



QUAESTORS' Quarterly

Issue 1

September 2015

"Welcome to this first newsletter from the Quaestors, whose meetings I currently have the honour to chair until the end of this year. This newsletter, which we aim to publish four times per year (every three months), has the modest ambition of shedding some light into the work that goes on behind the scenes to deal with all manner of practical and logistical issues raised by Members in the course of their mandates. Some matters will remain necessarily confidential, whilst others may be of only minor interest. Other matters, on the other hand, will affect you all, whether you are organising an exhibition, receiving a group of visitors or using one of the canteens / restaurants. For important decisions or changes to rules, all the preparatory work undertaken by the Quaestors must be confirmed by Parliament's Bureau."

I hope you will find time to read this newsletter and discover more about what we do. Needless to say, if you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact myself or one of my Quaestor colleagues."

Catherine Bearder MEP, Chair-in-Office



Meet the Quaestors

There are five Quaestors elected by Parliament at its Constituent meeting and half way through each legislature. Like the Vice-Presidents, the Quaestors serve a two-and-a-half year term of office. They are chaired on a rotating basis every six months according to the order in which they were elected and meet every part session in Strasbourg. They serve in an advisory capacity to the Bureau which they attend in an ex-officio capacity.

According to Rule 28 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure, the Quaestors "shall be responsible for administrative and financial matters directly concerning Members".

Apart from dealing with Members' financial matters, the Quaestors oversee a wide variety of issues including visitors' groups, exhibitions and events, transport facilities for Members, artistic donations, Parliaments' bars and restaurants, Christmas cards, rules on smoking, mail and document distribution, medical certificates for absence, management of office space and equipment, Parliament's sports Centre, relations with the Ombudsman, conciliation on harassment cases, relations with the former Members Association, the travel office, language and computer training, liaison with the European schools and crèches etc.

In addition, the office of the Quaestors is responsible for communications to Members on matters of common interest / concern which are usually sent via a formal notification. A full list of all Quaestors' communications is available online on the [Quaestors' section](#) of the Parliament's intranet site.

The Quaestors are assisted by a secretariat, under the authority of the Secretary General, in addition to each having a dedicated assistant to help with their duties.

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Roles and responsibilities

Elisabeth MORIN-CHARTIER EPP, FR



- Individual requests to payments of parliamentary allowances and reimbursement of expenses
- Members' restaurants and bars
- Members' facilities in EP information offices (with Mr. Liberadzki)
- Relations with national and local authorities in Parliament's three places of work
- Member of the Bureau Working Group on Buildings, Transport and Green Parliament
- *Member of the Advisory Committee dealing with Harassment Complaints between Accredited Parliamentary Assistants and Members of the European Parliament (appointed by the President)*
- *Conciliator pursuant to Article 23 of the Implementing Measures for the Statute of Accredited Parliamentary Assistants.*

Andrey KOVATCHEV EPP, BG



- Members' transport facilities, including car service, the Travel Agency, and facilities at Strasbourg and Brussels airports
- Reception facilities for visitors' groups
- Telecommunication and information technology (including television facilities)
- Members' language and computer courses
- Contacts with the Former Members' Association
- Member of the Bureau Working Group on Information and Communication Policy

Bogusław LIBERADZKI S&D, PL



- Security issues in Parliament's premises relating to individual Members - implementation measures (including the implementation of the Bureau rules governing smoking ban)
- Sports centres situated on Parliament's premises in Brussels and Strasbourg
- Members' facilities in EP information offices (with Ms Morin-Chartier)
- Relations with Political Groups and Non-Attached Members - rules concerning Intergroups and use of Parliament's premises
- Relations with the Ombudsman and the ECJ in cases relating to Quaestors responsibilities
- Mobility
- External services in Parliament's premises (shops, banks and postal services)
- Member of the Bureau Contact Group for the House of European History (with Mr. Karski)
- *Member of the Advisory Committee dealing with Harassment Complaints between Accredited Parliamentary Assistants and Members of the European Parliament (appointed by the President)*

VOTE			
Election of the Quaestors (1/2)			
V:696	+:677	O:019	>:339
Morin-Chartier Elisabeth	452		
Liberadzki Bogusław	443		
Bearder Catherine	425		
Kovatchev Andrey	420		
Karski Karol Adam	288		

QUAESTORS' COMPOSITION

For a full description of the Quaestors' duties and responsibilities, please refer to the official [webpage](#).

Catherine BEARDER ALDE, UK



- Cultural and artistic events sponsored by Members
- Artistic Committee
- Chair of Artistic Committee
- Contacts with Former Members' Association
- Use by Members of Parliament's library and document management
- Member of High-level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity
- Member of the Bureau Working Group on ICT Innovation Strategy
- *Member of the Advisory Committee dealing with Harassment Complaints between Accredited Parliamentary Assistants and Members of the European Parliament (appointed by the President).*

Karol KARSKI ECR, PL



- Services for Members (Medical Service, crèche facilities for the Members' children, European Schools)
- Office Equipment for Members
- Use by Members of Parliament's audio visual facilities
- Central register and lists of attendance in the Chamber and in the committee and groups rooms
- Technical aspects of register of lobbyists, long-term visitors' access to restricted areas
- Mail department and print shop
- Member of the Bureau Contact Group for the House of European History (with Mr. Liberadzki)

New rules on events & exhibitions

On several occasions, the President and Members of the Bureau have expressed concerns about the proliferation of social events and cocktails held on Parliament's premises. The Quaestors were invited to consider measures to reduce the number of such events and to relocate catered events to more suitable locations in order to preserve the dignity and public image of the Institution and to respond to increased security and safety concerns.

Consequently, the Quaestors asked the various services involved to carry out a review of existing practices and rules. The result of the review was submitted to the Quaestors, and finally to the Bureau, for approval.

The main changes concern:

- Maintaining the principle of two events/exhibitions per mandate for each Member, with a possible derogation for a third event to be decided by the College of Quaestors; the organisation of more than three events per legislative term is no longer permitted;
- Revising and reducing the number of areas available for holding exhibitions and cultural events, in particular the ground floor area opposite the shop and banks in the Spinelli (ASP) building will no longer be available for use for safety and security reasons;
- Reducing considerably the areas available for receptions/catering to certain designated areas, essentially limiting full catering options to the restaurants, the Yehudi Menuhin Area and the JAN Q3 Area in Brussels. Catering services in Strasbourg will also essentially be restricted to the restaurant and bar areas or private salons;
- Enhancing Members' responsibility vis-à-vis the Parliament for all aspects regarding the sponsoring of the exhibition/event and for the reception/catering, rather than handing over responsibility to external organisations; this includes the sending of invitations and the registration and distribution of access cards.

These new rules will be reviewed after six months to evaluate their implementation and impact. Your feedback is welcome.



CHECK YOUR BOOKING

These new provisions entered into force on 1st September 2015. Any Members who have booked an event, prior to the entry into force of the new rules, should check with the relevant services and may have to re-book if the chosen location is no longer in use for exhibitions or events.

For full details of the new rules in force and a list of the approved areas for exhibitions, see the [Annex to the Rules governing use of Parliament's premises](#).

MEP-Exhibitions@ep.europa.eu

The Bells: what do they mean?

Have you ever wondered what the different bell sounds mean during a plenary session? The plenary bell is situated on the desk of the President in the Chamber and is rung to signal the commencement of a plenary sitting or a vote. Following some recent confusion when the bells sounded for a vote in the middle of the afternoon, Parliament's Services have proposed to simplify the ring tones to better distinguish between the beginning and end of a sitting and the commencement of votes:

- **one minute continuous ringing** indicates the beginning of a session; the bell is rung 10 minutes and again 2 minutes before a plenary sitting starts;
- **two shorter rings of about 3 seconds** each indicate the start of a voting session; this is done 10 minutes before votes begin and repeated several times. It usually rings at lunchtime on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays but can ring at any time of the day if a vote is called;
- **one ring of 15 seconds** indicates the end of a sitting.

So basically, a single, continuous ring tone denotes the start or end of a sitting whilst a discontinuous tone of several rings denotes that a vote is about to take place.

CAN YOU HEAR THE BELLS?

If you have difficulty hearing the bells from your office or indeed from a public area, you should contact the relevant services at the following address:

INTE.tech-confer@ep.europa.eu



Christmas card selection 2015

With the help of DG ITEC, a list of twelve greetings cards was presented to the Quaestors at their July meeting. The cards fall into four thematic categories, namely:

- Religious (Christmas);
- New Year 2016;
- Institutional (EP);
- EU Year of Development

All twelve cards will be made available as e-cards for the use of Members and staff at the end of the year whilst six out of the twelve listed cards were also selected for printing for the use of Members only. Each Member can order 200 cards free of charge. The e-cards will be available on the EP Intranet from 7 December 2015 to 31 January 2016.



ORDERING YOUR CARDS

Members can already order their printed Christmas cards directly via the [Services for Members](#) section of the Parliament's intranet site [before](#) 20 November 2015.

Charity Sales

The end-of year charity sales have a long-standing tradition in Parliament and constitute an exception to the Rules governing cultural events and exhibitions on Parliament's premises by allowing charitable organisations to set up stands and sell their merchandise on the premises of Parliament. Parliament provides them, free of charge, with the space and furniture necessary to set up the stands (tables, chairs and exhibition panels) during two days, but other costs must be borne by the organisations themselves.

In July 2014 the Quaestors had requested Parliament's services to open up the procedure to allow for a greater variety of charitable organisations to participate. A revised set of rules was approved by the Quaestors on 8th September 2015.

Every MEP now has the right to propose, if they wish, the name of one charitable organisation of his/her choice to take part in Parliament's charitable sales in one of the three places of work. The Quaestor responsible for cultural and artistic events, with the assistance of Parliament's services, will then assess the nominations to ensure compliance with the criteria and recommend a draft list of charitable organisations for the final approval of the College of Quaestors. The list will reflect a balanced representation of charitable organisations proposed by Members from the various political groups. Organisations admitted to take part in the charitable sales must be non-profit organisations based in a Member State and active in the field of social and humanitarian actions.

Parliament will continue to host a maximum of 56 organisations over a two week period in the three working places - in Brussels and Luxembourg the week before the December plenary session and in Strasbourg during that plenary session.

TIMETABLE FOR NOMINATIONS

Nominations by Members should be sent to:
INLO.UHC-Secr@europarl.europa.eu

by 5 October 2015

New caterers take over restaurant services

After more than 30 years (since 1979) of catering services provided by Sodexo, Parliament is to change service provider, following a recent call for tender. The new caterers will take over the running of Parliament's canteens, bars and restaurants on Monday 28 September. Sodexo's contract expires on Friday 25 September, so expect a somewhat limited service for a short while during the transition period. The change in service provider is accompanied by a significant change in contract type too whereby the service provider accepts full financial responsibility for the catering operation. Apart from the physical infrastructure, Parliament will no longer be subsidising meals, so we can expect to see a slight increase in prices - and hopefully in quality too.

Local service providers will also soon manage the sandwich bar in the Spinelli building and two additional food outlets focusing on fair trade, organic food products and a Mediterranean style pasta bar. Vending machines will be run by a new company too - so expect to see existing ones replaced with new machines (including the Nespresso coffee towers) and the whole catering policy will be monitored by an external quality audit to ensure a high standard.

Under Belgian Law, a change of major service provider must not imperil the locally employed staff. So although the management will change, the same familiar faces will continue to serve us coffee and food as before.

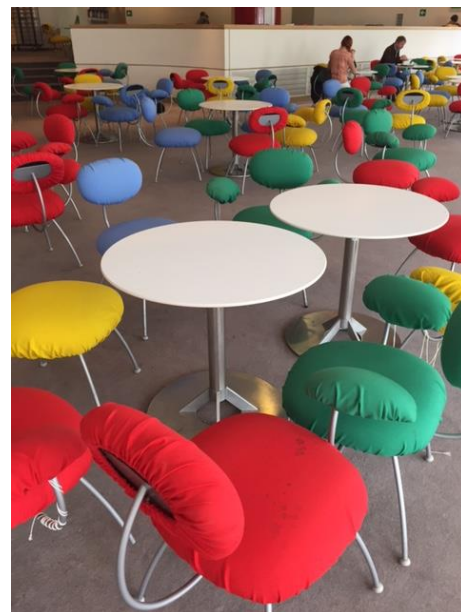
The new catering contract, which will last until the end of the legislature, also places a greater emphasis on nutritional foods, sustainable sourcing of products and reducing food waste, measures which have already started to be introduced in recent months.

Bon appétit !

IN CASE OF ANY PROBLEMS ...

In case of any problems you encounter with the new service, or if you simply wish for further information, please contact the Catering Unit directly:

INLO.URCA-secr@europarl.europa.eu



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:

SecrQuest@europarl.europa.eu