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Nothing to declare: Farage's whistle-stop US tour

Lucinda Pearson · Monday, May 20th, 2019

A Channel 4 [investigation](#) has revealed that Nigel Farage, Brussels' infamous eurosceptic and Brexit champion, has been bankrolled by his good friend, Arron Banks. This has included paying rent on a house in Chelsea, personal security, a luxury car and office space. It also included travel to the US.

According to the catchily titled, [Implementing Measures For The Code Of Conduct For Members Of The European Parliament With Respect To Financial Interests And Conflicts Of Interest](#), article 6 and 7, MEPs have to declare their trips and participation at events where their expenses or travel are paid for or reimbursed by others. In the past, MEPs have had some trouble with these obligations, for example Nirj Deva and his [undeclared trip to China](#). Mr Farage is also part of this club. In his [European Parliament declaration](#) there is no mention of these US trips, during which he attended the Republican Convention and rubbed shoulders with Donald Trump. He also [spoke at an event](#) with Fox News Anchor Tucker Carlson.

Mr Farage is no stranger to improperly filed European Parliament declarations. In 2017 we were forced to submit a [complaint](#) about his declaration of outside income in order for him to complete it correctly.

Of course breaches of the Code of Conduct in the European Parliament will happen, either accidentally or on purpose for darker reasons. The bigger problem is how the Parliament addresses these violations. In our report [Moonlighting in Brussels](#), which focussed on the outside income of MEPs, we stated that although over the past five years there had been 24 confirmed breaches, there has only been one penalty and it came in the form of a reprimand.

This lack of reprisal for flouting the rules sends a dangerous signal to both policy makers and the public. This is why it is essential that an independent and well-resourced ethics body to oversee conflicts of interest, revolving doors and lobby transparency for all EU institutions should be established. This body would publish findings in a timely manner and also be able to issue binding recommendations and sanction those that breach the rules. The creation of this body is one of the asks of our 2019 European Elections Pledge, [Stand up for Integrity](#), which has been supported by lead candidates of 7 parties and over 400 individuals who are running for the European Parliament.

We support the [request](#) of Catherine Bearder, European Parliament Quaestor, to launch a full investigation into Mr Farage.

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