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## A Culture based on service

The Commission aims to be a world class public administration whose first concern is the quality of service it provides to citizens and taxpayers. It wants to be associated in the minds of Europe's citizens with high quality, honesty, openness and integrity. These have been the Commission's operating values since the birth of the European Union. The reform process makes a new commitment to these values, enshrining them in a new approach to management based on four principles:

### Clearer responsibility

In many areas of the Commission's work, responsibility has become blurred by procedures that tend to obscure, rather than to reveal whom has actually taken a decision or approved expenditure. The reform process is remedying this by clearly defining the responsibilities of individuals at all levels, including the College of Commissioners. A clear definition of tasks also makes clear ambiguity about who is responsible for what.

### Strengthened accountability

As a European Institution, the Commission is formally accountable to the citizen in various ways. It reports, for example, to the Council and the European Parliament on its activities and its decisions can be challenged in the European Court of Justice. At the same time the Commission's accountability is being strengthened by greater openness to public scrutiny.

### Higher efficiency

The Commission has to deliver its services in the most cost-effective way. Efficiency is being secured by simplifying procedures and modifying, or removing, rules which stand in the way of common sense. Decentralisation is also increasing efficiency by clearly defining responsibilities and encouraging officials to use their own initiative.

### Public and internal transparency

This word deserves clearer definition than it is often given. To the Commission it means that its procedures and actions must be open to public scrutiny. Transparency also has an internal application and requires effective communications between all levels of the administration, openness to new ideas and a readiness to accept criticism as a positive encouragement to do better. The whole reform process is dedicated to achieving these four objectives. In the interest of getting results, the Commission adopted in 2000 a comprehensive and far reaching Action Plan, comprising 98 points whose implementation is closely monitored.

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