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Mrs Carola Fischbach-Pyttel  
EPSU General Secretary  
European Federation of Public  
Service Unions  
45 rue Royale, Box 1  
B – 1000 Brussels

Dear Mrs Fischbach-Pyttel,

First of all, I would like to thank you for the statement on the 2012 Annual Growth Survey that I have read with great interest. The Commission agrees with you on the importance of public administration and on the fact that its quality is a determining element of competitiveness and an important productivity factor. These concepts are clearly stated in the 2012 AGS, which also underlines the importance of prioritising growth-friendly expenditure, including for public services such as education and employment services, that represents an investment in future growth. Furthermore, the invaluable contribution of public services is also acknowledged in the context of tackling the social consequences of the crisis. However, the on-going pressure on public finances is driving major changes and restructuring of the public sector and it is in this context that the Commission recommendations should be read.

The EPSU statement raises a number of other important points. Please note that the objective of the Annual Growth Survey is not to set out a comprehensive plan for public administration reform, but to select a limited number of concrete actions that need to be pursued as a matter of priority in the next twelve months. The 2012 AGS also recalls the priorities in the previous AGS, highlighting the implementation gap that still exists and the need to put a stronger emphasis on implementation. Among the priorities identified in 2011 and that still remain valid, you can find other elements that are raised in the EPSU statement, including the need to ensure the stability of the financial sector by reinforcing the regulatory framework.

Social dialogue is at the core of the European Social Model and I have made it clear, including at the recent Tripartite Social Summit, that a close and open dialogue with the Social Partners at the European and national level is more important than ever at this time. I look forward to a continuing cooperation with the EPSU in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Marcel HAAG