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My 6 months term as Chair-in-Office of the Quaestors is drawing to a close. It also marks the end of the term of office of the current College of Quaestors ahead of the mid-term elections for Parliament's office holders in January.

My four colleagues and I have endeavoured, over the past 2 ½ years to resolve as many of your issues as possible and, working closely with Parliament's very professional and competent staff, to bring you new and improved services from security to catering and sports facilities, on-line assistance with parliamentary work and administrative form-filling through the e-portal, providing access for non-professional film crews and new arrangements for hosting exhibitions and events. All-in-all we have issued over 100 Notices over the last 2 ½ years informing Members on issues of relevance to them. In addition, through the introduction of this newsletter, we have aimed to inform you four times per year, and in a more informal style, of the main decisions being taken regarding Parliament's internal organisation and

changes to the Rules which may affect you.

Over the last couple of years, our Institution has experienced the greatest threats in its history to the safety of its Members and personnel but has risen to the challenge without compromising our openness and range of parliamentary activities. I take this opportunity, on behalf of my Quaestor colleagues - and all Members of the House - to thank Parliament's Administration for the dedicated and unfailing service and assistance over the past 2 ½ years.

I wish you peace and happiness this Christmas and every success in 2017.

**Karol KARSKI**

*Chair-in-Office of the Quaestors*



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## Free SNCB travel pass for MEPs to Zaventem

At the beginning of the parliamentary term, a free travel pass ('Libre Parcours') was issued by SNCB for each Member. This pass is valid on all SNCB train connections on the Belgian railway network, including the recently established direct train service connecting the stations of Brussels-Luxembourg to Brussels National Airport on weekdays. There are two trains per hour with a travel time of 19 minutes. Particularly during rush hours, this connection could be considered as a quick transport possibility for Members from and to the airport. The train schedule is accessible on the website of SNCB ([www.belgianrail.be/en/](http://www.belgianrail.be/en/)).



The train arrives at level -1 of the airport. To access the airport, gates have to be passed which open after scanning the barcode printed on the train ticket. Unfortunately, the barcode readers do not recognize barcodes on Members' free travel passes issued in 2014. Therefore, Members currently require assistance from SNCB staff to open the gate. The travel passes issued in 2014 are nevertheless still valid for the Belgian network.



In order to avoid this inconvenience, SNCB offers to issue a new free travel pass with a valid barcode on the basis of Members' individual requests.

### PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS

The Travel Organisation Service is at Members' disposal to arrange the exchange of travel passes on request and to provide any further information available, via email at: [dgfins-organisationdesvoyages@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:dgfins-organisationdesvoyages@europarl.europa.eu), via phone - 30466 - or at the office SPINELLI 03H161.

## New and improved catering services

Following a Bureau decision in June 2013 to modernise Parliament's catering policy, a new set of Rules on the use of the restaurant facilities and catering services was adopted in October 2016, following consultations with the Quaestors, with a view to responding to today's requirements for more variety, healthier options, reduced waste and better value.



The new rules enter into force on 1 January 2017.

### THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEW CATERING RULES:

- Introduce a clear set of definitions concerning the various services and authorised participants;
- Propose a new formula "Meet and Eat" inside meeting rooms in order to enable participants to make the most of their allotted time over a working lunch;
- Introduce different offers for cocktails at events and exhibitions – by the internal service providers and their high-quality subcontractors, as well as the possibility to use external caterers for certain events.



The new Catering Rules include an annex listing all restaurant facilities in the European Parliament and those areas where receptions or events involving food and beverages may now be organised.





## Revised rules on exhibitions and events



Following a review of the new rules on events and exhibitions a few changes have been introduced to facilitate Members' requests without undermining the essence of the main changes which were introduced last summer (2015) to bring some order back to the use of Parliament's public spaces.



### THE LATEST ADJUSTMENTS INCLUDE:

- A requirement to add a security opinion by DG SAFE to the request for authorisation;
- Once authorised, events will count against the Member's quota even if they are cancelled at the last minute;
- Any request for a third event per legislative term per Member will in future be authorised by the Quaestor responsible.

The updated Rules will enter into force on 1 January 2017.

## Zero harassment in the workplace

Following the proposal by the Advisory Committee dealing with harassment complaints between APAs and Members and its prevention at the workplace the Quaestors have adopted a leaflet to inform Members of the European Parliament about their responsibilities as managers of a team in an office environment, how to avoid improper behaviour towards staff that might escalate into a conflict situation or even harassment and how to handle the situation.

The brochure will be distributed to all Members.

### TYPES OF HARASSMENT

There are two types of harassment, psychological harassment and sexual harassment, as described in Article 12a of the Staff Regulations:

- Psychological harassment means any improper conduct that takes place over a period, is repetitive or systematic and involves physical behaviour, spoken or written language, gestures or other acts that are intentional and that may undermine the personality, dignity or physical or psychological integrity of any person.
- Sexual harassment means conduct relating to sex which is unwanted by the person to whom it is directed and which has the purpose or effect of offending that person or creating an intimidating, hostile, offensive or disturbing environment.

The brochure includes tips on recruitment, to ensure you finding someone both competent and compatible with the requirements, tips

on how to avoid a situation of harassment arising between Members and their staff, possible signs to watch out for and where to seek help and advice.

The Advisory Committee dealing with harassment complaints between APAs and Members has a twofold task:

- To play a role in the prevention of harassment of APAs by Members,
- To act as a consultative body for the President of Parliament in enquiring and issuing a recommendation on formal harassment complaints from APAs against Members.



Once an investigation is concluded, and a recommendation is sent to the President, the latter makes the final decision as to whether harassment has taken place and may propose an appropriate penalty on the Member concerned.



### 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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