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European Parliament in Court over MEP expenses

Raphaël Kergueno · Thursday, October 19th, 2017

Today, the European Court of Justice will have its first public hearing in a case brought forth by a consortium of investigative journalists, the MEPs Project, against the European Parliament. They brought the present case because of the Parliament's refusal to provide access to documents on how MEPs spend their various allowances.

For the purposes of covering the expenditure incurred in the performance their duties, MEPs receive a general expenditure allowance, to cover office management costs, a travel allowance, a parliamentary assistance allowance to cover staffing, and a flat-rate daily subsistence allowance. In 2017, these allowances cumulatively amount to more than € 300 million.

There is an overarching public interest to allow citizens, civil society and journalists to scrutinise spending on how MEPs are using public money, in order to ensure that proper safeguards are in place for preventing misuse and fraud.

Transparency International EU wholeheartedly supports the MEPs Project's efforts to make this area of EU expenditure more transparent and accountable. It is simply not tenable that the Parliament continues to block transparency on how tax-payer money is being spent.

A number of civil society organisations, including Transparency International EU, are working on the project openbudgets.eu, which aims to provide tools for citizens, journalists and civil society on public spending data.

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