



Ottawa, November 4, 2015

The Right Honourable Justin P.J. Trudeau, P.C., M.P.,
Prime Minister of Canada, Ottawa

Dear Prime Minister,

On behalf of the Directors of the Ethics Practitioners' Association of Canada (EPAC), I congratulate you on forming the next Canadian government.

We wish to introduce our organization to you and to offer our active collaboration in building and maintaining an **ethical culture** in government departments and agencies.

EPAC was formed in the mid-1990s to strengthen ethical wisdom and practice in Canadian organizations in all sectors – private, public, not-for-profit. Among its accomplishments, EPAC developed a competency profile and a related self-assessment instrument to guide the work of ethics consultants and advisors; these were reputed to be the first tools of their kind anywhere. Over the years, a significant number of EPAC members have been employed in ethics roles in the federal government, and some of them have provided substantial ethics leadership in the Canadian Forces, RCMP, CFIA and other organizations.

While there are opportunities for federal officials in ethics roles to network among themselves, they benefit greatly from additional, continuing contact outside of government. Values, ethics and principles are matters of constant maturation and deepening insight. This comes from frank dialogue among responsible, committed individuals with varied backgrounds and involvements in ethics. Government ethics needs to be in dialogue with the wider world. With its diverse membership, EPAC provides such an opportunity to its members.

As you know, laws articulate a society's minimum standards of behaviour. Values, ethics and principles challenge individuals and institutions to aim at higher goals and meet **aspirational standards of** behaviour – the essence of **ethical culture**. Since the Tait Report of 1996, the Canadian government has articulated lofty ethical standards. However, strong leadership is required to continue aiming at those high standards, instead of allowing legal minima to become the *de facto* standards. A practical example is how Maple Leaf Foods handled the listeriosis outbreak in 2008; led by the most senior officers, it kept the trust of consumers by its quick and highly responsible actions. Indeed, your own actions in the last week of the campaign demonstrated rapid and effective steps in the face of an ethical issue.

We look forward, if invited, to discussing such matters at any time with you. Furthermore, while interesting suggestions regarding key roles and relationships in government (for example from the

Public Policy Forum) touch on structure, we encourage your Government to reinforce ethical culture and aspirational standards by re-establishing the Public Service ethics champion function as soon as possible, with a mandate that includes reaching out to the wider community. As a lead organization in Canada on organizational ethics, we would be happy to meet with that champion to provide advice and support.

Ethical clarity and consistency are crucial for effective decision-making as well as for service to citizens, and leadership in organizational ethics by your government will have beneficial ripple effects throughout Canadian society.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert Czerny". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping 'C' at the beginning and a long, trailing 'y' at the end.

Robert Czerny, President,
Ethics Practitioners' Association of Canada
1485 Laperrière Avenue, Ottawa, ON, K1Z 7S8 –
Tel. 613-722-2273
<http://epac-apec.ca/>
service@epac-apec.ca