



HOUSE OF LORDS

European Union Committee

House of Lords
London
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Mr P. Nikiforos Diamandouros
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Dear Mr Diamandouros

Consultation by the European Ombudsman on a draft statement of public service principles for EU civil servants

I am grateful to you for drawing my attention at our recent meeting to the draft statement of public service principles. I asked the Justice and Institutions Sub-Committee of the EU Select Committee to look at this as well because the EU public administration is an area in which it has a particular interest.

We welcome this initiative and believe that a short accessible statement will complement existing documents in providing guidance and a benchmark for EU civil servants. The fact that Article 41 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights includes a right to good administration confirms the importance of maintaining the highest standards.

We believe that the draft will serve this purpose well, although we would suggest some changes in order to give more explicit emphasis to some important principles. In the suggested text below the changes are indicated by italics.

"Civil servants should conduct themselves at all times in a manner that would bear the closest public scrutiny. This obligation *demands integrity and probity in handling public resources* and is not fully discharged merely by acting within the law.

Civil servants should keep proper records and not misuse information."

"Civil servants should take steps to avoid conflict of interests and the appearance of such conflicts, *including by the receipt of gifts*. This obligation continues after leaving office."

"Civil servants should not *discriminate* or allow the fact that they like, or dislike, a particular person to influence their professional conduct."

"Civil servants should act respectfully to each other and to citizens. They should be polite, helpful, *timely*, and cooperative."

I hope that you find these comments helpful.

Yours faithfully
John Roper



The Rt Hon the Lord Roper
Chairman of the Select Committee on the European Union