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News | 25.09.2018

Court Decision against Journalists seeking Transparency of MEP spending shows need for urgent reform

A consortium of investigative journalists took the European Parliament to Court for its refusal to provide public access to information about how Members of the European Parliament spend public funds, but today they lost the case.

This disappointing decision from the European Court of Justice was in some ways inevitable due to the fact that the European Parliament's accounting systems are outdated and not done in a way that foresees public scrutiny of how the various Parliamentary Allowances are spent. Unfortunately the Court can only decide whether or not the administration's decision to refuse access was correct, and cannot make recommendations about the need to reform the Parliament's accounting systems.

We have long-known that these systems are outdated and have been calling for reform, particularly in areas where there is currently absolutely no oversight, such as with the General Expenditure Allowance. Of course, in this case, the Court could not force the Parliament to provide access to those documents because, since they do not even control that spending, they do not physically possess any documents about it.

> European Court of Justice refuses journalists' request to see how #MEPs spend public money. If the European Parliament had better accounting systems, we wouldn't be in this mess in the first place. #transparency needed NOW! pic.twitter.com/Q6fI5mUIcG
>
> — Pam Bartlett Q (@PamBQ) September 25, 2018

All this comes despite the fact that several political groups inside the European Parliament are already transparent about how they spend these funds - including Members of the Greens/EFA Group, which in turn has adopted its own transparency policy for the General Expenditure Allowance.

- Read our press reaction
- Read the European Court of Justice's (ECJ) Press Release about the case
- Read the full ECJ ruling

Recommended

Press release

Leonardo1982



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Press release

European External Action Service (https://www.flickr.com/photos/eeas/32978511020)



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Press release

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News

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12.09.2025

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