

Codes of conduct for civil servants in Denmark

Title of the governance practice: Codes of conduct for civil servants in Denmark

Summary of the governance practice

In 2007, the Danish government issued the *Code of Conduct in the Public Sector* to clarify the basic duties and responsibilities of public sector employees. In 2015, the Danish ministry of Finance launched *Code VII-Seven Key Duties* targeted more specifically at employees and managers in central government to supplement the *Code of Conduct*. A revised edition of the *Code of conduct in the Public Sector* was published by the Agency for Modernisation in 2017. It reflects Code VII guidelines, as well as the Local Government Denmark's Code of Quality and Ethics in the Public Administration, which contains recommendations for the relationship between local politicians and the public administration. Additionally, reference is made to the Ministry of justice's guide *How to Avoid Corruption*.

Short description of the governance practice

Code VII describes seven key duties of civil servants in central government, which are considered most essential, with a brief explanation of what this duty means and implies. It is explicitly provided in Code VII that it is not exhaustive and prescribes that civil servants should talk to their supervisor if in doubt, senior managers should ensure the dissemination of its content, that it is used in performance evaluations and it is to be used in management training programmes. The seven key duties are as follows: Legality; Truthfulness; Professionalism; Development and cooperation; Responsibility and management; Openness about errors; Party-political neutrality.

The Code of Conduct in the Public Sector (2017) covers a wide range of topics: Fundamental values; Authority to issue directions; Freedom of expression; Duty of confidentiality ; Impartiality; Gifts and other benefits; Secondary employment ; Duties, liability and rights Sound financial management.

While these publications are of great value and are enforceable they do not apply to ministers.

Achievement/outcome of the governance practice

The Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO) Evaluation Team considers the Code of Conduct for the Public Sector and Code VII comprehensive documents, providing clear guidance on such issues as confidentiality, impartiality, gifts and other benefits, secondary employment,

Source: Agency for modernization, Local Government Denmark and Danish Regions (2017) Code of Conduct in the Public Sector <https://modst.dk/media/18742/code-of-conduct-in-the-public-sectorforside.pdf>; Ministry of Finance (2015) seven key duties for civil servants in central government=code VII http://stm.dk/multimedia/UK_Kodex_VII.pdf; GRECO (2019) Fifth Evaluation Round Denmark Evaluation Report, <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-evaluation-round-preventing-corruption-and-promoting-integrity-i/168097203a>