



QUAESTORS' Quarterly

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Issue 10

Winter 2017

Dear Colleagues,

This Newsletter effectively concludes my last term as Chair of the Quaestors this legislature. It has been both an honour and a pleasure to serve in this capacity and to work alongside my excellent colleagues.

Much has been achieved since 2014 in terms of improvements to our security and safety, to the services offered in our canteens and other food outlets, to our drivers' service as well as the modernisation of the handling of financial and administrative matters.

Recently, efforts have been stepped up to respond to the outcry over allegations of sexual harassment in the workplace as a spill-over of the #metoo campaign. The Advisory Committee on Harassment, chaired by my colleague Elisabeth Morin-Chartier, has been at the forefront of raising Parliament's standards.

Regrettably, Parliament's sports centre remains closed for the time being whilst the water circuit is redesigned to prevent any possible reoccurrence of the Legionella bacteria that affected parts of the system earlier this year.



It just remains for me to wish you a very Happy Christmas and a successful 2018 before I pass the baton on to my colleague, Vladimir Manka for the next six months.

Andrey KOVATCHEV
Chair-in-Office of the Quaestors



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The central attendance register and MEPs' Financial Calendar 2018

As they do every year, the Quaestors have adopted a [Notice \(28/2017\)](#) to present the days and hours when the central attendance register will be open in 2018 for signing by Members.

The financial calendar for Members is also available at the [Members' Portal front desk](#).

The 2018 financial calendar (Notice 29/2017) shows the following:

- Opening days of the central attendance register;
- Deadlines for Parliamentary Assistance expenses (local assistants and trainees);
- Deadline for the submission of requests for reimbursement of MEPs' travel and subsistence expenses;
- Deadline for the submission of requests for reimbursement of MEPs' expenses in respect of language and computer courses.

Accredited assistants are also able to submit their mission order requests online through the e-Portal. Should they wish, Members can then sign the mission requests electronically by using the application DiSP (Digital Signature portal). This new procedure will save time for both Members and assistants. Notice 13/2017.

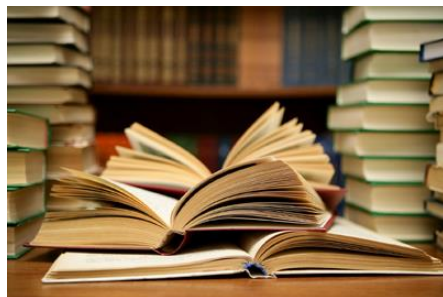
EPRS services to Members

In November, the Quaestors heard from EPRS Director-General, Anthony Teasdale, on the current work of Parliament's research service which is widely used. Since its creation in 2014, EPRS has responded to over 11 000 substantive requests, with 56 % of these requests answered within 36 hours.

There are over 100 specialised researchers at the disposal of Members to answer enquiries or conduct short research projects which may also generate broader publications on EU policy and legislation. EPRS has also produced over 3 500 content-rich, accessible publications and tracks EU legislation, analyses the EU budget, and produces an overview of plenary activities. 250 model answers have also been developed, in response to citizens' enquiries on a wide variety of EU matters which can be consulted online.

The library, which has a collection of over 100 000 traditional books will be fully digitalised in the future. Training is

also available for Members and their staff on, inter alia, how to access data sources on policy issues or how to manage archives.



A new EPRS application will be available in January 2018 for all users, both inside and outside Parliament, allowing quick access to over 4000 publications dating back to 2014 for consultation via smartphone or other portable device.

Renovation of the Astrid Lulling Lounge

Renovation works will begin to the Astrid Lulling Lounge on the ground floor of the SPINELLI building in Brussels that will last approximately six months.

The new lounge area will be divided into four distinct areas: a bar area, a library resources and reading area with newspapers and magazines, a large lounge area with decorative screens to create more intimate spaces for private meetings and conversations, and a working area with desks and tables.

Whilst the works are going on, a temporary Members' lounge will be available in the bar area next to the Members' restaurant on the ground floor of the 'G' zone in the SPINELLI building.

Parliament's warm water systems

Due to a higher than normal presence of Legionella bacteria in the showers of Members' offices, the warm-water circuit had been temporarily closed down earlier this year. In the meantime, an independent high-level expert on water safety examined Parliament's warm-water system which is in a

deteriorated condition due to its age and has thousands of 'dead-end pipes', which cause a permanent health risk linked to the potential growth of harmful bacteria, such as Legionella.

As this problem cannot be permanently solved by corrective measures, the Quaestors have decided to permanently close down the large warm-water circuit linked to the showers in Members' offices and called for compensatory measures such as kitchenettes on the floors housing Members' offices and showers in central areas.

EP travel agency - improving the service for MEPs

The contract between Parliament and the external Travel Agency expires, after five years, at the end of 2018. A new inter-institutional tender procedure has been launched with a view to providing a higher quality service for Members in the future that includes more flexible opening hours, and booking procedures offering best available fares (including low cost airlines), a monitored complaint register, an online-booking tool, an automated invoicing system as well as a crisis management and a 24/7 emergency hotline.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

This Newsletter is produced by the Secretariat of the Bureau and Quaestors. For further information on any of the articles in this edition, please contact one of the Quaestors responsible or the Secretariat at the following address:

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Link to the website of the [Quaestors](#)