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European Parliament must take action on MEP allowances

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Today, [revelations](#) by a cross-border team of investigative journalists, that Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are allegedly using their office allowances to rent domestic office space from their own homes, political parties, or in some cases not renting anything at all, shows the urgent need for the European Parliament to put in place robust financial control measures regarding MEPs' used of the [General Expenditure Allowance](#) (GEA), according to Transparency International EU.

The GEA is meant for office expenses related to their work as a MEP, such as rental costs for constituency office space, phone bills, or office supplies. The spending under this budget line amounts to just under €40 million annually, cumulatively for all MEPs. There is absolutely [no transparency](#) around the GEA, nor financial controls, nor requirement of receipts, by the European Parliament to prevent the potential misuse of this allowance.

“This is what happens when MEPs can collectively spend €40 million of taxpayers’ money every year without having to produce a single receipt”, said Nick Aiossa, Policy Officer at Transparency International EU.

“It should be obvious that the lack of transparency and control around these allowances make them vulnerable to abuse. Today’s revelations are ample proof of that. This allowance has rules in place and it is not meant to serve as an additional salary, a way to personally enrich themselves, nor subsidise domestic political parties. It is time for the Parliament to take action to instil high-levels of trust in the institution,” concluded Aiossa.

A number of civil society organisations, including Transparency International EU, are working on the project [openbudgets.eu](#), which aims to provide tools for public spending data, so that citizens, journalists and civil society can verify how tax payers’ money is being spent.

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