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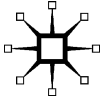
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# Reforming the European Commission

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*To Aodh, Adam and Lucie with all my love.*



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# Abbreviations

AAR	Annual Activity Report
ABB	Activity Based Budgeting
ABM	Activity Based Management
AIPN	Autorité investie du pouvoir de nomination (appointing authority acting in the name of its institution)
AMP	Annual Management Plan
APS	Annual Policy Strategy
BAT	Bureau d'Assistance Technique (see TAO)
CDR	Career Development Review
CIE	Committee of Independent Experts, also known as Wise Men
COCOBU	Comité de Contrôle Budgétaire (Budgetary Control Committee)
CWLP	Commission Legislative Work Programme
DAS	Déclaration d'Assurance
DECODE	Dessiner la Commission de Demain (Design Tomorrow's Commission)
DG	Directorate General
EAEC	European Atomic Energy Community
EC	European Community
ECA	European Court of Auditors
ECSC	European Community of Steel and Coal
EEC	European Economic Community
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
HI	Historical Institutionalism
HoU	Head of Unit
IA	Impact Assessment
IAC	Internal Audit Capacities
IAS	Internal Audit Service
IEEA	Intelligent Energy Executive Agency
IRMS	Integrated Reporting Management System
MAP 2000	Modernisation of Administration and Personnel Policy 2000
PDB	Preliminary Draft Budget
PPBS	Planning, Programming Budgeting System

SEM 2000	Sound and Efficient Management 2000
SPP	Strategic Planning and Programming
TAO	Technical Assistance Office
TFAR	Task Force for Administrative Reform
US	Union Syndicale
WFS	Workflow System

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Finally, I would like to thank my parents, who probably cannot believe I have published an academic book in a foreign language. I also have a thought for Mr Patrick Quinlivan who always supported my academic endeavours. His son remains my rock, despite having no interest in the European Union!



# Foreword

Dr Emmanuelle Schön-Quinlivan's book analyses the impact which the administrative reforms that were launched under my leadership in the European Commission in 2000 have had on the institution over the past ten years. It traces the arduous but rapid processes of designing, negotiating and implementing the reforms and it very usefully examines the nature, scope and dynamics of institutional change which resulted in the Commission. For practitioners, academics or those affected by change, a study which goes beyond the analysis of the content of a reform programme and objectively assesses positive and negative results is thought provoking and instructive.

This volume is novel and challenging for three reasons. First, it takes a very interesting historical institutionalist approach by chronicling the construction of the Commission as the administrative and executive institution of the EU in the past 60 years, therefore putting the *Reforming the Commission* White Paper of early 2000 into context.

That essential background provides a very important setting for the policy choices made in the White Paper.

Second, the book develops a fresh conceptualisation of New Public Management which takes the analysis beyond the technical, organisational side of administrative reform and embraces political and democratic issues such as transparency and openness of bureaucracies. New Public Management has been the basis of all administrative reforms across the Western world in the past 30 years but very little work has been done on its implementation by *international* organisations. That, as a result, gives Dr Schön-Quinlivan's work particular significance.

Third, this book not only investigates the institutional impact of the reform at Commission-wide level, but it also looks at the reform in action and, through case-studies of Directorates-General, it unveils the formidable – but vital – diversity of the European Commission and the challenges which that inevitably poses to reform.

*Reforming the European Commission* is a valuable contribution not only to the literature on European institutions but also to the development and application of New Public Management. I recommend it for its theoretical and empirical insights in a domain – the reform of international public administrations – which has been under-researched. In

addition, I commend Dr Emmanuelle Schön-Quinlivan for the rigour, quality and depth of her research and the very welcome clarity of her thinking and writing... I can only wish that we had enjoyed the advantage of an examination of administrative reform of this quality when we embarked on the task in the late 1999. Certainly, any future modernisation of the Commission – and such updating is *always* necessary in a dynamic public service organisation – will be greatly assisted.

THE RT. HON. NEIL KINNOCK

# Preface

Monday 15 March 1999, 10:00 p.m.

As the President of the European Commission, Jacques Santer, scanned the room he saw stress, strain and tiredness etched on the faces of his 14 colleagues. He had called this special night meeting to discuss the hard-hitting report of the Committee of Independent Experts (CIE), a group which had been formed under pressure from the European Parliament to investigate allegations of fraud, mismanagement and nepotism in the Commission. The report was damning.

Santer took a deep breath and methodically summarised the key findings of the report. He noted that a few individual Commissioners were criticised and that the Commission as a whole was found to have lost political control over the use of Community funds and the appointment of staff. Silence greeted the end of his summation as he concluded that this was a crisis unprecedented in the history of the European Commission.

Neil Kinnock, Commissioner for Transport, was the first person to break the awkward silence. He said that the report was devastating and that, in his opinion, 'the CIE had been a set-up' (Kinnock, 2006). The only option he could see to express his indignation was to resign. Neil Kinnock was supported by Commissioners Karel Van Miert and Franz Fizchler. All three speakers referred to an unacceptable and scandalous critical sentence regarding work ethics in the Commission which had been added at the last-minute to the report late on Sunday evening. The sentence to which they referred read: 'It is becoming difficult to find anyone who has even the slightest sense of responsibility' (CIE, 1999a, p. 9.4.25).

The Commissioners were appalled by this sentence and the tone of the report as a whole. At the conclusion of a heated two-hour debate it was agreed that the most appropriate way to express their disagreement was to resign.

Thus, at midnight on Monday 15, March 1999, Jacques Santer announced to the assembled press the College's historical decision to resign *en masse*. He presented the decision as a noble one, stating that the Commissioners 'thus assume their responsibility in keeping with their undertaking to take action on the findings of the inquiry' (House

of Commons, 1999, p. 3). The European Union was now formally without its 'executive' at a time when it faced a number of critical issues including the negotiations on enlargement of the Union to Central and Eastern Europe.

Even though the CIE, which was appointed by the European Parliament, did not identify any instances of fraud, the incoming College of Commissioners, under President Prodi's direction, took on the mandate of reforming the European bureaucracy. Neil Kinnock was hand-picked by Romano Prodi to be one of the Commission vice-presidents and to handle the administrative reform portfolio. Within six months Neil Kinnock, together with his *cabinet* and an *ad hoc* Task Force on Administrative Reform (TFAR), master-minded a White Paper entitled *Reforming the Commission* which listed 98 measures and was branded by *Le Monde* as 'a root and branch reform of the European Commission'<sup>1</sup> (Zecchini, 2000). Ten years later, the time has come to ask what impact the Kinnock administrative reforms have had on the Commission.