



New
Direction

the foundation for european reform

GEOFFREY VAN ORDEN MEP

ENDING EXCESS 2: THE EXTRAVAGANCE CONTINUES!

ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY AND EFFICIENCY





NEW DIRECTION
The Foundation for European Reform

is a Brussels-based free market, euro-realist think-tank and publisher, established in 2010 under the patronage of Baroness Thatcher.

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In the pages of this Report are examples of some €430 million of savings that could be made from the Parliament's budget without the least effect on its primary purpose, which should be to represent the interests of our citizens in Brussels. We call on the Parliament's Bureau to explore our proposals and to set in train the necessary action to cut costs.

Our fundamental demand, however, is that the Parliament, along with the other EU institutions, should have a 10% cut in its budget imposed. We believe this is not only reasonable and necessary, but modest given the possibilities.



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Since 2011, the governments of EU member states have adopted painful austerity measures in order to reduce their budget deficits and national debts, but the European Parliament's extravagant spending has continued.

In this report, we identify a limited number of areas where the European Parliament has made some progress in reducing spending.

More significantly, **we highlight vast areas of increased expenditure, the unnecessary tasks that are being performed and the costs of the political role of the Parliament itself, quite separate from that of the MEPs.** It shows clearly that it is not the MEPs that cost the money but the Parliament's Secretariat: its inflated numbers, very generous salaries, burgeoning office buildings, and pursuit of a separate institutional agenda.

The budget of the European Parliament has risen from €1.57 billion in 2011 to €1.79 billion in 2015, an increase of some €224.45 million or 14.29%. The Secretariat has doubled in size in the last decade. It now employs 7,485 people, and occupies 65 buildings. The number of MEPs has remained fairly constant - currently 751.

Reducing the number of officials would enable the Parliament's real estate empire to shrink rather than endlessly expand. Over €170 million could be saved immediately by cancelling the construction, lease or renovation of four unnecessary buildings.

The largest and most costly department of the Secretariat is the Directorate General for Translation. Since our last report, some €16 million has been shaved off its costs without noticeable effect on customers. Reducing the number of working languages from 24 to a level similar to every other international institution would have no serious impact on the Parliament's work but would result in a massive cost saving.

The two most egregious examples of waste are the Parliament's 'second seat' at Strasbourg and the House of European History. Scrapping Strasbourg would save between €100 million and €200 million a year. The House of European History is costing over €56 million to set up - annual running costs are expected to be over €11 million a year.

Every year at least €80 million is spent on promoting the Parliament's role and the project of European integration. This figure includes the 'Information Offices' in each member state, the *Euroscola* scheme, visitors' groups, the *Parlamentarium* visitor centre, and EuroparlTV. In 2013-2014 another €18 million was spent on the Parliament's 'institutional information and communication campaign' for the European elections. A 'European Youth Event' costing at least €3 million is now held every other year.

In the pages of this Report are examples of some €430 million of savings that could be made from the Parliament's budget without the least effect on its primary purpose, which should be to represent the interests of our citizens in Brussels. We call on the Parliament's Bureau to explore our proposals and to set in train the necessary action to cut costs.

Our fundamental demand, however, is that the Parliament, along with the other EU institutions, should have a 10% cut in its budget imposed. We believe this is not only reasonable and necessary, but modest given the possibilities.

It has not been easy to acquire much of the information contained in this report. The target is constantly moving. I am most grateful for the assistance of James Day who has done much of the necessary research. The help of a number of officials has also been much appreciated.

This is a work in progress and comments, corrections and suggestions are most welcome to assist preparation of a future edition.

OUTCOMES?....normally
we just measure the height
of the files!



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THE OFFICIALS COST THE MONEY

It is the Secretariat of the Parliament that costs the money, not the MEPs. The Secretariat has an agenda and life of its own, often remote from the MEPs that it is supposed to serve. As part of a common 'European Civil Service,' its officials are closely intertwined with the European Commission, with the General Secretariat of the Council and with the External Action Service, to drive forward the process of European integration - 'ever closer union' - and to convince the general public of the benefits of this project. It was once remarked to me that the Parliament could get on perfectly well without the MEPs who arrived for a few days each week to disturb the harmony of its work. The fact that 9 so-called 'Green weeks' - when MEPs do not attend Brussels or Strasbourg - have been built into the proposed calendar for 2016, compared with 5 in 2015, may suggest a reduced workload. More likely, they suggest a desire by the officials to have more time to get on with their own thing without the nuisance of elected representatives turning up.

More officials means more offices and therefore more buildings. The Secretariat has doubled in size in the last decade; it now employs 7,485 people, and occupies 65 buildings. The number of MEPs has remained fairly constant - currently 751.

The largest number of officials continues to be in the translation service (1,190) and Directorate General of Communications (722). The principal costs are therefore in salaries and buildings, including the extravagant vanity project, the 'House of European History' at some €56 million start-up costs and projected running costs of €11.5 million a year.



THE NEED FOR RETRENCHMENT

Governments across Europe are still struggling to kick-start their economies and overcome massive burdens of debt. It is noticeable that there has been only a reluctant and minor reflection of the national cuts in public expenditure at the European level even though the European Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control has noted that the EU is in a situation 'of limitation of resources, caused by the economic and financial crisis.'¹

Clearly the continued need for governments and public bodies to economise has not changed and the revised EU Stability and Growth Pact that entered into force in December 2011 imposes financial sanctions on member states which fail to meet strict criteria for limiting debt and deficits.

Of its own accord, the British government has already cut £35 billion in spending and is expected to adopt further cuts of £55 billion by 2020.² France is proposing to reduce

its budget deficit from 4.4% in 2014 to 2.8% in 2017. Not unreasonably, many feel that the EU institutions should set an example of financial prudence. The British Prime Minister led the way in insisting on an EU budget cut and as a consequence commitment appropriations for the current 7-year period have been reduced by 3.4% to €960bn/£812bn or approximately €137 billion a year for overall EU expenditure. This was the first time in its history that a reduction in the EU budget had been achieved.

Germany is the largest net contributor to the budget with €13 billion. Ironically for a nation that is so sceptical about the EU project, and contrary to much received official opinion on the continent, the United Kingdom still remains the second largest net contributor with €8.2 billion. This is in spite of the 'rebate'.³

Our Report of October 2011⁴ focused on one European institution, the European Parliament, and identified major

areas of wasteful and unnecessary expenditure by the bureaucracy of the Parliament that could easily be reduced. Such cuts would have resulted in significant savings. But we find that the extravagance continues.

While only 1.3% of the overall EU budget is for the Parliament, nevertheless it represents a substantial amount - some €1.79 billion in 2015. This is five times the costs of the House of Commons.⁵ In our view, the European Parliament should set an example of frugality and efficiency among the EU institutions. Instead, it continues as a beacon of extravagance where it seems money is no object.

As the parliament's bureaucracy expands, there is some evidence that the core tasks of the Parliament have actually reduced over the years.⁶

It should be noted that the Eurobarometer survey during the 2014 European elections found that 66% of people had a negative or neutral image of the European Parliament, which in many cases was due to the costs associated with it.⁷ The January 2015 ComRes poll commissioned by New Direction showed that fewer than 1 in 5 people across 9 European countries felt that they benefited from EU membership. Some 60% of those in Germany, the UK and Italy thought their country should contribute less to the EU. In the Netherlands it was 70%.⁸

1. Opinion of the Committee on Budgetary Control for the Committee on Budgets on the Council position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2014, 3rd October 2013, section A
 2. S. Swinford, 'Colossal cuts' needed after General Election, warns IFS', The Daily Telegraph, 4th December 2014 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/autumn-statement/11273458/Colossal-cuts-needed-after-General-Election-warns-IFS.html>
 3. EU Budget 2013 data. Germany gross contribution €26 bn, gross receipts 13bn, net contribution €13 bn; UK gross contribution €14.5 bn, gross receipts 6.3bn, net contribution €8.2 bn; France gross contribution €21.8 bn, gross receipts €14.2 bn, net contribution €7.6bn. There are 6 other net contributors: Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Austria and Finland.
 4. 'Ending Excess: Cutting the Costs of the European Parliament', by Geoffrey

Van Orden MEP and Derk Jan Eppink MEP, published by New Direction-The Foundation for European Reform, 5 October 2011
 5. House of Commons Main Supply estimate for 2015-2016: £258.3 million.
 6. If you sum up all the procedures of each parliament (cooperation + co-decision + consultation + consent), the figures are the following: 1994-1999: 1.695; 1999-2004: 1.604; 2004-2009: 1.355; 2009-2014: 1.071. This suggests a constant decrease of the parliamentary workload. However, this is not borne out by the experience of MEPs over the past 10 years.
 7. Report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section I - European Parliament, Committee on Budgetary Control, 30th March 2015, section 31
 8. 'Public attitudes Towards the EU: Nine Market Survey,' 2 January 2015, ComRes and New Direction - the Foundation for European Reform.

HAS THE PENNY DROPPED?



Following our 2011 Report, there was some evidence that our message was understood and that there was a willingness to make at least some of the necessary economies. In the area of translation and interpretation, the adoption of 'resource-efficient full multilingualism' has produced substantial savings, although much more could be accomplished if the Parliament were not committed to the use of twenty-four working languages. The internalisation of security and IT support (ICT) has also cut costs, as have restrictions imposed on travel allowances. In March 2014, the Committee on Budgetary Control acknowledged the need to improve the efficiency of the Parliament, 'firstly by reducing Parliament's budget and secondly by allowing for the redeployment of resources to Parliament's new areas of intervention, notably to reinforce the scrutiny dimension over the Commission's implementation of the Union's policies.'¹

THE EXTRAVAGANCE CONTINUES

However, acceptance of the need for budget reductions proved short-lived and many areas were unaffected. The extravagance continues. This follow-up Report shows that the budget of the European Parliament has risen from €1.57 billion in 2011 to €1.79 billion in 2015, an increase of some €224.45 million or 14.29%. The Council and Commission have also increased their budgets by 6.90% and 12.45% respectively. The Parliament's 2016 budget is due to increase further, to €1.84 billion.²

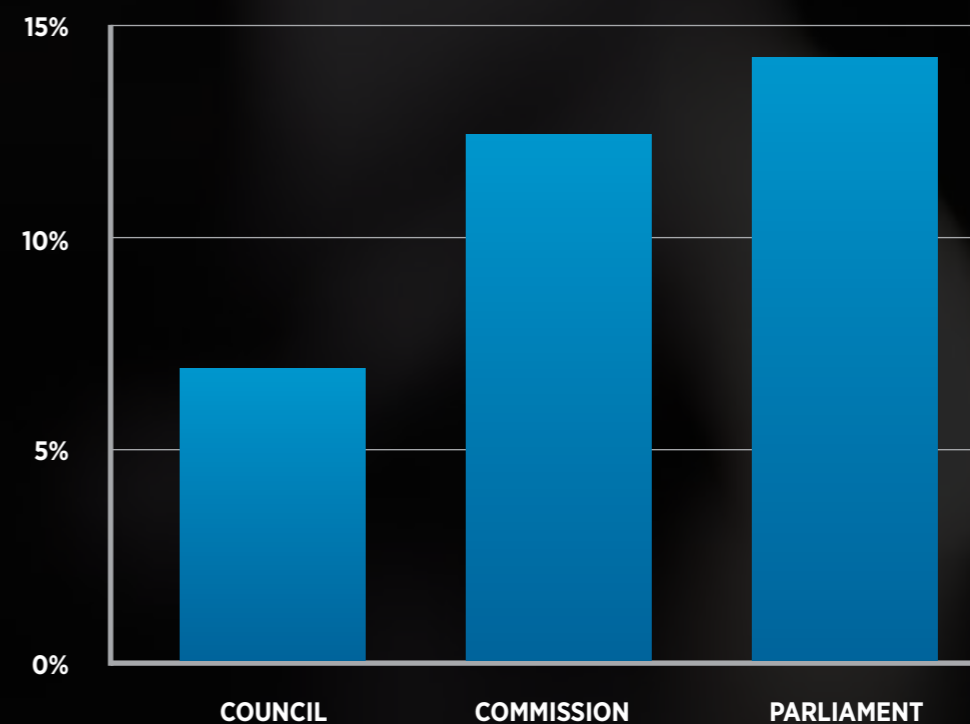
Budgetary constraint and willingness to cover new priorities by making savings in redundant areas have yet to be fully understood by the Parliament's Secretariat.

Extravagant spending continues unabated on inappropriate or superfluous activities. This includes the production of 'educational material,' the official purpose of which is to raise awareness of the Parliament's functions but which in practice amounts to propaganda to take forward the project of European integration. I can think of no other Parliament which expends such massive resources on the promotion of its own political programme.

There has been no success so far in putting a stop to the extremely wasteful 'Strasbourg circus' despite the fact that MEPs have repeatedly voted by large majorities in favour of a single seat. Unfortunately the decision is not in their hands as the requirement to hold 12 sessions a year in Strasbourg is engraved in the EU treaties. A change requires the unanimous agreement of 28 governments and it is easy to imagine at least one that might object.

Expenditure on buildings is inflated by the Parliament's maintenance of a network of 'information offices' in each of the member states, in spite of the role of elected MEPs. The embarrassingly expensive vanity project to build a 'House of European History,' whose purpose is to present the history of our continent in a way that justifies and explains the project of European integration, continues without hesitation. Funding of the Political Groups and the transnational European political parties has continued to grow. It is clear that further large-scale cuts could be made without compromising the essential functions of the Parliament.

Growth in budgets, 2011-2015



1. Report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2012, Section I – European

Parliament, Committee on Budgetary Control, 24th March 2014, section 58
2. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 27th April 2015, p. 13

AREAS WHERE SOME PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE

TRANSLATION

The largest and most costly department of the Secretariat is the Directorate General for Translation. Our report of October 2011 highlighted the enormous potential savings that could be made in this area.

Since then, the Bureau has adopted a number of measures designed to promote 'resource-efficient full multilingualism.' Expenditure on translation has been cut by reducing outsourcing and the amount of material that is automatically translated. The decision to end the systematic translation of written questions and verbatim minutes of the plenary in favour of an on-demand system has yielded an annual saving of €11 million on external translation.¹ Furthermore, new contracts for outsourced translation came into force on 1st January 2012, reducing the average price per page by 21% and saving over €2.6 million in 2012.² In May 2012, the Secretariat began 'pre-treating' documents prior to outsourcing, saving nearly €2.5 million in the second half of 2012.³ In addition, the Directorate-General for Translation's productivity grew by 17% from 1st January to 5th May 2013, with the result that

levels of outsourcing dropped from 33% to 27%.⁴ The budget for external translation fell from €24.99 million in 2011 to €7 million in 2014, before rising to €10 million in 2015.⁵ The Directorate-General for Translation lost a net total of 57 staff in 2011-2015, making it the only Directorate-General of the Secretariat to shrink in this period apart from the Directorate-General for the Presidency, many of whose responsibilities were transferred to the newly formed Directorate-Generals for Research and for Security.

In 2011-2014, the Directorate-General for Translation's budget fell from €27.31 million to €10.74 million. However, it then rose to €15.05 million in 2015.⁶ The Committee on Budgets has suggested that further savings could be achieved by having committee amendments translated only on request.⁷ Undoubtedly there is enormous scope for further major cuts.

It remains the case that documents and speeches have to be translated into all twenty-four official languages of the European Union. The Members' Statute, which took effect

'Resource-efficient full multilingualism' has saved large sums of money by reducing outsourcing and the amount of material that is translated automatically, and making more efficient use of interpreters' time.

However, translation and interpretation will remain expensive as long as the Parliament uses 24 working languages, far more than any other international parliamentary body.

Internalising security and ICT has cut spending, as have the new rules on travel expenses.

in 2009, specifies that: 'Any discrimination against any of the official languages should be ruled out. This principle should continue to apply after any enlargement of the European Union.'⁸ It goes on to say that 'Parliament's documents shall be translated into all the official languages' and that 'speeches shall be translated simultaneously into all the other official languages.'⁹

In preparation for Croatia's accession, a new Croatian Translation Unit was created with 27 translators and 11 assistants, while interpretation into Croatian required 10 interpreters and 9 assistants.¹⁰ Nonetheless, Parliament has made use of Rule 147, which allows exceptions when adequate numbers of linguists are unavailable, to maintain derogations from the provision of full Irish or Croatian interpretation and translation services, and a Maltese interpretation service.¹¹

INTERPRETATION

To limit interpretation costs, the Bureau decided in December 2011 in favour of stringency regarding the duration of evening meetings, a more even spread of committee meetings over the week, and a limit on the number of interpretation teams that could be provided at 16 per day. On 12th March 2012, a second decision limited delegations travelling during Committee weeks to interpretation into one language only. This decreased interpreters' days on mission by 23% in 2011-12. Interpreter days for external interpreters decreased by 31% as more missions took place outside committee weeks, enabling them to use staff interpreters. External interpretation costs as a share of the total Parliament budget fell from 3.5% in 2011 to 2.6% in 2012.¹² On 23rd March 2013, the Secretary-General reserved the Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons of committee weeks for trilogue and committee meetings, greatly enhancing the capacity for trilogues. As a result, the number of interpretation days provided by external freelance interpreters fell from 53,401 in 2011 to 46,684 in 2012.¹³ This is estimated to save €15 million a year on interpretation.¹⁴ Since 2010, an interpretation ad personam service has been made available to Vice-Presidents, Quaestors, Committee chairmen, political group coordinators, rapporteurs, shadow rapporteurs, and rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs of opinions, easing the consequences of the new restrictions on the number of meetings to be provided by the Directorate-General for Interpretation.¹⁵ However, late cancellations, which lead to money being wasted on interpretation services, are increasing; this cost €4,350,000 (7.6% of the interpretation budget) in 2011 and €5,480,000 (11.9%) in 2012.¹⁶ The total budget of the Directorate-General fell from €61.39 million in 2011 to €45.58 million in 2014, before increasing to €57.24 million in 2015.¹⁷

We should contrast the European Parliament's approach to translation and interpretation with other international institutions. The United Nations has 193 member states but only 6 working languages. NATO has 28 member states but just two working languages, English and French, and members of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly who choose to speak in another language are personally responsible for ensuring its interpretation into one of the official languages.¹⁸ The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, with members from 57 countries, has six working languages: English, French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish.¹⁹ The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has two official languages, English and French, in which its documents are published, and three additional working languages: German, Italian and Russian.²⁰

It is clear that reducing the number of working languages would have no serious impact on the Parliament's work; from September 2009 to February 2013, the six most commonly used languages - English, German, French, Italian, Polish and Spanish - together accounted for nearly three quarters (74.2%) of plenary minutes.²¹

1. Follow up on EP discharge of 2011, DV\1006657EN.doc, p. 10
 2. Information on the budgetary and the financial management of the European Parliament in 2012, p. 19
 3. Follow up on EP discharge of 2011, DV\1006657EN.doc, p. 10
 4. Follow up on EP discharge of 2011, DV\1006657EN.doc, p. 10
 5. 2013 and 2015 European Parliament budgets, 1 4 2 0
 6. DG TRAD budgets, 2013, 2014 and 2015
 7. Report on Parliament's estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year 2015, Committee on Budgets, 11th April 2014, section 20
 8. Decision of the European Parliament of 28th September 2005 adopting the Statute for Members of the European Parliament, Preamble, Article 8
 9. Members' Statute, Title 1, Article 7
 10. Information on the budgetary and the financial management of the European

Parliament in 2012, p. 10
 11. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 16th June 2014, p. 25
 12. Follow up on EP discharge of 2011, DV\1006657EN.doc, p. 11
 13. Information on the budgetary and the financial management of the European Parliament in 2012, p. 19
 14. Information on the budgetary and the financial management of the European Parliament in 2012, p. 17
 15. Information on the budgetary and the financial management of the European Parliament in 2012, p. 84
 16. Report on 'Towards more efficient and cost effective interpretation in the European Parliament,' Committee on Budgetary Control, 25th June 2013, PE 508.175v03-00, p. 6
 17. DG INTE budgets, 2013 and 2015

18. NATO Parliamentary Assembly Rules of Procedure, p. 22, accessed 19th February 2014 <http://www.nato-pa.int/Default.asp?SHORTCUT=2999>
 19. OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Rules of Procedure, p. 18, accessed 19th February 2014 <http://www.oscepa.org/publications/rules-of-procedure/1832-rules-of-procedure-english/file>
 20. PACE Rules of Procedure, accessed 19th February 2014 http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/RoP/RoP-XML2HTML-EN.asp?id=ENToc_N0A29C3B0N0A318360#Format-It
 21. Report on 'Towards more efficient and cost effective interpretation in the European Parliament,' Committee on Budgetary Control, 25th June 2013, PE 508.175v03-00, Annex 1



INSOURCING OF SECURITY AND ICT

TRAVEL EXPENSES

Counter-intuitively, it seems that running services 'in-house' is cheaper than out-sourcing. At this stage it is not clear if all costs, including for example, pension liabilities are taken into consideration. The new Directorate-General for Security and Safety began operating in 2014 and internalisation of security at Brussels and Strasbourg is expected to be completed in 2015. To this end, 80 contract staff posts were created in 2013 and another 180 in 2014.¹ Internalisation of security is anticipated to reduce costs by €11,250,000 in 2013-16 and €5,640,000 thereafter.² The 2015 budget for security was €10.89 million lower than in 2013, a 35% decrease.³ However, in March 2015 the Secretary-General told the Bureau that: 'due to the changed security situation in

Europe in general, and Belgium in particular, Parliament will urgently need to improve its internal and external security infrastructure and enhance cybersecurity in order to reduce Parliament's vulnerability in this field.'⁴ The 2016 budget is to include €15 million to be spent on improvements in security and cybersecurity.⁵ Twenty-five posts - 5 administrators and 20 assistants - are to be created in order to strengthen security.⁶

ICT services are also being internalised, which entails creating 60 permanent posts in 2013-14; this is expected to be revenue neutral due to the ensuing reduction in spending on external service providers.⁷ The budget for ICT fell from €119.55 million in 2012 to €115.18 million in 2015.⁸

In September 2012, the Bureau adopted a proposal for members' and officials' travel expenses to be reduced by 5%,⁹ to be accomplished by restricting reimbursement for business class travel to tariff class D, use of economy class for short distance flights and of the cheapest fare suggested by the travel agency, discontinuation of the second intermediate journey during ordinary working weeks and the first intermediate journey during constituency weeks, closure of the attendance register on Fridays during constituency weeks, discounting distance travelled by car in excess of 1,000 km per single journey when calculating reimbursement, obligatory pre-reservation and car-sharing to improve the efficiency of the shuttle service, and freezing of travel and subsistence allowances at 2011 levels.¹⁰ This

led to €1.6 million of savings in 2012 (as a result of the non-indexation of travel and subsistence allowances) and €4 million in 2013.¹¹ Furthermore, the Committee on Budgetary Control has called for the Parliament to reimburse only the cost of economy class tickets for MEPs' travel within Europe.¹² However, the savings from the reductions in travel expenditure are to be used 'to finance new initiatives' rather than to reduce the cost of the Parliament to taxpayers.¹³

In December 2014, the Bureau decided to restore the indexation of members' travel and daily subsistence allowances, which therefore rose by 0.5% from 1st January.¹⁴ The budget for MEPs' travel rose from €74.32 million in 2011 to €78.65 million in 2015.¹⁵

1. Information on the budgetary and the financial management of the European Parliament in 2012, p. 16
 2. Report on discharge in respect of the 2011 budget, Committee on Budgetary Control, 21st March 2013, section 57
 3. 2015 budget of the European Parliament, 2 0 2 6
 4. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 9th March 2015, p. 14
 5. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 27th April 2015, p. 11

6. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 9th March 2014, p. 19
 7. Information on the budgetary and the financial management of the European Parliament in 2012, p. 16
 8. 2014 and 2015 budgets of the European Parliament, 2 1 0
 9. Information on the budgetary and the financial management of the European Parliament in 2012, p. 15
 10. Information on the budgetary and the financial management of the European

Parliament in 2012, p. 53
 11. Information on the budgetary and the financial management of the European Parliament in 2012, p. 18 and Report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section I - European Parliament, Committee on Budgetary Control, 30th March 2015, section 47
 12. Report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget

of the European Union for the financial year 2012, Section I - European Parliament, Committee on Budgetary Control, 24th March 2014, section 101
 13. Information on the budgetary and the financial management of the European Parliament in 2012, p. 17
 14. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 15th December 2014, p. 20
 15. 2013 and 2015 budgets of the European Parliament, 1 0 0 4 and 1 0 0 5



AREAS OF CONTINUED WASTEFUL SPENDING

PUBLICITY AND INFORMATION

In 2015, the Directorate-General for Communication has 722 personnel, an increase of 98 over 2011. Its budget peaked at €106.7 million in 2013, a 45% increase since 2011.

Grants The multi-annual grants programme aimed at raising awareness of the Parliament's role cost €14.5 million in 2012-2014; the Committee on Budgetary Control has expressed doubts as to whether the programme represents a core task of the Parliament, and called for it to be subject to an external evaluation.¹

Visitors' Groups Official visitors sponsored by MEPs or the Directorate-General for Communication can have their travel, accommodation and meal expenses reimbursed by the Parliament.² There are approximately 2,000 visitors' groups per year, and around 15% (325 in 2010, 332 in 2011, and 365 in 2012) receive more than €15,000 in reimbursements.³ Furthermore, a majority of visitors' groups - 73% in 2013 - received their reimbursements

in cash rather than by bank transfer, creating what the Committee on Budgetary Control describes as a 'high reputational risk' and 'significant security risk' for the Parliament. The Court of Auditors also says that cash reimbursements are a 'high risk concern.'⁴ The cost of official visits and the Euroscola programme, under which students from across Europe spend a day at the Parliament in Strasbourg, rose by 16.70% in 2011-15, from €27.20 million to €31.74 million.⁵

Youth events In May 2014, the Parliament held a 'European Youth Event' in Strasbourg, hosting 5,000 people at an anticipated cost of some €7 million, including €4 million in surplus funds left over from other commitments.⁶ Subsequently, the Bureau decided that the European Youth Event should take place regularly 'in the framework of an open and continuous two-way communication strategy with young people' and decided to hold another in 2016.⁷ A budget of up to €3 million will be available to fund

the event.⁸ The Parliament has called on the Bureau to commission an independent evaluation of the first European Youth Event before organising another one.⁹

The Parliamentarium The costs of the Parliamentarium, the visitors' centre at the Parliament's seat in Brussels, more than doubled in 2011-14, rising from €2.47 million to €4.98 million, before falling to €4.15 million in 2015.¹⁰ In 2013 all Parliamentarium content had to be additionally translated into Croatian.¹¹ According to the Secretary-General in his 2013 report on the future of the Parliament, the Parliamentarium 'does not limit itself to a technical description of Parliament's functioning, but explains the historical background of European integration, from the darkest hours of European history.'¹²

House of European History The Parliament has commissioned the construction of a House of European History to 'convey a trans-national overview of European history.'¹³ It is to depict 'the process of

European integration as a means of combating nationalism and safeguarding peace in Europe'¹⁴ and 'the European Union's ambitious undertaking in successfully harnessing the destructive forces inherent in all nation states at all times.'¹⁵ Projected costs for the House of European History include €31.4 million for construction, €15.4 million for fitting out, €6 million for multilingual arrangements and €3.75 million for the collection, making a total of €56.55 million for preparation followed by anticipated annual running costs of €11.5 million.¹⁶ Running costs prior to opening include €1.9 million per annum for staff working

on the project and €0.7 million per annum for maintenance in between the completion of the building and the opening of the exhibition.¹⁷ Since 2014, the Commission provides €800,000 of funding per year.¹⁸ In 2014, this was expected to reduce the Parliament's expenditure on running costs such as staffing, security and utilities by 30%, and make

it possible to keep the museum open seven days a week, but did not offset the set-up costs.¹⁹ The House of European History is currently scheduled to open by summer 2016.²⁰

Information Offices There are now 29 information offices (one in the capital city of each member state plus one in Strasbourg).²¹ Britain, Spain, France, Italy, Germany and Poland each have one Regional Office as well as Information Offices. The Information Offices and Regional Offices employed 227 staff as of 2013,²² while the European Parliament Liaison Office in Washington has another 19. The Directorate-General for Communication employs an additional 32 people to run the information offices, in the Coordination and

Programming Unit, Horizontal and Thematic Monitoring Unit and Support Unit for Information Offices.²³ In 2012, the last year for which figures are available, all the information offices and regional offices combined cost €37.99 million.²⁴ The Washington Liaison Office cost €1.9 million.²⁵ Costs presumably increased in 2013, since the lease on an additional information office in Zagreb was signed in November 2012.²⁶ In addition, a new Europe House was purchased in Sofia in 2013 at a cost of €8.59 million.²⁷ In 2013, mission expenses by Information Office staff totalled €1.84 million.²⁸

The Directorate-General for Communication, responsible for information and publicity, has more than 700 staff and an annual budget of over €100 million.

The Parliament spent €14.5 million over three years on multi-annual grants to raise awareness of its role.

The Parliamentarium costs nearly €5 million a year, the 2014 'information and communication campaign' cost nearly €18 million, and the House of European History is expected to cost €56.55 million to build and equip and €11.5 million to run every year.

The Directorate-General for Communication also maintains 35 Information Offices and Regional Offices throughout the EU, at a cost of €38 million in 2012.

The Secretariat's European Added Value Unit uses public money to campaign for further European integration across various policy areas.

The enormously wasteful practice of maintaining two seats, at Strasbourg and Brussels, continues.

Parliamentary delegations are expensive to administer and often inefficient.

1. Report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section I - European Parliament, Committee on Budgetary Control, 30th March 2015, section 54
2. Rules governing the reception of groups of visitors, Bureau decision of 16th December 2002, PE 422.557/BUR
3. Information on the budgetary and the financial management of the European Parliament in 2012, p. 37
4. Report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section I - European Parliament, Committee on Budgetary Control, 30th March 2015, section 48
5. 2014 and 2013 budgets of the European Parliament, 3 2 4 4
6. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 1st July 2013, p. 13
7. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 12th January 2015, p. 13
8. Query to DG COMM, 19th June 2015

9. European Parliament resolution of 29 April 2015 on Parliament's estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year 2016, 29th April 2015, Section 31
10. 2014 European Parliament budget, 3 2 4 3
11. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 12th December 2012, p. 28
12. 'Preparing for complexity: European Parliament in 2025', Secretary-General of the European Parliament, 9th April 2013, p. 10 <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/the-secretary-general/resource/static/files/2013/Preparing%20for%20Complexity%20-%20EP%20in%202025%20-%20Going%20global,%20going%20local,%20going%20digital%20-%20Final%20report%20by%20SG.pdf>
13. 'House of European History', accessed 25th February 2014 <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/visiting/en/visits/historyhouse.html>
14. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 22nd October 2012, p. 13
15. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 10th March 2014, p. 12
16. House of European History business plan, pp. 25-6

17. Query to DG INLO, 9th October 2014
18. Report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section I - European Parliament, Committee on Budgetary Control, 30th March 2015, section 67
19. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 9th September 2013, p. 15, Report on discharge in respect of the 2011 budget, Committee on Budgetary Control, 21st March 2013, section 68, and Draft report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2012, section 1 - European Parliament, Committee on Budgetary Control, 31st January 2014, p. 18
20. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 9th February 2015, p. 13
21. EP Information Offices: the complete list, European Parliament, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/information_offices.html
22. Query to DG COMM, 19th February 2014

23. EP Directory: Directorate for Information Offices, accessed 29th January 2014 http://www.epintranet.ep.parl.union.eu/intranet/ep/content/epdir_search?action=structureComposition&node=04B&withoutType=EXTERNAL&service=04B
24. Annexes to responses to the discharge questionnaire 2012, Annex 2, p. 30
25. Information on the budgetary and the financial management of the European Parliament in 2012, section 34, p. 33
26. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 19th November 2012, p. 14
27. Information on the budgetary and the financial management of the European Parliament in 2012, p. 47
28. Report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section I - European Parliament, Committee on Budgetary Control, 30th March 2015, section 64



The VoxBox in the Altiero Spinelli building

EuroparITV In 2012, the Committee on Budgetary Control reported that EuroparITV ‘cannot be considered a success story in view of its very low number of direct individual users’ and that ‘further subsidy cannot be justified,’ and therefore called on the Secretary-General to present proposals for its closure.¹ Since then, its budget has fallen from €8 million in 2013 to €5 million in 2014 and 2015.² Simultaneously, EuroparITV has been overhauled to make it more appealing and cost-effective, including by increased distribution of content via social media, co-operation with television channels in member states, and phasing out of unsuccessful programmes.³ This has led to a substantial increase in audience numbers, with the average number of videos watched per month rising from 53,000 in 2012 to 824,000 in 2014.⁴

Lux Prize The European Parliament Cinema Prize, or Lux Prize, is awarded annually to films which ‘contribute to building a stronger European identity.’ In 2014, €455,000 was allocated for the prize. This marks a reduction of €140,000 since 2011, achieved through cutting costs related to promotional activities. However, the Committee on Budgetary Control noted in 2014 that ‘prizes are not a

core activity of Parliament’ and called for a cost-benefit analysis before any more are introduced.⁵ It reiterated this stance in 2015, and also called for the Parliament to ‘reconsider the continuation of the Prize,’ as well as a survey of Members to determine ‘how, if at all, it is viewed in their respective Member States.’⁶

Election campaign The Parliament’s ‘institutional information and communication campaign’ for the 2014 elections, which began in September 2013 and continued until the inauguration of the new Commission, cost €17.8 million, paid for out of the 2013 and 2014 budgets.⁷ The Parliament was assisted with the running of the campaign by an external communications agency, Ogilvy Group Brussels, which was responsible for producing ‘a situational assessment, a segmentation proposal to ensure effective targeting, a creative concept and the roadmap for the campaign itself.’ The campaign was conducted in all 24 official languages of the EU including, for the first time, Gaelic. In July 2012, the Bureau adopted the Secretary-General’s ‘political guidelines for the institutional information and communication campaign’ despite objections that no national parliament in the EU conducts

its own election campaign, and that Parliament’s campaign prior to the elections should not go beyond providing citizens with neutral information about their rights.⁸

Although supposedly politically neutral, the guidelines for the campaign describe European integration as an ‘undeniable success story’ and state that ‘we need to communicate that the answer to existing challenges capable of countering the negative effects of globalisation is ‘more Europe’ not ‘less Europe.’⁹ They go on to warn that: ‘particular attention needs to be paid to the countries that have experienced a surge in euroscepticism.’¹⁰ One of the messages of the campaign was that ‘being part of the European integration process helps member states to solve problems that go far beyond national borders.’¹¹

More than two million Parliament leaflets were printed by the Commission.¹² Despite these extensive preparations, and the President of Parliament’s claim that ‘the elections campaign was a very successful one,’¹³ turnout declined slightly, from 42.97% in 2009 to 42.61% in 2014, the lowest level ever.¹⁴ After the elections, the campaign was supposed to include a ceremony for the inauguration of

the new Commission at a cost of €800,000, which was cancelled in response to pressure from MEPs.¹⁵

VoxBox In preparation for the elections and the appointment of a new Commission, the Directorate-General for Communication commissioned the refurbishment of the VoxBox radio studio in the Altiero Spinelli building, and the construction of an adjoining television studio, at a total cost of €1.99 million; the €1.2 million set-up costs are expected to be paid back over a period of five years.¹⁶

Added Value Unit The Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services has a European Added Value Unit, responsible for producing ‘cost of non-Europe reports’ which make the case for further European integration across various policy areas. These reports make arguments which are premised on political judgements; for example, the one on defence states that: ‘Duplication could be perhaps considered an ‘acceptable’ price to pay for national sovereignty when budgets were large enough to permit wastage. The current pressure on public finances in all EU Member States makes this position no longer tenable.’¹⁷

1. Report on Discharge in respect of the 2010 budget, Committee on Budgetary Control, 10th April 2012, PE 473.917v02-00, section 54 <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bREPORT%2bA7-2012-0120%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bVO%2f%2fEN&language=EN>
2. 2014 and 2015 European Parliament budgets, 3 2 4 6
3. Follow up on EP discharge of 2011, DV\1006657EN.doc, p. 18
4. Query to DG COMM, 19th June 2015

5. Report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2012, Section I – European Parliament, Committee on Budgetary Control, 24th March 2014, section 40
6. Report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section I – European Parliament, Committee on Budgetary Control, 30th March 2015, sections 60 and 63
7. Report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget

of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section I – European Parliament, Committee on Budgetary Control, 30th March 2015, section 29
8. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 2nd July 2012, p. 16
9. Campaign guidelines, p. 3
10. Campaign guidelines, p. 5
11. Campaign guidelines, p. 6
12. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 14th April 2014, p. 20

13. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 16th June 2014, p. 34
14. 2014 European elections desk research, DG COMM, April 2015, p. 3
15. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 15th September 2014, p. 11
16. Query to DG COMM, 05-03-2014
17. Cost of Non-Europe Report: European Common Security and Defence Policy, PE 494.466, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/JOIN/2013/494466/IPOL-JOIN_ET\(2013\)494466_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/JOIN/2013/494466/IPOL-JOIN_ET(2013)494466_EN.pdf)



STRASBOURG

PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

The Secretary-General estimates that at 2014 prices, abolishing the Strasbourg seat would save €102.9 million annually.¹ A July 2014 report by the European Court of Auditors estimates the annual saving at €113.8 million, as well as a one-off net saving of €616 million if the Parliament's buildings in Strasbourg were successfully divested, assuming that the buildings would have to be maintained for a further two years and that 50 staff would be moved from Strasbourg to Brussels.² If the buildings could not be divested, disposing of the Strasbourg seat would involve a one-off net cost of €40.1 million. The report by British Conservative MEP Ashley Fox and German Green MEP Gerald Häfner, calling for a single-seat Parliament, was adopted by 483 votes to 141 in November 2013. It argues that the annual amortisation cost of the Parliament's buildings in Strasbourg and the cost of unused floor space need to be taken into account.³ This would bring the total annual cost

of the 'Strasbourg circus' to €156 million, on the basis of the figures provided by the Secretary-General. The Joint Working Group of the Bureau and Budget Committee estimates the overall annual cost at between €169 million and €204 million.⁴

As of January 2013 there were 98 staff based in Strasbourg, most of them employed in the information office or the services responsible for supervising the buildings.⁵ According to the Secretary-General, abolishing the Strasbourg seat and the Luxembourg place of work would enable the elimination of 108 posts in the Secretariat (no estimate is provided of the effect on personnel of abolishing only the Strasbourg seat).⁶ Strasbourg also accounts for 10,235 tonnes (10.67%) of the Parliament's carbon emissions.⁷ The expansion of videoconferencing facilities contributed to the reduction in the number of missions to Strasbourg, which was 5.6% lower in 2012 than in 2011.⁸

The Parliament has 39 delegations, responsible for inter-parliamentary relations with third countries, regions, and other international organisations. In general, they hold one or two meetings per year, with the venue alternating between the Parliament and the partner country or grouping.⁹ According to the Secretary-General's report, 'we are entertaining the same intensity of relations with everybody, the purpose of which is not always clear.'¹⁰ In particular he notes that there is no variation of the intensity of contact according to need, experts on countries and issues are not brought together, some delegations are too big to be effective, and the costs often exceed the specified limits.

Delegations are entitled to translation services in two official languages, and Parliament also provides a translation service for the ACP-EU, Euro-Mediterranean and EU-Latin American Parliamentary Assemblies.¹¹

MEPs who travel on delegation missions are eligible for reimbursement of their travel expenses. In 2012, inter-parliamentary delegations outside the EU cost €2,514,269, an average of €47,439 per delegation.¹² Committee delegations outside the EU cost €1,563,603, an average of €31,910 per delegation.¹³ One parliamentary delegation in 2013 cost €493,000; total expenditure that year on delegations and electoral observation missions was €5.79 million.¹⁴ Directorate B of DG EXPO, which is responsible for providing secretariats for EP delegations, employed 74 staff to do so as of 2014.

To reduce costs, the regulations proposed by the Secretary-General should be adopted: these include limiting delegation bureaux to one trip per year, with no more accompanying staff than there are MEPs.

1. Information on the budgetary and the financial management of the European Parliament in 2012, p. 42
 2. 'Analysis of potential savings to the EU budget if the European Parliament centralised its operations', European Court of Auditors, 11th July 2014 http://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/PL1407_LETTER/PL1407_LETTER_EN.pdf
 3. European Parliament resolution of 20th November 2013, 'The location of the seats of the European Union's institutions', P7_TA-PROV(2013)0498, section O

4. Opinion of the Committee on Budgets for the Committee on Constitutional Affairs on the location of the seats of the European Union's institutions, 2012/2308(INI), 27th September 2013, section C
 5. 'Analysis of potential savings to the EU budget if the European Parliament centralised its operations', p. 5
 6. 'The three places of work of the European Parliament', annexes to responses to the discharge questionnaire, 2012, p. 12

7. 'The three places of work of the European Parliament', annexes to responses to the discharge questionnaire, 2012, p. 19
 8. Query to DG ITEC, 19th February 2014
 9. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 13th January 2014, p. 23
 10. 'Preparing for complexity: European Parliament in 2025', p. 8
 11. Code of Conduct on Multilingualism, PE 413.599/BUR, 13.2

12. Information on the budgetary and the financial management of the European Parliament in 2012, p. 72
 13. Information on the budgetary and the financial management of the European Parliament in 2012, p. 73
 14. Report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section I – European Parliament, Committee on Budgetary Control, 30th March 2015, section 52

THE MAJOR AREAS OF INCREASED SPENDING

THE SECRETARIAT

The size of the Parliament's Secretariat has increased significantly year on year while the number of MEPs has remained more or less static.

Year	Total Number of staff	(Number of Administrators)
2011	6,239	(2,432)
2012	6,395	(2,500)
2013	6,690	(2,615)
2014	6,896	(2,750)
2015	7,485	(2,813)

In 2013, during the last revision of the Staff Regulations, the Parliament, Commission and Council decided to reduce staff numbers by 5% over five years and increase working hours from 37.5 to 40 per week during the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework.¹ The Commission is supposed to remove 1,254 positions from its establishment plan by 2017. However, the Parliament's Secretariat grew by 657 people or 10.53% over the period 2011-2014, more than any other institution:²

Institution	Change in staff numbers, 2011-2014	Percentage change
Parliament Secretariat	+657	+10.53%
Commission	+240	+0.73%
External Action Service	+229	+8.34%
Council Secretariat	-72	-2.48%

Even if the Parliament did reduce its number of officials by 5%, there would still be more Secretariat employees than there were in 2014. As can be seen in the above table, staff numbers have continued to grow steadily since the first Ending Excess report was published. Annual 1% staff reductions begun in 2013 were offset by the addition of 322 staff due to the accession of Croatia

to the EU.³ Furthermore, Parliament's officials are paid very generously; as of 2015, over 1,500 earned more than MEPs.⁴ The staff budget was €748.16 million in 2015, a €74.42 million (11.05%) increase since 2011.⁵ The 2015 budget provides for the removal of 47 posts in accordance with the commitment to a 5% staff reduction, but will also convert fifteen positions

Directorate-General or unit title	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Change 2011-2015
DG Presidency	618	642	717	379	341	-277
DG Internal Policies	448	491	544	520	529	+81
DG External Policies	196	219	235	235	228	+32
DG Communication	624	652	659	705	722	+98
DG Personnel	396	407	416	410	442	+46
DG Infrastructure and Logistics	509	541	571	576	625	+116
DG Translation	1,247	1,228	1,216	1,204	1,190	-57
DG Interpretation and Conferences	492	503	518	530	520	+28
DG Finance	190	190	186	188	204	+14
DG Innovation and Technical Support	434	432	446	451	507	+73
DG Safety	Not yet established			249	614	+614
DG Parliamentary Research Services	Not yet established			210	292	+292
Staff Committee	9	14	16	14	14	+5
President's Office	40	39	39	41	35	-5
Vice Presidents' Secretariat	18		19	19	19	+1
Quaestors' Secretariat	5	5	5	5	5	-
Office of the Secretary-General	66	68	76	76	85	+19
Directorate for Relations with Political Groups	14	5	11	20	10	-4
Legal Service	86	91	103	105	110	+24
Secretariats of the Political Groups	847	868	913	959	960	+113
Office of the Deputy Secretary-General	Not yet established				33	+33
Total	6,239	6,395	6,690	6,896	7,485	+1,246

from assistants to administrators in order to facilitate redeployment, thereby further increasing staff costs.⁶ In 2016, 57 posts are to be abolished, giving rise to €1.8 million in savings, and another two are to be transferred to the Commission.⁷ However, another 48 posts are to be created: 25 in the Directorate-General for Security (see above), 3 (all assistants) to help with

the management of parliamentary assistance, and 20 (14 administrators and 6 assistants) in the secretariats of the committees that deal with delegated and implementing acts (Economic and Monetary Affairs, Environment, Industry, Transport, and Justice and Home Affairs). A further eight positions will be converted from assistants to administrators.⁸

The size of the Secretariat has almost doubled since 2004, adding 3,899 employees.

More and more officials are employed in directorates whose work advances European integration, regardless of the wishes of MEPs.

Fewer than 10% of Secretariat officials are directly engaged in supporting MEPs as committee or delegation staff.

The Parliament currently occupies 65 buildings, at a total cost of €190 million a year.

Another six large-scale building projects, with a combined cost of over €644 million, are under way or due to begin soon.

Efficiency savings elsewhere often finance increases in the construction budget.

European political parties, groups and foundations together cost over €100 million in 2015.

The 'federalisation' of MEPs, who now receive their salaries from the EU rather than from their national governments, has drastically increased costs.

The Parliament's restaurants operate at a loss - over €4 million in 2014.

Over €100 million per year is spent on computers and other technical equipment.

1. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 9th September 2013, p. 16
2. Written questions to the Commission, External Action Service and Council Secretariat, submitted 13th October 2014

3. Answer to written question submitted 30th October 2014
4. Pay scales in Staff Regulations, Article 66, and staff numbers from DG PERS, 'staff numbers for 2015', accessed 22nd June 2015 <http://persweb.ep.parl>.

5. union.eu/statistics/data/TabEffectis/TE2015_Final-vote-decembre_2014.pdf
6. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 24th February 2014, p. 12

7. European Parliament resolution of 29 April 2015 on Parliament's estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year 2016, section 36
8. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 9th March 2015, p. 19



The Trebel building under construction.

Currently the Parliament occupies 16 buildings in Brussels (6 owned, 6 leased, 4 rented), 8 in Luxembourg (1 owned, 7 rented), 4 in Strasbourg (all owned) and 37 elsewhere (35 information offices and regional offices, Jean Monnet's house and the European Parliament Liaison Office in Washington, DC). In the three places of work together, the Parliament occupies 1.1 million square metres of floor space, of which it owns 81%.¹⁸ In 2010, the Bureau adopted a new buildings policy which specified that the Parliament would purchase buildings rather than leasing or renting them.¹⁹ However, this is expected to lead to rising costs in the future due to the need to cope with ageing buildings.²⁰

The Bureau also decided to obtain 30-35,000 m² of additional office space for the Secretariat, Groups, Members and their assistants.²¹ According to the President of Parliament, the extra space was needed partly because fifteen more MEPs were elected in 2014 than in 2009, due to the Treaty of Lisbon's coming into force and the admission of Croatia. Furthermore, after the 2014 elections, without consultation, members were provided with more office space in order to ensure that no office holds more than two members of staff, apparently in order to conform with Belgian regulations.²²

The Directorate-General for Infrastructure and Logistics, which implements the Parliament's buildings policy, has grown more since 2011 than any other unit of the Secretariat except for the newly created Directorates-General.

The budget for 'acquisition of expertise' by the Parliament rose from €7.59 million in 2011 to €18.06 million in 2015.⁹ The Directorates-General for Internal and External Policies, which are responsible for procuring outside expertise to advise the Parliament's delegations and committees, spent €6.53 million on acquisition of expertise in 2011, an amount which rose to €7.1 million in 2015, even though the Multiannual Financial Framework was completed in 2013.¹⁰ A budget is allocated for acquisition of expertise and then as many studies as necessary are commissioned in order to use it up. In 2015, €9.11 million has been budgeted for acquisition of expertise by the Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services.¹¹ A further €1.3 million is to be spent on acquisition of expertise by the Parliament's administration, €450,000 on security-related acquisition of expertise, and €107,000 on acquisition of expertise for the eco-management and audit scheme.¹² This process is self-generated and devoid of input from MEPs.

The Parliament's Secretariat should not act as an executive agency and duplicate the work of the Commission, so bodies like the Directorate-General for External Policies' Directorate for Democracy Promotion ought to be scrapped. Cutting spending on publicity and construction should make it possible to reverse the growth of the Directorates-General for Communication and for Infrastructure and Logistics. In particular, doing away with the European Parliament Information Offices should enable the Directorate-General for Communication to dispense with over 200 staff.

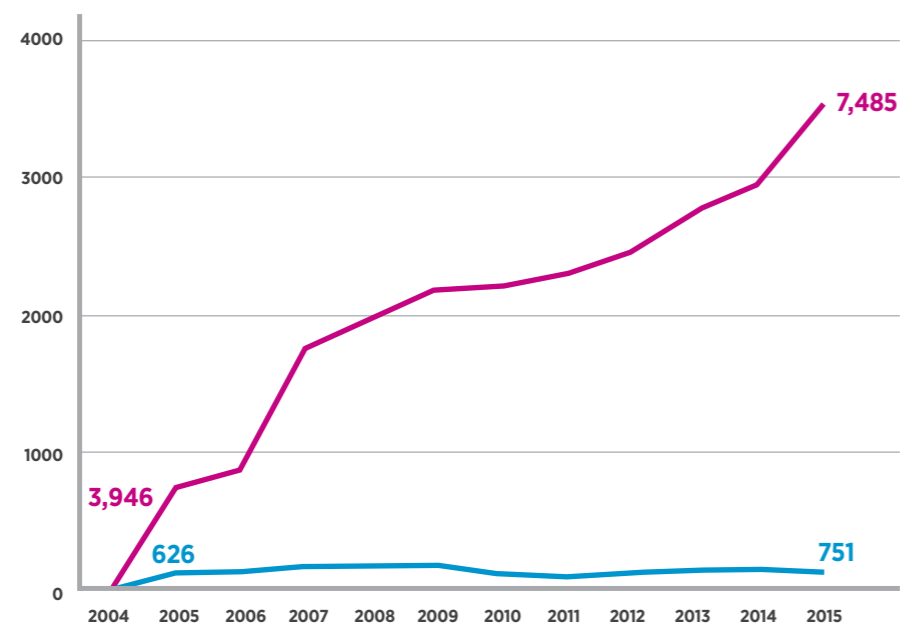
By contrast with the European Parliament, in the financial year 2014-2015 the British House of Commons had only 1,817 staff, and total staff costs were £84.814 million, or €115.17 million.¹³ As of 31st December 2011, the German Bundestag had 2,819 full time staff, costing €182.8 million.¹⁴ The personnel costs of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly's International Secretariat totalled only €2.75 million in 2014,¹⁵ and it has just 27 staff to meet the needs of 257 members, a ratio of nearly ten members to every employee, while the European Parliament's Secretariat has almost ten officials for every MEP. No NATO Parliamentary Assembly committee has more than two staff, and many committee staff members also have other responsibilities. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's International Secretariat has 26 staff,¹⁶ and the Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has around 90.¹⁷

That the Directorate-Generals for Internal and External Policies remain so much larger than they were in 2011 suggests that additional committee staff, taken on to help draw up the next Multiannual Financial Framework, remain on the books. Furthermore, the four directorates of the Directorate-General for Internal Policies that provide committee staff have their own 'policy departments' or 'think tanks,' with 84 staff between them as of 2014. The 'internal think tank' of the Directorate-General for External Policies employed 37 staff in 2014. Based on the 2014 figures, the workforce of the Directorate-General for Internal Policies could be reduced by 192 if its activities were restricted to its core function of providing staff to committees, and another 37 could be cut if the number of staff attached to each committee was capped at 20. Removing the non-committee functions of the Directorate-General for External Policies would make it possible to cut 141 staff.

and European Added Value) was created in July 2011; it evaluates Commission proposals, assesses the value of potential Parliamentary legislative proposals, and produces 'cost of non-Europe reports' (see above).³ According to the Committee on Budgetary Control, its creation was budgetary neutral,⁴ though the budget for European Added Value and Impact Assessment within the Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services rose from €629,000 in 2012 to €1 million in 2015.⁵ In April 2012, the Directorate-General for External Policies gained a Directorate D for Democracy Promotion (set up in a budget-neutral manner through redeployment), which works with new and emerging democracies.⁶ This includes the European Parliament Mediation Support Service, Office for Promotion of Parliamentary Democracy, Pre-Accession Actions Unit, Human Rights Actions Unit and Election Observation

Change in numbers of MEPs and officials since 2004

- Cumulative growth in number of MEPs
- Cumulative growth in number of officials



Drivers of the growth of the Secretariat include the accession of new member states, the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, and the enlargement of the Directorate-General for Infrastructure and Logistics to implement the Parliament's buildings strategy, which accounted for the addition of 106 positions in 2012. Furthermore, the internalisation of security and ICT led to the creation of 240 and 60 posts respectively in 2013-14.¹ Directorates for human resources management have been set up in nine Directorate-Generals.² The Directorate for Impact Assessment (now the Directorate for Impact Assessment

Unit. The Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services was created on 1st November 2013 'with a view to improving independent scrutiny advice given to parliamentary bodies and members.'⁷ It took over the library from the Directorate-General for the Presidency and the Impact Assessment directorate from the Directorate-General for Internal Policies. In 2015, it absorbed 80 staff from the translation units of the Economic and Social Committee and Committee of the Regions.⁸ In 2014 the Office of the Deputy Secretary-General was set up, with 33 staff.

1. Information on the budgetary and the financial management of the European Parliament in 2012, p. 16
 2. Information on the budgetary and the financial management of the European Parliament in 2012, p. 15
 3. Information on the budgetary and the financial management of the European Parliament in 2012, p. 6 <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201401/20140115ATT77482/20140115ATT77482EN.pdf>
 4. Report on discharge in respect of the 2011 budget, Committee on Budgetary Control, 21st March 2013, PE 497.942v02-00, section 70 <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2F%2FEP%2F%2FTEXT%2BREPORT%2BA7-2013-0063%2B0%2BDOC%2BXML%2B0%2F%2FEN&language=EN>

5. European Parliament budgets for 2014, 3 2 0 0 09, and 2015, 3 2 1 0 01
 6. Information on the budgetary and the financial management of the European Parliament in 2012, p. 63
 7. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 7th October 2013, p. 13
 8. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 15th September 2014, p. 13
 9. 2013, 2014 and 2015 European Parliament budgets, 3 2 0 0 and 3 2 1
 10. 2013, 2014 and 2015 European Parliament budgets, 3 2 0 0 01 and 3 2 0 0 02
 11. 2015 European Parliament budget, section 3 2 1 0
 12. 2015 budget of the European Parliament, 3 2 0 0 03, 3 2 0 0 05 and 3 2 0 0 07
 13. The House of Commons Administration: Annual Accounts 2014-15, section 3 p. 45, accessed 2nd September 2015 <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/>

commons-expenditure/Admin%20Annual%20Accounts/Administration_Annual_Accounts_2014_15.pdf
 14. Comparative study of the European Parliament and German Bundestag, DG Finance, PE 500.863/BUR/GT/ANN1, p. 10 and p. 31
 15. NATO Parliamentary Assembly Financial Statement for the year ending 31st December 2014, p. 6, accessed 2nd September 2015 <http://www.nato-pa.int/Default.asp?SHORTCUT=3308>
 16. OSCE Parliamentary Assembly International Secretariat, accessed 2nd September 2015 <https://www.oscepa.org/about-osce-pa/international-secretariat/staff>
 17. Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe: the Secretary-General, accessed 2nd September 2015 <http://website-pace.net/web/apce/secretary-general>

18. Report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section I – European Parliament, Committee on Budgetary Control, 30th March 2015, section 81
 19. Property needs and medium-term buildings policy of the European Parliament, Bureau decision of 24th March 2010, PE 422.590/BUR, p. 2
 20. Report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2012, Section I – European Parliament, Committee on Budgetary Control, 24th March 2014, section 80
 21. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 30th November 2011, p. 12
 22. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 24th February 2014, p. 12

Specific measures include:

- Conversion of the Eastman Building into the House of European History, the forecast cost of which is €31.4 million.¹
- Construction of the Trebel building in Brussels, which is expected to cost €114.6 million overall; the price of the initial instalment was €15 million.² The Trebel building is needed to implement the decision to acquire additional office space for the Secretariat, Groups, Members and their staff. Atenor, the developer of the Trebel building, admits that construction costs will be around 15% higher than the average for office space in Brussels. The high cost of the building is partly due to the inclusion of 'geothermal bores' designed to produce sustainable energy.³
- Purchase of Rue Montoyer 70, which cost €16.5 million, to house the Directorate-Generals for Infrastructure and Logistics and for Personnel.⁴
- Renovation and extension of the Konrad Adenauer building in Luxembourg to house all the Secretariat staff who work there, replacing six of the seven buildings rented by the Parliament in Luxembourg (the seventh is a warehouse). The price is estimated at €482.7 million.⁵ The Secretary General claims that it will save €363 million over the next twenty years.⁶ However, it is not expected to be complete until 2018.⁷
- Purchase and renovation of the Vačlav Havel building in Strasbourg to house the Ombudsman and her staff, freeing up space for members in the central buildings. This cost €6.7 million, with another €9.3 million needed to renovate the building; renovation work is expected to be finished by the end of 2015.⁸
- The Square de Meeûs building in Brussels, which will become the Regus building, was leased to the European Parliament in July 2013 for twelve years, first to house staff who are waiting to move into the Trebel building and then, in 2017, to accommodate those moved out of the Altiero Spinelli and Paul-Henri Spaak buildings, which will be undergoing the renovation which EU rules require 20 years after construction.⁹ Twelve years' lease payments will cost the Parliament €91.3 million.¹⁰
- The Montoyer-Science building was leased to the Parliament in 2012 for 21 years at an annual cost of €1.27 million, to house the European Ombudsman, the Court of Auditors and the European Data Protection Supervisor; €1.25 million of the cost is offset by contributions from these three institutions.¹¹
- In 2012, Jean Monnet's house was renovated and the conference facilities expanded at a cost of €1.11 million.¹² The intention is to create a Jean Monnet Academy 'for training purposes.'¹³ The Parliament intends to spend €1.3-1.4 million on further renovations.¹⁴
- The cost of repairing the Brussels chamber following the discovery of structural damage in September 2012 is estimated at €2 million.¹⁵



The House of European History under construction.

Building	Project type	Location	Cost
Eastman Building	Conversion	Brussels	€31.4 million
Trebel Building	Construction	Brussels	€114.6 million
Rue Montoyer 70	Purchase	Brussels	€16.5 million
Konrad Adenauer Building	Renovation and extension	Luxembourg	€482.7 million
Vačlav Havel Building	Purchase and renovation	Strasbourg	€16 million
Square de Meeûs Building	Rent	Brussels	€91.3 million
Montoyer-Science Building	Rent	Brussels	€1.27 million (annual)
Jean Monnet House	Renovation	Houjarray	€2.41 million
Brussels plenary chamber	Repairs	Brussels	€2 million

Other planned building projects, for which the cost is not yet known, include the renovation of the PHS and ASP buildings. There is also a project for a new visitors' entrance in the Brussels atrium building.¹⁶ The Secretary-General has told the Bureau that the costs of this could be covered by the existing renovation budget.¹⁷ There are plans to expand the visitors' centre in Strasbourg, modelling it on the Parliamentarium in Brussels, and to build a pathway connecting the visitors' attractions at the Parliament's place of work in Brussels.¹⁸ While the Rue Montoyer 63 building is due to be disposed of in December 2015, a training centre will still be required and a survey for a new building has therefore been launched.¹⁹ The European Parliament's total infrastructure-related expenditure in 2014 was foreseen as amounting to €91.1 million in Brussels, to €49.3 million in Strasbourg, and to €50.2 million in Luxembourg, a total of €190.6 million.²⁰

Parliament's construction budget regularly absorbs money which has been saved by spending cuts elsewhere. Of the money spent on Rue Montoyer 70 and the Vačlav Havel building, €13.1 million came from the contingency fund and €10.1 million from unused funds allocated for additional secretariat staff who were to have been recruited as a result of the Lisbon Treaty.²¹ In 2012, €10 million was saved by transferring €45 million in unused appropriations at the end of the year to pre-finance the Trebel and Konrad Adenauer buildings. However, the Bureau adopted this step (like that of freezing mission allowances) 'in order to finance new initiatives.'²² In 2013, €54 million was transferred from provisional appropriation headings and other sources to fund the renovation and extension of the Konrad Adenauer building, a step which the Secretariat expected to save €18.1 million.²³

1. House of European History business plan, p. 26
 2. Information on the budgetary and the financial management of the European Parliament in 2012, p. 48
 3. B. Waterfield, 'Anger as 'profligate' EU parliament spends £74 million on new buildings', The Daily Telegraph, 20th September 2013, accessed 18th February 2014
 4. C. Brand, 'Budgets committee approves €38m purchase of buildings', European Voice, 15th December 2011 <http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/imported/budgets-committee-approves-38m-purchase-of-buildings/72943.aspx>
 5. Report on discharge in respect of the 2011 budget, Committee on Budgetary Control, 21st March 2013, section 77
 6. 'Foundation stone laid for new KAD building in Luxembourg', European Parliament, 9th September 2013 <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/the->

[secretary-general/en/activities/recent_activities/articles/articles-2013/articles-2013-september/articles-2013-september-1.html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/the-secretary-general/en/activities/recent_activities/articles/articles-2013/articles-2013-september/articles-2013-september-1.html)
 7. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 1st July 2013, p. 12
 8. C. Brand, 'Budgets committee approves €38m purchase of buildings', European Voice, 15th December 2011 <http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/imported/budgets-committee-approves-38m-purchase-of-buildings/72943.aspx> and 2012 Annual Activity Report, DG INLO, p. 19
 9. T. Vogel, 'Parliament to occupy Square de Meeûs site', European Voice, 24th July 2013 <https://www.europeanvoice.com/article/2013/july/parliament-to-occupy-square-de-meeus-site/77943.aspx>
 10. B. Waterfield, 'Anger as 'profligate' EU parliament spends £74 million on new buildings', The Daily Telegraph, 20th September 2013, accessed 18th February

2014 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/eu/10320940/Anger-as-profligate-EU-parliament-spends-174m-on-new-buildings.html>
 11. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 24th October 2011, p. 13, and query to DG INLO, 17th October 2014
 12. Query to DG INLO, 19th February 2014
 13. 'Preparing for complexity: European Parliament in 2025', p. 10
 14. Tender for the renovation of the Jean Monnet House, 30th June 2014 <http://ted.europa.eu/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:231901-2014:TEXT:EN:HTML>
 15. Report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2012, Section I – European Parliament, Committee on Budgetary Control, 24th March 2014, section 83
 16. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 9th April 2013, p. 7

17. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 15th May 2013, p. 18
 18. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 9th April 2013, p. 10; European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 9th February 2015, p. 13
 19. Query to DG INLO, 17th October 2014
 20. 'The three places of work of the European Parliament', annexes to responses to the discharge questionnaire, 2012, p. 28
 21. Replies to the questionnaire in preparation to the EP discharge in 2011, section 2
 22. Information on the budgetary and the financial management of the European Parliament in 2012, p. 17
 23. Report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section I – European Parliament, Committee on Budgetary Control, 30th March 2015, section 7

FUNDING OF EUROPEAN POLITICAL PARTIES, FOUNDATIONS AND GROUPS

The Parliament is organised into transnational political groups to which most MEPs belong. Currently there are 8 political groups plus a small number of MEPs who for various reasons are 'non-attached.'

The secretariats of the political groups had 960 staff as of 1st January 2015, and we understand that the total had risen to 1,016 by September. Over half of these are employed by the EPP and Socialist (S&D) Groups. The group secretariats are so far excluded from the 5% reduction in staff numbers agreed upon by the Parliament.¹

As a further aspect of the process of European political integration, the Parliament has also encouraged the creation of transnational political parties. The aim of this is to move eventually to a system where our citizens no longer vote in European elections for national political parties but instead vote for transnational parties represented across the EU. Political groups opposed to the process of European integration, such as the European Conservatives & Reformists Group (ECR), have overcome this political difficulty by creating an 'alliance' of national political parties. Otherwise they would be put at a financial disadvantage compared with their political opponents.

In 2011-2015, the Parliament's funding of the transnational European political parties grew from €17.2 million to €28.35 million even though the number of MEPs increased by only 30 (to 766) before falling to 751 after the May 2014 elections.² This can be accounted for in part by the increase in political mobilisation at the European level, with the number of European political parties rising from 10 to 13, but all European parties have seen their grants rise steadily during this period.³ At the same time, subsidies to political groups rose from €54.69 million in 2011 to €59.80 million in 2015. Once a transnational political party has been established it is eligible to create a political foundation or think-tank. Funding for political foundations has also continued to rise, from €11.10 million in 2011 to €16.67 million in 2015.⁴ Those opposed to the process have also received funding. The reasonable justification for this is that there is a finite pool of funding which is divided amongst all the political foundations according to the size of their membership. Abstention by the eurosceptical foundations would merely provide a larger share for the remainder.

The total cost of subsidies to parties, foundations and groups rose from €83.08 million in 2011 to €104.82 million in 2015.⁵



IMPACT OF THE NEW MEMBERS' STATUTE



Far from saving money, the introduction of the new Members' Statute in 2009 following public and media pressure has not only federalised the status of MEPs (they are now employed by the Parliament rather than by their national authorities) but resulted in a doubling of costs. All MEPs, regardless of salary scales in their home countries, are now paid a salary fixed at 38.5% of that of a judge of the European Court of Justice, currently €7,957 per month. The allowance for general expenditure remains set at €4,299 per month. This is much more expensive than the old system under which member state governments paid MEPs at the same rate as national MPs; as of December 2012, the average monthly wage of national MPs in EU countries was €5,766, including allowances and living expenses.⁶ After the introduction of the new statute, expenditure on MEPs' salaries rose from €30.6 million in 2009 to €67.7 million in 2010. By 2014, spending on salaries had reached €73.6 million; it fell slightly, to €71.53 million, in 2015.⁷ Parliamentary assistants also became employees of the Parliament in 2009, and spending on parliamentary assistance grew from €153.4 million in 2009 to €196.2 million in 2014 before falling to €192.11 million in 2015.⁸

As a result of the European elections, in which 408 MEPs left the Parliament,⁹ spending on transitional allowances initially rose to €15.8 million in 2014 and fell to €11.81 million in 2015.¹⁰

1. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 24th February 2014, p. 13
 2. 2013, 2014 and 2015 budgets of the European Parliament, 4 0 2
 3. Grants from the European Parliament to political parties at European level, 2004-2013, accessed 7th February 2014, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/grants/Grant_amounts_parties%2011-2013.pdf

4. 2013, 2014 and 2015 budgets of the European Parliament, 4 0 3
 5. 2013, 2014 and 2015 budgets of the European Parliament, 4 0
 6. 'Salary Atlas in the 27 EU countries', Preisvergleich.de, May 2013, p. 5 http://presse.preisvergleich.de/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/PVG_Pressemappe_Abgeordneten-Geh%C3%A4lter_EN.pdf

7. 2011, 2012, 2014 and 2015 budgets of the European Parliament, 1 0 0 0
 8. 2011, 2012, 2014 and 2015 budgets of the European Parliament, 4 2 2
 9. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 15th September 2014, p. 13
 10. 2014 and 2015 budgets of the European Parliament, 1 0 2



CAFETERIA FACILITIES

The Parliament's cafeterias are largely used by the officials of the Secretariat. The Secretary-General took the decision to raise prices for food and drink in these facilities in 2013, the first time that this had been done in twelve years.¹ Nonetheless, the subsidy required to cover their operating deficit climbed from €2.6 million in 2011 to €4.05 million in 2014. In 2015, it was €3.5 million.²

The Committee on Budgetary Control has recommended further economy measures, including increased and possibly indexed prices, in order to ensure that the restaurants are breaking even by the next election in 2019, and also for the Parliament to use the same price structure as the Commission's catering service and cafeterias.³ In his note on the guidelines for the 2016 budget, the Secretary-General called for improvements in the quality of catering and greater competition between providers.⁴

PURCHASE OF EQUIPMENT FOR USE BY PARLIAMENT STAFF

A comparative study of the European Parliament and the Bundestag found that the Parliament spent 83% more than the Bundestag on ICT, telecommunications and office supplies.⁵

The 2015 budget for computing and telecommunications was €115.18 million, €22.61 million higher than in 2011, after peaking in 2012 at €119.55 million.⁶ Furthermore, the budget for technical equipment and installations has grown steadily, from €15.73 million in 2011 to €24.16 million in 2015.⁷

1,000 computers were purchased at a cost of €1.2 million for the use of staff from the Directorate-General for External Policies to prevent disruption during the move to the Square de Meeûs building, even though only 200 staff were moving to the new building and it would have been possible for their computers to be moved from their former workplace with them.

PENSIONS

The purchase of equipment is another area in which the Parliament often spends surplus funds, rather than returning them to taxpayers or member state governments: €3.1 million left over from the 2012 budget was used to pay for the extension of the Wi-Fi network.⁸



The pensions of retired Parliament staff members come from the Commission budget. In 2013, the Commission spent €139.95 million on the pensions of 2,692 former Parliament employees. This does not include administrative costs, which cannot be estimated since the Commission's Paymaster Office is responsible for the pensions of all EU officials.⁹

Spending on MEPs' pensions rose from €13.03 million in 2011 to €14.11 million in 2015, an increase of 8.29%. As of the end of 2013, the Voluntary Pension Fund was running a notional deficit of €197.5 million; the Parliament noted that 'it is ultimately impossible to judge whether the Fund is being run efficiently and properly' and that it faces possible exhaustion in the future. Should the Fund be unable to meet its obligations, the Parliament itself will have to guarantee the payment of pensions.¹⁰ In 2015 the management of members' pensions is to be transferred to the Commission, which is expected to save €1.9 million.¹¹

1. 'Parliament's future catering policy 2014-2019', Follow up on the EP discharge 2011, Annex 2, p. 3
 2. 2013, 2014 and 2015 budgets of the European Parliament, 1 6 5 2
 3. Report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section I – Eu-

ropean Parliament, Committee on Budgetary Control, 30th March 2015, section 22
 4. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 9th February 2015, p. 12
 5. Comparative study of the European Parliament and the German Bundestag prepared by Directorate A of DG Finance, p. 11

6. 2015, 2014 and 2013 budgets of the European Parliament, 2 1 0
 7. 2015 and 2013 budgets of the European Parliament, 2 1 4
 8. European Parliament Bureau, minutes of the meeting of 22nd October 2012, p. 15
 9. Query to DG EPRS, 24th April 2014
 10. Report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general

budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section I – European Parliament, Committee on Budgetary Control, 30th March 2015, sections 85-87
 11. Report on Parliament's estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year 2015, Committee on Budgets, 11th April 2014, p. 15

This report has outlined the continuing extravagance of just one EU institution, at a time when national governments are making every possible economy in public expenditure. While there would be resistance from many quarters to anything that appears to call into question any aspect of the European project, a reasonable observer can see that there is enormous scope to make major savings if there was the will to do this.

In summary, these savings might include one-off cuts of €178.27 million and annual spending reductions of €255.87 million (assuming the cancellation of the House of European History prior to opening), for total potential savings of €434.14 million.

ONE-OFF SAVINGS

Cancelling the Trebel building, minus the initial installment of €15 million	€99.6 million
Cancelling the purchase of Rue Montoyer 70	€16.5 million
Leasing the Square de Meeûs building for four years rather than eight	€60.87 million
Cancelling the planned works on Jean Monnet's house	€1.3 million
Total	€178.27 million

ANNUAL SAVINGS

Reducing staff budget to 2011 level (and there is much more scope for reductions here)	€74.42 million
Conservative estimate of gains from abolishing the Strasbourg seat	€100 million
Elimination of European Parliament Information Offices	€37.99 million for running costs €1.84 million for mission expenses
Elimination of the European Parliament Liaison Office	€1.9 million
Cancelling the House of European History	€2.6 million (prior to opening) €11.5 million (after opening)
Abolition of the Parliamentarium	€4 million
Abolition of the European Youth Event	€3.5 million
Abolition of EuroparlTV	€5 million
Capping reimbursement to visitors' groups at €10,000 (assuming that 300 visitors' groups a year cost €15,000)	€1.5 million
Reducing the share of foundations' income provided from European Parliament funding from 85% to 50%	€6.86 million
Reducing funding of European political parties to 2011 levels	€11.15 million
Reducing funding of political groups in the European Parliament to 2011 levels	€5.11 million
Total	€255.87 million





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