



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Andrew Duff

MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Mr Nikoforos Diamandouros
Ombudsman
Avenue du President Robert Schuman
Strasbourg F-67001

1 June 2011

Dear Mr Diamandouros,

I note with interest that you are conducting a consultation on the introduction of a code of conduct for EU civil servants. I write in my capacity as President of the Union of European Federalists (UEF), which has as an affiliate member Groupe Europe, a voluntary association of *fonctionnaires* from the EU institutions committed to the building of a united democratic Europe.

As stated on your website: "The draft statement is intended to complement existing instruments, including the *Staff Regulations*, the *Financial Regulation*, and the *European Code of Good Administrative Behaviour*, which contain general rules and principles governing the behaviour of civil servants".

It is good that the introduction to the document for consultation should recall that EU officials are already subject to high professional and ethical standards and that a graduated system of controls, audits, financial, disciplinary and possible criminal sanctions are provided for in these regulations.

Some disquiet has been raised, however, as to the exact message which is emitted by your consultation. In particular, I must say that I find that the tone of the consultation document which sets out five standards of behaviour rather negative. This risks doing a disservice to your laudable objective of "building trust through dialogue between citizens and the European Union and fostering the highest standards of behaviour in the Union's institutions".

It is felt by members of Groupe Europe that the EU institutions have since 2000 adopted a number of powerful instruments to ensure that personal misbehaviour among members of its staff is prevented, detected and punished. Many feel that the number and quality of such instruments is unparalleled in other civil services.

I am sure you would agree that it would be counter-productive if your new initiative were to demoralise even accidentally those who have already been through the recent spate of institutional reforms.

May I suggest, also, that in the interests of securing a sound and durable set of public service principles specifically for EU officials that the first sentence of the code should be amended to read: "... to serve the interests of the Union and its citizens *in fulfilling the objectives of the Treaties*".

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely, Andrew Duff