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A GUIDE TO NAVIGATING WORKPLACE DILEMMAS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

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CENTRE FOR INTEGRITY
IN THE DEFENCE SECTOR

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The Centre for Integrity in the Defence Sector (CIDS) promotes integrity, anti-corruption measures and good governance in the defence and related security sector. Working with Norwegian and international partners, the Centre seeks to build competence, raise awareness and provide practical means to reduce the risks of corruption by seeking to strengthen institutions through advice and training. CIDS was established in 2012 by the Norwegian Ministry of Defence and was officially appointed as s Department Head for NATO's discipline Building Integrity in 2013. The Centre is now an integral part of the Norwegian Ministry of Defence.

The views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of, and should not be attributed to, the Norwegian MOD.

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PREFACE

Sometimes people are not aware of the fact that they are facing a dilemma and have a choice of how to respond. Integrity building and promoting good governance are part and parcel of this process and need to continuously be in focus and practised. CIDS has for many years run Case-based awareness or dilemma training workshops in both different departments in MoD and the Defence Sector, as well as in benefactors we work with in the Western Balkans and Ukraine. As such CIDS has made a collection of dilemmas and an introduction to these (see annex). Some of the case studies have been inspired by the Dutch “Centrale Organisatie Integritate Defensie” (COID) and the Danish seven virtues for the civil service. The Collection of cases may be a useful supplement to NATO’s Building Integrity Programme and toolbox and we are pleased to share them with our Allies and partners.

I would like to thank especially Damir Ahmetović, but also Annette Hurum for their major efforts in putting this together. I would also like to extend my thanks to Terje Haaverstad for his valuable contribution and Fridthjof Søgård for his advice in the process.



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1. INTRODUCTION

Dilemmas are not always fully evident to civil servants. Sometimes, potentially challenging situations end up being wrongly assessed and dismissed as complete non-dilemmas or matters that can be easily solved. In other instances, the dynamics of work and tight deadlines leave insufficient space and time for the regular process of decision-making to materialise and, as a result, a relevant analysis of the dilemma fails to take place. The list of reasons why civil servants may end up underestimating certain issues is rather long but the outcome is always the same: failure to spot the dilemma (and to understand the consequences of wrong decisions) pose a serious risk for the institution. This is especially true in a case when a civil servant resorts

to an *ad hoc* solution based on scarce information, bribes, insufficient consultations and/or personal whims. The need for civil servants to learn how to recognise, assess and responsibly handle dilemmas and be aware of potential illegal orders is of critical value for any institution.

This publication aims to raise awareness among civil servants about such situations at work and to offer some practical recommendations on how to resolve them. The expectation is that an increase in the awareness of dilemmas and the rate of successfully addressing them will over time, lead public institutions to better performance and stronger culture of integrity.

2. DILEMMAS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

A dilemma, in the context of public service, can be understood as a situation where a public servant faces a difficult choice between two or more possible courses of action. It is very important to understand that for a particular situation to be described as a dilemma, it needs to involve a choice between several possibilities.

From the perspective of their character, dilemmas can be divided into ethical and professional categories:

When civil servants find themselves in a situation that creates a tension between two or more moral imperatives, then they face an ethical dilemma. For instance, a public servant may need to apply the regulation that has been criticised by media for failing to address serious food safety risks. Here, an ethical imperative to carry out job duties in a diligent and professional manner clashes with the moral imperative to protect human health. Refusing to apply the regulation may be risky given that the media reports could end-up being a 'false alarm'; waiting to find out whether the reports are true, which however, could bring serious damage to citizens' health. This is, typically, what it means to face an ethical or moral dilemma.

On the other hand, some workplace-dilemmas test the depth of our knowledge base, the strength of our professional skills, and the soundness of our work attitudes. For instance, a head of an IT department in a public institution may spend weeks pondering whether to buy a new software from an outside party, or to invest that money in the training of own IT professionals to enable an in-house development of the required software. Both approaches are ethically sound but the choice is tough as there are 'pros and cons' in both cases.

Civil servants' dilemmas carry significant risks. The outcome of wrong decisions may bring an institution into public disrepute, could result in legal repercussions, unqualified personnel taking bad decisions, inferior quality or wrong type of material/equipment being purchased which all may cause a serious loss of public trust. Civil servants need to be mindful of these risks all the time, and institutions need to offer specially designed workshops/seminars to highlight the importance of recognising the dilemma-related risks, and instilling the culture of consciousness, integrity and accountability.

In spite of being in a position to rely on the regulations and documents such as codes of ethics, public servants often find themselves in a 'grey zone' and without clear guidance when encountering certain dilemmas. Therefore, it is of crucial importance for public institutions to equip their staff with the competencies necessary to help them handle dilemmas in a proper way. The content of the next section of the Guide is dedicated to practical ways of dealing with workplace dilemmas. However, dilemmas depend on the

context or circumstances in which civil servants work and, therefore, the advice and recommendations presented here are not to be regarded as ready-made solutions. Instead, they should be regarded as input designed to influence civil servants' approach to solving dilemmas or, to be more specific, to promote certain way of thinking which, if employed, will facilitate working out the best course of action in any given situation.

3. BUILDING THE CAPACITIES TO RESPOND TO DILEMMAS

Having solid moral foundations and being in possession of job-related, technical competencies is necessary but not sufficient for the individuals to make the right decisions. In many cases, it is the context in which public servants operate that decisively influences their thinking and, consequently, the course of action. The context that makes it easy and natural for civil servants to approach dilemmas in the right way is the desirable one; the context that expects civil servants to possess extraordinary moral and/or professional qualities in order to make proper choices is not realistic. The key here is to create an environment in which mistakes that stem from the lack of individual capacity, human negligence, laziness, or personal whim are reduced to a minimum (with an ambition to eliminate them altogether). The public sector can live with civil servants making suboptimal decisions as long as they are the result of objective and justifiable circumstances (e.g. a deficit of information, an interplay of factors beyond the civil servant's control, etc.), but it cannot afford to have civil servants whose decision-making is based on a wrong attitude (e.g. lack of due consideration to a dilemma, or displaying complacency with regard to it).

Therefore, responding to dilemmas should primarily be about creating the circumstances, or climate, in which opting for the right approach should come as easy and natural. To do that, conducive conditions need to be created by ensuring existence of:

- a. civil servants with high professional and moral standards,
- b. a supportive work environment.

3.1. CIVIL SERVANTS

Job-related competencies and integrity standards of individual civil servants are critical in responding to workplace dilemmas. Public institutions must not make compromises when it comes to employing people with high professional and integrity standing. As we said earlier, dilemmas can be professional and moral in nature; being competent and diligent is the pre-requisite for the successful response to a professional dilemma, and possessing sound ethical standards is the key to weathering challenges that arise from moral dilemmas.

Given below are the characteristics that civil servants in a modern, democratic environment should be able to display regardless of the level of responsibilities and the nature of job they hold:

- **Sound Judgment:** The ability to assess situations and make decisions that are in the best interest of the public, even if they may be difficult or unpopular.
- **Critical Thinking:** The capacity to evaluate complex situations, identify underlying issues, and anticipate potential outcomes or implications.
- **Strong Communication Skills:** This includes the ability

to convey complex information clearly, engage in active listening, and facilitate productive discussions.

- **Continuous Learning:** A commitment to ongoing professional development, staying updated with best practices, and being open to new methodologies or ideas.
- **Cultural Competency:** An understanding and respect for diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and values, ensuring that decisions are inclusive and fair.

The above list is not exhaustive, of course. For instance, jobs with managerial responsibilities may include an additional set of competencies that are critical for the ability of public managers to respond to dilemmas (e.g. conflict resolution, negotiation skills, leadership abilities, etc.). Also, public servants working within the specific areas (e.g. defence, security, civil aviation) may encounter dilemmas that require types and depths of competencies/behavioural standards that surpass those associated with the regular public service jobs.

As for the moral side of the civil servants' profile, it is important to seek people who embody the following qualities:

- **High integrity standards:** Acting with honesty, transparency, and consistency in all actions and decisions.
- **Accountability:** Taking responsibility for one's actions and decisions, particularly when mistakes are made.
- **Empathy:** The ability to understand and share the feelings of another, ensuring that decisions are compassionate and considerate of all stakeholders.

3.2. A SUPPORTIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

As we said previously, individual public servants would find it much easier to make a proper response to the workplace dilemmas if they are to work in a supportive work environment. We believe that such an environment should be built alongside the following three characteristics:

- i. Sound general management practices
- ii. Effective anti-corruption arrangements
- iii. Supportive organisational culture.

Presented below are the main elements of each of the listed three characteristics.

i. Sound general management practices

General management practices, especially the manner in which decision-making and communication take place, are critical for the successful resolution of workplace dilemmas. The process of decision-making should be consultative and decentralised. By practicing an inclusive and consultative decision-making, public institutions ensure a greater balance of viewpoints thus sending a message that everyone can contribute and that no one holds a monopoly over knowledge. Affirming such approach to decision-making makes it convenient for individuals who encounter a workplace dilemma to count on the opinion and advise of others in deciding on the best course of action.

Similarly, higher level officials who delegate their decision-making authorities to the lower levels directly contribute to the democratisation of the process. Also, in this way, civil servants get exposure to a wider set of tasks and they build both their experience and confidence. These are all elements that can make a difference once an individual encounters a workplace dilemma.

In addition, for dilemmas to be shared and discussed, open communication channels are the key. Open and uninhibited communication (upward and downward!) allows for feedback, insights and advice to be given freely and in real time thus easing the task of those who need to navigate intricate situations.

ii. Effective Anti-Corruption Arrangements

Sound management practices represent an important pillar of the environment which enables successful resolution of workplace dilemmas. However, it is not sufficient. An institution will need to have in place effective anti-corruption arrangements as well. What does this mean in practical terms?

First, arrangements to identify and declare conflict of interest have to be in place. Such arrangements ensure that

dilemmas arising from personal interests are transparently addressed.

Second, accessible and protected pathways for reporting corruption must be in place. Although, whistleblowing regulations can be used for reporting corrupt practices as well, it is in the interest of the institution to set aside a mechanism designed to deal exclusively with various forms of corruption.

Third, an institution should have functional and trustworthy whistleblower mechanisms in place so that those in dilemma over witnessing questionable practices can feel safe to voice out their concerns.

iii. Supportive Organisational Culture

Finally, for the dilemmas to be addressed in the right manner and consistently over a long period of time, institutions need to work on developing and nurturing a supportive organisational culture. Such culture brings commonly accepted set of values that play a decisive role in how civil servants address their dilemmas. Building and nurturing such culture implies adoption of several factors.

First, civil servants must not fear the consequences of their decisions as long as they adhere to the due process. A

dilemma becomes more challenging if an individual is stifled by the fear. Therefore, institutions need to make sure that their civil servants feel encouraged and supported to do the very best in resolving the dilemma. Everything else is likely to be counterproductive.

Second, institutions should forge the spirit of protection of public interest. This perspective is of crucial importance for those who face dilemmas. In many instances, reinforcing this as a guiding principle may prove to lead to the 'moment of truth' and be an inspiration that will result in the right decision.

Third, institutions should work on creating a culture of creativity and professional autonomy. Modern institutions should offer to public servants an autonomy to think and to think innovatively. Many dilemmas arise as a result of the sheer pace of technological changes in the public sector. These are unprecedented situations that demand from civil servants to think freely and to engage their entire creative potential in responding those situations.

Hopefully, a combination of solid personal competencies and attitudes in combination with the enabling work environment should be sufficient to guarantee that, once they appear, dilemmas will be dealt with in a professional and responsible manner with the public interest as the key guiding principle.

4. PRACTICAL WAYS IN APPROACHING DILEMMAS

In this section we will present two practical tools that can be of value for public servants when they encounter workplace dilemmas. The first tool refers to the way how decision-making process should look like if an individual comes across a challenging situation. The second one is related to the process of evaluation of potential solutions. However, before we present these tools, those who end-up facing an ethical dilemma may find it useful to begin their quest for the best solution by referring to the concept of *four types of ethical dilemmas* – a concept developed by

Rushworth Kidder, an American scholar and ethicist. Given below is the summary of Kidder's idea which may prove to be handy in 'unpacking' the dilemma and putting it into a wider perspective:

- **Truth vs Loyalty:** Reporting facts as they are versus displaying allegiance to someone or something. Should truth ever be sacrificed? How did we as civil servants end up being in a situation to even consider blanking the truth?

- **Short-term vs Long-term:** Refers to the choice of doing something to serve a short-term or long-term purpose. Long-term solutions are, of course, better than quick-time fixes but it is down to the nature of needs that dictates our choice. Also, in some instances, short-term solutions happen to be compatible with the long-term ones.
- **Individual vs Community:** This is a situation in which an individual (with his/her opinion or interest) stands alone against a larger group and its interest. Are there situations where numbers can be allowed to prevail over the truth?
- **Justice vs. Mercy:** A choice between strict

implementation of the regulations, on one side, and allowing for exceptions on the compassionate grounds on the other. Can sympathy for one's mistake be justified?

4.1. STEPS IN APPROACHING A DILEMMA

Given below is the table that outlines steps in approaching a dilemma. Following these steps does not guarantee that each dilemma will be successfully resolved but it does ensure that it will be approached in a systematic way and with the due seriousness and responsibility.

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Identify the dilemma | Make sure that there are different possible courses of action and that each possible choice has got some merits. Be honest with yourself; don't invent a dilemma. If in doubt, ask your supervisor or colleagues. |
| Secure resources | Dilemmas are tough. Don't try to solve them all by yourself. To objectively evaluate all potential choices you will need to mobilise some available resources. Consult with you supervisor, other managers or colleagues. Do your own readings, refer to relevant written guidelines, policies, good practices. Keep your focus on the potential consequences of each possible course of action. |
| Brainstorm solutions | Some dilemmas are unique and demand a custom-made solution; other dilemmas repeat themselves and tempt us to do what our predecessors have done. Don't jump to repeat earlier course of action. First, find out how successful those previous choices have been. Second, keep your mind open; maybe you can come up with a better solution. |
| Evaluate alternatives | When considering all possible courses of action make sure that you don't lose sight of the potential consequences associated with each and how likely it is for the consequences to really occur. A particular course of action may have only one negative consequence but the probability that it will happen may be very high. Another possible solution may result in several negative consequences but they are very unlikely to occur. In addition, impact of the consequences (i.e. the extent of damage) can also differ. The bigger the impact of a potential consequence, the less attractive the solution (unless the probability of its occurrence is extremely low). In any case, evaluating alternatives is about analysing potential consequences in the light of two key factors: probability that a consequence may occur and the size of damage it could cause. |
| Make a decision | Your decision concerns public interest and, therefore, must be transparent. If you did everything in line with the steps outlined here, you have nothing to hide or fear. |
| Evaluate the decision | Once in a while, your dilemma may beat you in spite of you doing everything 'by the book'. Do an honest evaluation and make sure that you learn your lessons. |

4.2. TESTING THE POTENTIAL COURSE OF ACTION

Weighing different options when facing a dilemma is probably the most critical part of the decision-making process. It is at this stage that an individual who faces a

dilemma gets through different thoughts and tensions in considering the best course of action. The table below offers a five-point test that is designed to provide a kind of reminder for a public servant not to lose sight of what really matters and why.

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| The legal test | Obviously, if the considered option implies a breach in regulation it should be abandoned. The fact that some legal provisions may be outdated or in any other way inadequate may complicate the matters here. |
| Professional standards test | If the particular course of action goes against the accepted standards of profession, it should be refined or dropped altogether. For instance, the process of legislative drafting implies adherence to certain standards of legal profession. Compromising on those can be very risky from the perspective of public interest. |
| The gut feeling test | Some potential solutions just don't seem to be right. For instance, an action may be legally permissible (or may fall into an unregulated area) but you know intuitively that it is wrong. If you have such doubts you should listen to your gut feeling and seek assistance from your supervisor or colleagues. |
| The front page test | Think about how would you react if your action became a public knowledge. If you would feel embarrassed or upset, than your potential solution should be modified or abandoned. |
| The role model test | Most people have someone they consider a 'role model' when it comes to behaviour or thinking. If you are in doubt about the course of action you consider to take, you should ask yourself what would your role model do if in your place. |

5. CONCLUSION

The Public sector is evolving and in that process of change civil servants encounter a wide variety of workplace dilemmas. When public servants encounter a situation in which several options appear as potential solutions, they should approach it with the diligence and seriousness that demonstrate their awareness of the mission they agreed to carry – to be guardians of public interest.

Of course, knowing what is right is not always sufficient for a person to make the right decision. There are all kinds of temptations that arise from the context in which civil servants operate and there are all kinds of issues that civil servants carry over from their private life. Therefore,

successful resolution of workplace dilemmas is a matter of personal competencies and integrity but wider societal circumstances and organisational culture play a very critical role as well.

The cases we presented here should help those who work with protecting public interest to sharpen their senses when it comes to recognising dilemmas. Thereafter, the issue is finding the right response. This Guide is, basically, about the way how civil servants should respond to dilemmas. We may not always make the right decision but, as civil servants, we must always make use of appropriate considerations and deliberations before making our choice.

ANNEX – DILEMMA CASES

DILEMMAS RELATED TO WORKING IN THE DEFENCE SECTOR

Case #1 – Giving advice about a topic where you are considered an expert

Your leader has asked you to provide advice on a topic in which you are regarded to be an expert. The final decision will be made at a political level, and you are aware that your advice will contradict the view of the political leaders.

What would your final advice be to the political masters? Being aware of the views of the political leaders, would you still be forwarding your professional advice on the issue at hand?

Case #2 – A purveyor of administrative services invites you to a Christmas dinner

A purveyor of administrative services in the Defence sector invites you and other colleagues to the traditional Christmas dinner. The event commences with a regular

meeting with the company at 15:00 and concludes with a dinner at a restaurant at 16:30.

Note: the standard provisions, stating that an employer should cover his/her own expenses, as well as clarifying that the meal shall be of a “modest” nature, imply that such an event as described above, would not be compliant with these regulations.

How should social relation- building with external actors be managed? Should it be ruled out completely as not appropriate at all? What if there was no working meeting prior to the dinner? Would attending the dinner on your part be appropriate?

Case #3 – Buying of services from a family member when arranging a job-related party

Your unit is planning the yearly Christmas party. A small amount of money is allocated to the event. One of your colleagues has a brother who works in the entertainment business. Your colleague suggests engaging him – at a

small fee – to perform at the party, since this would be convenient for the hosting committee.

How would you respond to similar circumstances? Is this a case worth further discussion and consideration at a more principal level?

Case #4 – How to handle an agreement with an external consulting company

You are responsible for the management of a contract with a consulting company regarding defence procurements. The contract is about to expire, and there is still a need for assistance from a consulting company within the actual field of procurement. Co-operation with the company has been very satisfactory, and you would prefer to extend the current agreement for a new period.

Would you initiate a new competitive bidding process? Alternatively, would you automatically extend the current agreement without real external competition?

DILEMMAS RELATED TO BEING IN A MISSION/A MILITARY HQ

Case #5 – During a mission, one of your colleagues acts in a way that is not in accordance with the mandate. What do you do?

Case #6 – During a weapons drill, a male soldier aims his weapon at a female colleague and says “as a joke” that she has to get undressed. What do you do?

Case #7 – The Commanding Officer (CO) withholds information from one of your colleagues. The colleague in question comes to you to complain about the incident, as he believes the CO is withholding the information to make him/her look bad. What do you do?

Case #8 – During a visit to the local village elders, several boys enter the room and start dancing. Observing how the elders treat the boys, you suspect that they are being sexually abused. You are dependent on the elders for the success of the mission. What do you do?

Case #9 – During a private conversation a colleague tells you that he regularly uses drugs. You find drug use to be incompatible with his job, but you also know that if this news becomes known, he will inevitably be dismissed. The colleague thinks that the conversation was confidential. What do you do?

Case #10 – Several of your colleagues are rather slack with following the Rules of Engagement. You are dependent on them. What do you do?

Case #11 – You suspect someone in a sensitive position of abusing his knowledge to put a colleague under pressure. What do you do with this suspicion?

Case #12 – During a patrol, a local merchant offers you an ancient religious statue at a very attractive price. You suspect that you will be able to sell it at home for a nice profit. You can easily transport the statue in one of your vehicles. What do you do with that offer?

Case #13 – Your duty car has broken down and needs attention. Spare parts through the logistics system will take at least two weeks to arrive. Your transportation officer has “special contacts” with somebody he knows. The vehicle can be fixed in half a day for an extra fee. What thought process should go through your head in this case? What will you do in this case?

Case #14 – Your spouse is finalizing a master thesis of 100 pages, and needs printouts for proof reading. The latest draft is e-mailed to your work e-mail. Your spouse is demanding three copies that must be in high-resolution colour since there are lots of graphics, photos and graphs in the paper. Your workplace has a printer that can do this job. What dilemmas do you see? What is your choice of action?

Case #15 – You and your colleague have been driving in the staff car for several hours and have stopped for dinner at a restaurant along the road. After the meal, the restaurant owner doesn't want you to pay because, as he says: “You are keeping us safe and besides, I would like to do business with the military”. How will you deal with this situation? What possible problems may arise in the longer term?

Case #16 – Your office is responsible for procuring communication equipment and spare parts. You have a tight budget and specification standards that have to be met. One of the potential suppliers has ‘discovered’ that you are urgently looking for generators suitable for charging batteries, and has put forward an offer that looks really good for the purpose. What reflections should you do make in this case? What consequences and negative effects may arise?

Case #17 – Your HQ annual Christmas party is about to be planned. This year, your branch is responsible for the entertainment. 1500 Euros has been allocated for hiring a music band. Since your best friend happens to own a band that suits the bill perfectly, booking his ensemble is just one easy SMS away. Should you go ahead with the booking?

Case #18 – Your unit has a contract with a supplier that delivers foodstuff to the kitchen on a weekly basis. As it happens, frequently there is a discrepancy between what is listed on the manifest and what actually is delivered. As counter-corruption officer, you are asked by the kitchen manager to look into the matter. When you talk to the logistics quartermaster paying for the food, you are told this is normal due to the nature of logistics operations in general. The quartermaster happens to be the brother of your unit commander and shows no sign of wanting to do anything about this situation. He is just looking at you and clearly wants you to leave his office. How do deal with this somewhat delicate situation?

Case #19 – Your unit is relocating and needs a new place for establishing a logistics point. You find a perfect place right outside a small town next to the railway and main road. You are in a big hurry due to operational reasons. You manage to find someone who claims ownership and who gives permission to use this land for a daily fee. No paperwork needed, he says. How do you deal with this situation? Which problems might arise in the short or long term if you do not investigate properly?

DILEMMAS RELATED TO REAL-LIFE CIVIL SERVANT CASES FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES AND REGIONS

Case #20 – You are a clerk in an office in an agency, and you work with promotion. Your minister has just been in the press to announce a new bill which will de-bureaucratize a number of schemes. A number of minor regulations must be removed from some industries in order to create better growth opportunities for companies. The minister has already announced that it will create around 1,000 new jobs. You will be tasked with assessing the business effects, which must be included in the legislative proposal's comments. You find that the deregulation will not have any significant effect on the profession. According to your analysis, the proposal will create no more than 100 new jobs. You turn the matter over to your office manager, who agrees with your analysis. However, you decide - in light of the minister's position and announcements - to write a soft wording in the bill that the effects “could be up to 500 new jobs”.

Is that okay? Yes or no.

Case #21 – You are a consultant in a department. You are a trained economist and have many years of experience in your field. The minister is calling for an increase in the tax on soft drinks in order to limit sales and improve the health of the population. Together with two other employees in the ministry, you must draft a bill on the increase. You must, among other things, explain the economic consequences of the proposal, including the extent to which a higher tax will increase cross-border trade. It is your assessment that the proposal will have a major effect on cross-border trade and that it constitutes a significant disadvantage of the proposal. You submit your financial assessment to your office manager, who also has experience in the area. The office manager does not share your assessment. This is the manager's assessment based on, among other things, the information you have presented about the effects of previous tax changes on other goods, that the proposal will have only a small effect on cross-border trade, but the head of office admits that the conclusion is not entirely clear. You are not convinced that the manager's assessment is correct and are considering going to your head of department, but nevertheless change your financial conclusion in accordance with the manager's assessment.

Is that okay? Yes or no.

Case #22 – You are a specialist consultant in an office regarding nature restoration. Your head of office asks you to prepare a memo that the minister has requested. The memo is to explain a new proposal for the use of currency 100 million for a recovery project. The minister would like to launch the proposal in a month. The ministry has grant and legal authority for the proposal, but you soon find out that the project will not meet the normal professional criteria that the ministry uses. The effect is very small per expenditure currency. You turn the matter over to your boss. On the one hand, you are aware that the minister is very keen on this particular project, which will be used to conclude a major political agreement. On the other hand, you agree that the proposal has major professional shortcomings. You agree to prepare a memorandum for the minister in which you describe the professional weaknesses of the proposal, and on that basis you propose to the minister that the initiative be dropped.

Is that okay? Yes or no.

Case #23 – You are a specialist consultant in an office that works with the prevention of occupational accidents. The leader of the opposition has put forward a proposal to relax the rules in the area of the working environment with the aim of promoting employment. Your minister is against the proposal and expresses doubts as to whether the proposal will really have any major effect on employment. You are asked to write a note on the opposition leader's proposal and prepare some short talking points for the minister's meeting with one of the government parties' labor market representatives. In your analysis of the proposal, you will find i.a. forward to information from abroad, which clearly indicates that the proposal will only lead to a small increase in the number of occupational accidents, but have a relatively large effect on employment. You write your information about the experiences abroad in your professional note to the minister on the matter, but since you know your minister's position, you write in the talking points to the minister that the proposal is unacceptable and unsympathetic, as it is inhumane to want to accept even a small increase in the number of accidents to benefit employment. In the talking points, you do not mention the foreign experiences or the effect on employment in general.

Is that okay? Yes or no.

Case #24 – You are a consultant in an agency and have to draft comments for a bill that tightens the rules for the use of a certain additive in food. The bill has a high priority for your minister and is on the government's legislative programme. You also carried out a professional assessment of the case, since the initial thoughts about a possible bill was reversed with the minister. You then found that there were five foreign and Danish studies on the subject. Your professional summary of the studies is that – even if there is some uncertainty about the conclusions – there seems to be only a very modest risk that the additive is harmful to health in the quantities that are permitted according to the current legislation. At the time, the minister was informed of this professional assessment, but found out from a political assessment that the doubt that there is after all about the health hazard should benefit the citizens, and that a bill should be put forward to tighten the rules. In light of this previous process, you decide to write in the comments of the bill: "According to international and Danish studies, there is a risk that the additive is dangerous to health in the quantities that are currently permitted - although there is uncertainty regarding the scope thereof. The government believes that this uncertainty should benefit the citizens. The government is therefore proposing a tightening of the rules."

Is that okay? Yes or no.

Case #25 – You are an office manager in a department and are responsible for socially disadvantaged groups. In today's news there is a story about a short unannounced interview a reporter had with your minister. During the interview, the journalist asks whether the minister and the government have not been too passive towards disadvantaged children. The minister rejects this, and mentions as proof of the minister's active efforts that the ministry's subsidy for disadvantaged children has increased by approx. 500 million DKK since the government took office. Several representatives from voluntary organizations subsequently criticize the statement, which they find to be an exaggeration. Several journalists are asking about the matter, and your minister would like to make a supplementary statement, as the minister himself has become uncertain whether the quick answer was completely correct. You know that the DKK 500 million

not due to the decisions of the government, but decisions made by the previous government. However, since the money has only been paid out under this government, you find the minister's statement about the increased subsidy to be correct. And you prepare a professional note, which can be handed out to the press, in which the minister's statements about the government's active efforts are confirmed. The memo does not mention the decisions made by the previous government that triggered the money.

Is that okay? Yes or no.

Case #26 – Minister places a request to be given the monthly 'separate living' allowance – a monetary compensation paid out to those whose place of residence is at least 80 KM away from the place of work. In order for this request to be processed, a minister is obliged to submit his 'place of residence certificate'. However, he did not submit this document and, to make matters worse, his request didn't come in writing but verbally through his Chief of Cabinet. The head of HRM department is aware of the media reports that highlighted the malversations with the 'separate living allowance'. She suspects, that the minister's place of residence is the same as his place of living although he originally comes from the town that is some 100 KM away. The minister is known to be very influential. On top of that, he is known for his rather confrontational and patronising style of communication. Head of HRM is feeling the heat. He can process the request and make a polite request to the minister's aide to submit the certificate at a later date (knowing full well that it will probably not happen but clinging on the hope that it may eventually be submitted). He knows that in such situation he will avoid the wrath of the minister but will harm citizen's interest. On the other hand, he can follow the procedure and risk getting a revenge by the influential politician.

What would you do if in place of the Head of HRM?

Case #27 – You share an office with a person that you saw taking office stationaries (especially printing paper), placing them into his personal bag and heading back home. You made no fuss about it when you noticed it for the first time (you thought that it was an isolated case and the amount

of paper taken was rather petty) but the similar thing has occurred recently again.

This time, the person takes a whole ream (500 pages) and he is rather unfazed about it. He tells you that he has two school kids at home and their assignments require a considerable amount of printing paper. He says that he hardly prints anything at work and he uses that argument to offset any ethical dilemma in relation to what he does. You warn him that it is not right to have that kind of attitude towards something that is the state property. However, your reaction upsets your office mate; he thinks you are trying to portray yourself as 'an angel' because you have ambitions to be promoted. He stops talking to you and, soon, your other colleagues from other offices are not as warm to you as they used to be. You feel that he spoke behind your back.

What would you do? Will you try to mend the relationship with the 'stationary guy' and get back to normal working atmosphere or stay unapologetic and determined not to allow misuse of state properties?

Case #28 – You are a procurement officer and one of the prospective bidders is asking you over the phone to help her fill out an electronic application. You realise that the questions are neutral and technical in nature, so you decide to help. The prospective bidder is grateful for your willingness to help and commends you for your professionalism. However, the next day a lady bidder comes to your institution asking for you. You go to the reception only to find that a lady is smiling at you and pulling out of her bag a box of chocolates (not so cheap one, actually!) for you to share it with your colleagues. She says it is her way of showing appreciation for your kindness and professionalism. You feel a bit uncomfortable. You were only doing your work and nothing more, after all. It crosses your mind that this could be an entry point for the lady bidder to strike a rapport with you. At the same time, it is just a box of chocolates; you did indeed go a bit outside of your duties to help with the application but you feel there was nothing wrong with your action or attitude. People at the reception are all looking at you.

What would you do?

Case #29 – You have been appointed to sit in the selection panel for the recruitment of a new clerk in the finance and budgeting department. You went through the list of applicants who meet formal criteria and you realise that no name sounds familiar to you. It means that you are safe when it comes to the risk of being in the conflict of interest. However, on the day of the interviews, you are surprised to see that one of the first candidates that comes before the panel is actually a person whom you know from your neighbourhood. You know the guy only by his nickname which explains why you didn't notice his name on the list of candidates. He is not your close friend but you say 'hello' to each other when you meet on the street. On a few occasions, you two have exchanged a few words as well. He is a rather nice guy and you and him might have some common friends. He does not greet you personally upon entering the interview room. Nobody suspects anything. You feel you can carry out the interview without any bias. However, something is telling you that you should declare to the chairman of the panel that you know the candidate.

Would you ignore your feeling and continue with the interview or not?

Case #30 – Civil service legislation permits civil servants to be member of political parties. However, holding a post in the party structure is forbidden. You live in a country where politics is divided along ethnic lines and you are proud to be the supporter of the political option that claims to take care of protection and affirmation of your ethnic group. You have your Facebook account where you rarely make any political statements or comments. However, the election campaign is in full swing and FB users from the opposing political option are leaving comments that you consider to be fake and very malicious. You are tempted to defend the leader of the political party that you belong to. You feel that you are just in the mission to protect the truth.

You leave your comment. The replies arrive almost instantly. They are not polite at all; they target you personally. You lose your calm and tell them off in the language that they understand and deserve.

Did you do the right thing as a civil servant?

Case #31 – You have a nephew who recently graduated with distinction from the local public university. He has

been looking for a job for more than a year now but the closest he got was to be called for an interview...on two occasions. He is a bright guy. He speaks English and learns German through the online courses. He is very mature for his age as well. These unsuccessful attempts to land a job are affecting him. His mom, your sister, has noticed that he takes calming pills before going to sleep. Also, he is often talking about his friends plans to go to Germany in search of job. Your sister is desperate; he is her only child... and she pleads to you to somehow help him get a job in your institution. You know that he could be great asset for your Ministry but currently there are no vacant jobs. You speak to your best friend at work and ask her for advice. She assures you that the Minister can change the internal organisation and open the position that will benefit the ministry and suit him at the same time. You feel that if you ask the Minister for favour your integrity will be ruined and, in addition, you know that it is almost 100% certain that he will ask you for a counter favour.

What will you do?

Case #32 – Your child is feeling unwell lately. The doctor in your primary healthcare unit suspects that it might be a serious condition and, therefore, requests a number of tests to be done. He is sending you to the public hospital and you already know that the waiting lists are going to be very long. Your mind shifts to the possibility of doing the tests at a private clinic. You are a civil servant and a sole bread-winner of your family. You know that the costs of those tests will be substantial and you know that you can't take any more bank loans. Your wife suggests that you borrow the money but you are reluctant. On the other hand, prolonging the wait might be simply too risky for your child. The situation is making you feel very distressed; you barely sleep at night and you lose your appetite. Your office colleague and good friend notices your change in behaviour and asks you about it. You tell him the story and he immediately points out to the assistant minister whose wife is a medical doctor at the hospital where your child has been referred to. He urges you to go and speak to him saying that his wife is in a position to shorten the wait for your child significantly. However, asking for such favour will surely place you in a very vulnerable position.

What are your options? What should you do?

Case #33 – You are a head of section within the IT department in a fairly big government agency. You have been around for almost eight years and your record as a professional is indeed impeccable. Soon, the current head of the IT department is leaving the agency for a job in the corporate sector. He is asked by the director to recommend someone who can take over and make sure that the transition is smooth and successful. The head calls to tell you that your name has been mentioned in the context of succession alongside your colleague who currently heads another section. You really want that promotion because you feel that you are ready to make the next step in your career and assume the job that will bring new responsibilities but also new exciting opportunities to prove yourself. Also, the remuneration package is significantly better which coincides just perfectly with the plans in your private life. Your 'competitor' happens to be someone you get along with rather well but you know something about him that others don't – in order to be promoted to his current post he had to complete his post-graduate degree in the field of IT. He obtained the degree as requested but through a questionable online program without really going through the curriculum. Your colleague is very competent. His talent for computers and programming is great and his work does not really suffer in any way because of the fact that he practically bought his degree. At the same time, you know that he is prone to temporary lapses in his integrity. The idea starts developing in your mind to expose his case. You feel that he didn't do the right thing but you also know that you didn't act properly by keeping quiet about the issue for more than two years. In fact, you have a feeling that it is your desire for career advancement, rather than your thirst for justice and integrity, that prompts your thinking. But you wonder what if your friend's pragmatism gets misguided again. It could be damaging for the institution.

Which options do you have? What do you do?

Case #34 – Your daughter is turning eight on Thursday. You and your wife have promised her a garden party after working hours and, for the last couple of days, all she talks about is things related to the preparation of this event. You are a lawyer in a government ministry and on Thursday you will have a hearing as part of the disciplinary process against a public servant in the ministry. It will take place at 15.00 and you have to be home by 17.00. You were

worried about organising your daughter's birthday party on that day knowing that disciplinary hearings can be very unpredictable and last much longer than they normally should. However, you and your wife agreed that the risk of staying long hours is not that big and you ended up making all the preparations for Thursday. Half an hour before the hearing starts, your colleague comes to you with the information that the case may not be so straight forward as the person who is facing disciplinary hearings intends to bring many witnesses. You can ask your colleague (also a lawyer) to replace you but she is unfamiliar with the case. Involving her at this point would be rather unfair but, more importantly, it would not be in the best interest of both sides in the process. At the same time, your colleague is urging you to trust her and assures you that she will figure out 'what is what' in the case. She points out that the hearing is likely to last beyond 17.00 and she pats your back saying that it is not really something that you should prioritise over your daughter's birthday. You are in a split mind; your absence from the birthday party would break your daughter's heart...that is for sure. At the same time, being replaced by your colleague may not have a negative impact on the case at all. Still, your conscience is not fully at peace...

Which dilemmas do you face? What do you do?

Case #35 – You are a manager of a legal department in a public institution which is involved in a bilateral technical assistance project with an organisation from abroad. The partner organisation is offering the possibility for up to 10 people from your institution to go for a study trip abroad and your boss is asking you to nominate two of those from your organisational unit. It is a 4-day trip to London and you know that it is a kind of 'hot potato' for you as everyone will be keen to go. Your approach is to send those that will benefit most from the program of the visit. However, in the days prior to finally receiving the draft program, you start developing some doubts. You are faced with the dilemma of who will be the second nominee. You have two candidates; both are credible but the first person is a slightly better in doing the job. At the same time, that person is a bit cocky, maybe even arrogant in some situations. The other person is the total opposite; very humble, friendly and well-intended. However, he may not be able to come across as competent as the 'cocky' person. You are in a real dilemma

– whether to send a ‘cocky’ but extremely competent or nice but slightly less competent person.

Which dilemmas do you face? Who would you pick? Why?

Case #36 – You work in the urban planning department of the municipal administration as a civil engineer in charge of issuing various kinds of construction permits. One day you receive a call from your good friend who wants to renovate his parents’ home. He complains to you that one of your colleagues has been very nit-picking when handling his application for permits. It seems that one particular requirement related to the statics of the building is not explicitly listed among the compulsory ones. It is something that the administrative authorities have dealt with on a case by case basis. You inquire about this particular case and your colleague tells you that indeed the decision depends on the terrain on which the construction stands. In some cases, the land is rather porous or, elsewhere, the terrain is quite steep (i.e. landslide risk) which increases the safety risks and, thus, make the authorities apply stricter criteria. The house of your friend’s parents, though sitting alone in a relatively large piece of land, happens to be located in a steep area with no reinforcements of any kind to protect it from a potential landslide. However, your colleague tells you that he understands that the required interventions would generate a significant additional cost for your friend and he offers to hand over the case to you if you are ready to make a different decision. He just asks you to inform the head of department about the switch. You both know that there is a possibility to write an opinion that will be ‘good enough’ to support the issuing of this permit. Moreover, you have never heard of a landslide in that area in your life. Still, you are not so sure...Climate changes are causing prolonged rainy periods and things are getting worse from year to year. What if the worst thing happens? What if your decision to reduce the financial burden for your friend today returns as a boomerang tomorrow?

Which considerations do you need to take? What would you do? Why?

Case #37 – You are in charge of recruitment at a ministry. A senior male colleague (a general) informs you that his a “close” friend has applied for a job at the ministry, and hopes you can look “favourably” upon her application. Since he could be responsible for giving you a promotion, and you are afraid you will be bypassed for the promotion you have just applied for, you decide to argue in favour of his friend. In your evaluation of the candidates your argue for his friend as the best candidate, because although she is slightly less formally qualified than the other candidates, they are all males and the ministry has an aim to increase the number of females in this type of position. However, the impression she gave during the interview told you that she is personally less fit for the position than the best male. Is this acceptable? Which elements should be considered? What other options do you have?

Case #38 – You are a senior civil servant in a ministry department and recently you have got a new minister from what used to be the main opposition party. The new minister expresses a clear wish to overturn an important decision made by the outgoing government, and asks for a paper and a recommendation to that effect. Because you only see bad consequences of overturning the previous decision, you find it unjustifiable to argue positively and actually recommend what the new minister would like to do.

What are your options, and which one do you choose?

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