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European Parliament transparency

Centre right MEPs vote to keep details of industry-funded jollies opaque

The European Parliament's bureau (1) last night voted to overturn the essence of provisions in the MEP code of conduct aimed at ensuring full transparency when MEPs accept gifts in the form of travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses from third parties. The outcome, which was determined by a centre right majority on the EP's bureau, ignored the advice of the EP's ethics committee, which had recommended full transparency for such trips. Greens/EFA vice-president Isabelle Durant opposed the decision in the bureau and the Greens hit out the decision, with Green MEP and member of the EP's advisory committee on the code of conduct **Gerald Häfner** stating:

"Last night's decision is unacceptable. A majority of the EP's bureau voted in favour of less transparency, overturning the very essence of a key provision of the new MEP code of conduct, aimed at preventing conflicts of interest and ensuring transparency.

"Gifts from third parties in the form of travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses from third parties could raise serious questions about conflicts of interest and details of such trips should be in the public domain, as was the intention of the code of conduct and the recommendation of the advisory committee. Industry-funded jollies should not be kept in the dark.

"This decision must be brought on the agenda of the EP plenary as a whole with a view to ensuring it is overturned."

(1) The European Parliament's bureau is responsible for the budget, administration, organisation and staff, and is composed of the EP president and 14 vice-presidents.

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