



European Economic and Social Committee
The President

Mr Neil Kinnock
Vice - President of the European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
B- 1049 BRUSSELS_

Brussels, 30 January 2001
GF/PV/CB/DFB/er/n°D(01)383

Your ref. : Your letter of 11 January 2001

Subject : Advisory Group on Standards in Public Life

Dear **Mr Kinnock**,

Your letter has received my closest attention, since professional ethics is an area to which the Economic and Social Committee attaches particular importance.

Although in the past, the idea of an ethical European civil service was considered to be self-evident, events in recent years have shown that the principles and rules governing professional standards needed to be recalled and perhaps put into codified form. The Staff Regulations of the European Communities makes a significant contribution in this direction, but cannot resolve every aspect of the issue.

For its part, in 1999 the ESC adopted a decision concerning internal investigations to be carried out by OLAF. Furthermore, and in keeping with earlier measures by the Parliament and Commission, the Committee has recently prepared a Code of Good Practice for its officials and other servants.

The proposal to set up an Advisory Group on Standards in Public Life is therefore entirely consonant with our concerns; the group will represent a valuable supplement to the measures mentioned above by bringing authoritative views to bear on difficult cases.

The Economic and Social Committee supports the initiative and looks forward to the creation of the advisory group in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

Göke Frerichs