.



Your letter also contains a specific drafting suggestion, which is to expand the first sentence of the first principle so that it reads:

“Civil servants should be conscious that the Union’s institutions exist in order to serve the interests of the Union and its citizens in fulfilling the objectives of the Treaties”.

I am very grateful to you for this constructive suggestion for improvement of the draft. The additional wording you propose would ensure that the public service principles expressly acknowledge the fundamental constitutional role of the Treaties and would also make the first principle itself more precise. I am therefore happy to accept it.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you once again for your valuable contribution to the public consultation on the public service principles.

Yours sincerely *and with best wishes,*

P. Nikiforos Diamandouros