



## **Minister Vehviläinen: Tiitinen working group's proposals worth supporting**

Today I received the report on unified government from Seppo Tiitinen's working group. The group's work forms part of the key project on improving management and implementation, set out under the Government Programme.

Let me say straight away that the seeds for creating a more unified government were already in place during the previous government's term. A lot of work was done at that time, for instance in the Parliamentary Committee on the Structure of the Central Administration Reform Project, of which I was a member.

I would also like to emphasise that reforming the work of government is not a party political matter or dependent on the composition of the Government. Anyone concerned with efficient political decision-making and good governance should be ready to reform the work of government and of central government administration. In particular, actions for establishing a genuinely intersectoral approach are essential.

After more than a year's work, the Tiitinen working group came to the conclusion that Finland should not aim for the Swedish model of a single, integrated government authority that replaces independent ministries. Instead, the working group recommends various separate measures and close cooperation to ensure unified government. As I understand it, the working group's position is not to aim for structural and organisational changes but to enable unified government by means of meaningful and efficient cooperation among ministries.

Looking at the working group's proposals, I can highlight various ones that I am ready to support, right here. My support goes to encouraging greater mobility of public officials between ministries and, connected with this, the transfer to a uniform pay system. I also support the idea that, to assist in recruitment by the ministries, a joint government appointments board be established that would support the ministries, especially in assessing leadership skills during recruitment.

The Tiitinen working group proposes that the government plenary session could set up fixed-term bodies for managing extensive and demanding intersectoral matters. I warmly support this. I would emphasise, though, that this opportunity should be taken only after careful consideration, to ensure that it does not suffer overuse. Almost all ministerial groups are already engaged in extensive cooperation across ministerial boundaries.

The Tiitinen working group also expresses views in support of higher quality legislative drafting. I support the proposal that a separate post of Director of Legislative Affairs be set up in each ministry. I also consider there to be good justification for the working group's proposal to strengthen the legislative resources of the Ministry of Justice.

I hope that the working group's proposals will generate a lively discussion both ways among public officials and decision-makers, and among the general public.

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