Codes of Conduct for Public Officials in Europe: Common Label, Divergent Purposes

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Abstract
Codes of conduct have been adopted very broadly on both sides of the Atlantic in the last two decades. They have been introduced for both elected representatives and appointed officials. Though the accountability mechanisms vary, elected politicians prefer self-policing and enforcement. For appointed officials who carry out specialized functions with exposure to particular, clearly identifiable, ethical risks, where the need for public trust and confidence is great, it is important but also relatively straightforward to develop codes of practice. For generalist public servants, the situation is different. The range of ethical risk to which civil servants are exposed is broader. It is less easy to be specific about the risks involved.

Citation

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