

ASSEMBLÉE  
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DÉPARTEMENTS DE FRANCE

ASSOCIATION  
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MAIRES DE FRANCE

ASSOCIATION  
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RÉGIONS DE FRANCE

INSTITUT DE LA GESTION DÉLÉGUÉE

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# Local Public Services Charter

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The charter was signed on January 16, 2002,  
under the chairmanship of Christian Poncelet, president of the French Senate,  
by:

- Mr. Jean-Paul Delevoye, president of the Association des Maires de France
- Mr. Jean-Pierre Raffarin, president of the Association des Régions de France
- Mr. Jean Puech, president of the Assemblée des Départements de France
- Mr. Claude Martinand, president of the Institut de la Gestion Délégée

in the presence of Daniel Vaillant, Minister of the Interior\*.

\* or his representative

# THE AIMS OF THE CHARTER

Local authorities and groups of local authorities, in their capacity as organizing authorities, create, set the scope of and implement the public services that fall within their mandate, in the interests of the population they represent.

To guarantee the quality and performance of these services, and to foster social and regional cohesion, the deliberating assemblies, mayors and presidents concerned are obliged to make short- and long-term decisions with regard to the management method, operator selection, level of quality, tariffs and control of the service.

The aim of the Local Public Services Charter is to clarify their approach and management ethics under existing economic conditions and in a stimulating national and European regulatory environment.

Over and beyond the needs for service continuity, equality of access and adaptability, the charter aims to define the principles and objectives on which organizing authorities must base their decisions to create and manage their public services.

This national initiative also advocates a public action approach to evaluation that is beyond reproach, which is the essential complement to the principles of subsidiarity and free administration applied in France and within the European Union.

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This charter is addressed to all stakeholders and partners of public services: user customers, citizen taxpayers, organizing authorities, employees and operators.

The objectives and actions confirmed by the charter's signatories are commitments and guidelines for their own activities and for the support they give their members in the organization and management of local public services.

The signatories invite all stakeholders in local public services to apply and fulfill this charter in the way they deem most suitable.

The signatories agree to create a Charter Implementation and Compliance Committee.

The signatories have decided to set in place a Local Public Services Observatory according to terms and conditions defined in conjunction with all the partners involved.

The Senate, which represents the local authorities of France, supports this charter.

France's Minister of the Interior, by his presence, bears witness to the importance he attaches to this charter.

# THE SIGNATORIES WILL PURSUE THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES :

1. **Clarification of roles**  
To clarify the role of those responsible for local public services
2. **Definition of missions**  
To clearly define the missions of public service in order to better control their implementation and outcome
3. **Freedom of choice and reversibility**  
To promote freedom of choice by elected officials with regard to the management method and its reversibility
4. **Emulation through comparison**  
To enlighten this choice through objective comparisons between the various management methods and between operators
5. **Confidence and partnership**  
To build balanced relations through a lasting and responsible partnership between the parties concerned
6. **Transparency and fairness**  
To ensure transparency of costs and to share performance savings fairly
7. **Evaluation and local democracy**  
To develop public debate on major decisions by basing them on independent evaluation by a multiplicity of stakeholders.

# THEY COMMIT TO IMPLEMENTING THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS :

- The organizing authority's role is to define the scope of the missions of local public service and set the general organization rules within the context of applicable laws and in cooperation with the partners concerned.
- The user is at the center of the public service, which contributes to social and local cohesion.
- The sustainable development of the service includes aspects relating to safety, public health and the environment.
  
- Decisions relating to the organization of the service are preceded by an assessment of existing conditions (technical, labor-related, legal and economic) of the service and its environment, including an inventory of all its assets.
- The characteristics of the service are established on the basis of a regularly updated study of needs to be satisfied. The service rules define the measures applicable to users.
- The operation rules and the principal stages of development to meet forecast needs are set out in documents specific to each management method: public-sector regulations, technical specifications, works schedule.
  
- To guarantee freedom of choice of the management method and the reversibility of that choice, the conditions of organization of the different management methods are harmonized by each level of administration involved; objective remaining disparities are taken into account in the comparison of performances. The practice of drawing up contracts is applied generally.
- The transfer of personnel from one situation to another is organized in compliance with applicable regulations, and with special attention being paid to the fair treatment of special cases.
- In the case of the delegated management of public services, the choice of operator is made after a fair and robust competitive tender that applies national and European Union procedures for selecting the best bidder.
  
- Representative performance indicators are defined at the national level by the Local Public Services Observatory. Each organizing authority selects and adds those indicators it deems the most appropriate. It may thus introduce performance incentive mechanisms into the objectives set for the operator, whether a public- or private-sector entity.
- The economic and technical information required for performance comparisons is gathered, processed and distributed by the Local Public Services Observatory.
- The various partners supply the information requested and contribute to the financing of its processing.
  
- Central government and the organizing authorities establish and support autonomous competence and expertise networks to serve elected officials, as well as their technical, financial and administrative departments.
- The qualification of public- or private-sector specialists who provide advice and support to the organizing authorities shall be recognized or certified by an independent body to be created.
- A wide range of representative documentation on the various subjects relating to the organization and management of local public services is set in place by the observatory and made accessible through a variety of information and communication technologies, in particular electronic data transfer.
  
- The organizing authority selects and sets the level of objectives in a balanced manner, taking into account the quality of service required, the price for users and the rules and standards to be met.
- The organizing authority and the operator, whether a public- or private-sector management entity, ensure the conditions of the service's sustainable development by providing it in timely manner with the resources to replace, upgrade and extend its systems.
- The organizing authority and the operator, whether a public- or private-sector entity, use the performance savings to foster social, economic and environmental progress without compromising the operator's incentive for efficient management. Costs not directly related to the services, joint expenses and headquarters overhead are taken into account in total transparency.
  
- The organizing authority establishes and leads a Local Public Services Consultative Committee.

- The organizing authority ensures that reports on the service are produced, and analyzes and distributes them. It keeps the public informed of the quality of service and tariffs, and regularly monitors any customer complaints and remedial actions taken.
- The organizing authority establishes the most suitable mechanism for gathering information about the public's local expectations, in particular with regard to the service's systems and cost-effectiveness. Public debates, clarified by evaluations carried out by a range of stakeholders, are organized at the time of major choices or decisions.

## THE FOUNDING SIGNATORIES :

Jean-Paul DELEVOYE  
President of the  
Association des Maires  
de France

Jean-Pierre  
RAFFARIN  
President of the  
Association des Régions  
de France

Jean PUECH  
President of the  
Association des  
Départements de France

Claude MARTINAND  
President of the Institut  
de la Gestion Déléguée

WITH THE SPONSORSHIP OF THE SENATE :

Christian PONCELET  
President of the Senate

**Institut  
de la Gestion Déléguée**

84, rue de Grenelle  
75007 PARIS

Téléphone : 01 44 39 27 00  
Télécopie : 01 44 39 27 07  
[www.fondation-igd.org](http://www.fondation-igd.org)

**Association  
des Maires de France**

41, quai d'Orsay  
75007 Paris

Téléphone : 01 44 18 14 14  
Télécopie : 01 47 53 96 73  
[www.amf.asso.fr](http://www.amf.asso.fr)

**Assemblée  
des Départements de France**

6, rue Duguay-Trouin  
75006 Paris

Téléphone : 01 45 49 60 20  
Télécopie : 01 45 49 60 21  
[www.departement.org](http://www.departement.org)

**Association  
des Régions de France**

276, bd Saint Germain  
75507 Paris

Téléphone : 01 45 55 82 48  
Télécopie : 01 45 50 20 38  
[www.Regions.de.France@arf-regions.org](mailto:www.Regions.de.France@arf-regions.org)