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Europe's public administrations in flux: public service under threat?

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Mr Tiny KOX and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

One of the primary responses of European governments to the crisis, in particular the crisis in their public finances, has been to cut the resources allocated to public services. The latter have accordingly seen their budgets squeezed with, for example, only one in two civil servants who leave being replaced in some States, and various services being contracted out to the private sector. Likewise, certain services which are normally free because they are part of the traditional public service remit are now fee-based.

It is said that the aim of the structural and institutional changes under way in public services is to streamline activities and rein in public spending. One wonders, however, whether it is feasible to maintain a quality public service in a difficult economic and budgetary context, and whether the basic principles of public service, namely independence, permanence and competence, are still relevant.

In Recommendation 1617 (2003), the Parliamentary Assembly referred to the unique role and contribution of public administrations to social cohesion. At a time when most European governments are reviewing their tasks and reducing their involvement in the social sphere, by withdrawing from certain public services or doing away with them altogether, it may be worth asking whether such moves are justified, especially given their impact on society. Are they a well-thought-out change in public administration or a budgetary quick fix with no long-term vision?

Signed (see overleaf)



Signed¹:

KOX Tiny, Netherlands, UEL
ÁRNASON Mörrður, Iceland, SOC
BARCIA DUEDRA Gerard, Andorra, SOC
BONET PEROT Sílvia Eloïsa, Andorra, SOC
BRAUN Márton, Hungary, EPP/CD
DÍAZ TEJERA Arcadio, Spain, SOC
DOBBIN Jim, United Kingdom, SOC
GROSS Andreas, Switzerland, SOC
HARUTYUNYAN Davit, Armenia, EDG
HAUPERT Norbert, Luxembourg, EPP/CD
HOLOVATY Serhiy, Ukraine, ALDE
KOÇ Haluk, Turkey, SOC
MAURY PASQUIER Liliane, Switzerland, SOC
MEALE Alan, United Kingdom, SOC
PALIHOVICI Liliana, Republic of Moldova, EPP/CD
PLOTNIKOV Oleksiy, Ukraine, SOC
RIGONI Andrea, Italy, ALDE
RUSTAMYAN Armen, Armenia, SOC
SAAR Indrek, Estonia, SOC
SANNEN Ludo, Belgium, SOC
SEYIDOV Samad, Azerbaijan, EDG
VUČKOVIĆ Nataša, Serbia, SOC

1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democrat Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left