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The Transparency Standards of the GREENS/EFA Group

The Greens/EFA Group is committed to lobbying transparency and to the equal access of stakeholders to the decision-making process. For this reason, over the years, the Group has put in place different tools to guarantee transparency of our activities and public money spent. The Greens/EFA Group has internal [Standards on transparency and accountability](#), which are summarised here.

Transparency of Lobby Meetings

We were the first political group in the European Parliament, already in 2015 and as a promise made during the European election campaign, to set a system to make meetings with interest groups more transparent. [Lobbycal](#) (short for [Lobby Calendar](#)) is an open-source software that takes information from our MEPs' calendars and automatically publishes all their meetings with lobbyists, including date, time, the concerned MEP, the NGO or lobby or interest representative that was received and the topic of discussion. Moreover, the Group is committed to only meet lobbyists that are registered in the EU [Transparency register](#) and we limit meetings with tobacco lobbyists when working on public health policies (in line with the UN Framework Convention on Tobacco Control).

Thanks to us, the European Parliament now has [mandatory rules](#) obliging MEPs that are rapporteurs (lead drafters), shadow rapporteurs, or chairs of committees to publish - for each report they are working on - their meetings with lobbyists. These meetings will be listed on the MEPs' profile page on the European Parliament website.

Greens/EFA Policy on the General Expenditure Allowance

The General Expenditure Allowance (GEA) is a sum of money that Members of the European Parliament receive each month to cover their office costs. The GEA amounts to about 4.513 EUR and is one of the few types of spending that does not have to be accounted for in any way. However, when MEPs spend the General Expenditure Allowance (GEA), they are spending public funds paid for by European tax-payers so this expenditure should be transparent and accountable. Therefore, [the Greens/EFA group has adopted an internal policy to ensure transparency and accountability of the GEA](#).

1. The GEA must be handled in a separate bank account
2. At the end of each mandate, Greens/EFA MEPs should return any unspent GEA funds to the European Parliament accounts
3. Spending of the GEA should be accountable and transparent:
 - All receipts should be kept by Greens/EFA MEPs at least until the end of their mandate
 - An overview of the expenditure by category should be published or at least available upon request (e.g. communications costs, office rental, office supplies, etc.), at least once a year

Financial reports of the Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament and of the European Green Party

Greens/EFA MEPs also commit to publish an audit or confirmation that their use of the GEA complies with the Parliament rules.

Further information on how money is spent by the European Parliament group can be found in our [annual accounts \(financial reports\) and internal financial rules of the Group on the European Parliament website](#). You can also see the [European Green Party annual account and finances on the EGP website](#).

Declarations of financial interest for Members of the European Parliament

All the MEPs are required to publish and update their financial interests every year, including additional incomes. Such declarations are published on the personal page of each MEP on the website of the European Parliament (see example [here](#)). This is useful to understand which kind of personal income MEPs might have, besides their parliamentary salary. MEPs are forbidden from taking on paid lobbying jobs during their mandate, and Greens/EFA Group MEPs have additionally committed not to engage in any unpaid lobbying activities in representation of an organisation either.

Events and gifts

Gifts can only be accepted if they are given in line with diplomatic courtesy and if they are worth less than 150€. If MEPs are officially representing the EU Parliament as an institution, different rules apply that oblige all gifts to be declared in a public register. If MEPs' travel, accommodation or subsistence expenses are covered by third parties, these must be disclosed. However, Greens/EFA MEPs generally refrain from accepting reimbursements of costs by third parties and tend to cover the costs themselves. Greens/EFA MEPs also do not participate in integroups or friendship groups that do not comply with the relevant transparency rules.

MEPs' salary

Information on the amount of the salary of MEPs and their pension is available on the [website of the](#)

[European Parliament](#). The salary comes from the Parliament's budget. As a starting point, the monthly pre-tax salary of MEPs, under the single statute, is **€ 8.757,70** (as of July 2018).

To find out more about salaries, pensions and allowances for MEPs, visit:
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/about>

Ethics rules for staff

Ethics rules apply not only to politicians, but also to the staff of the European Parliament. Staff must act with independence, must refuse gifts and must not engage in remunerated outside activities. Spouses' professional activities must also be declared in order to avoid any conflicts of interest. During the two years after leaving the European Parliament, staff must declare where they intend to work in order to avoid any incompatibilities.

Whistleblower Protection

All EU staff are obliged to blow the whistle if they experience wrongdoing. The Greens/EFA Group has a specific whistleblower protection policy to encourage our staff to speak up without fear of reprisals.

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