

398 MEPs earn up to €18m from side-jobs - EU Integrity Watch database launched -

Brussels, 13 October 2014

Members of the European Parliament cumulatively earn between €5.8 and €18.3 million per year on top of their official salaries, according to new research by Transparency International EU Office.

TI EU has for the first ever time collected all available information on the outside activities and incomes of MEPs to create the EU Integrity Watch database (www.integritywatch.eu), which receives its public launch today.

The database provides a comprehensive overview of MEPs' outside revenues. It can be used to show differences between countries, political groups and national parties, and to monitor potential conflicts of interest. It allows MEPs to be ranked based on the number of their outside occupations, board memberships or other political mandates as well as the income derived from these activities.

Key findings:

- 398 or 53% of MEPs have outside activities.
- Combined, those 398 MEPs earn between €5.8 and €18.3 million per year on top of their MEP salaries.
- 175 earn at least €500 per month from outside activities, 12 MEPs even exceed 10,000 EUR.
- One MEP has declared 68 different outside activities.
- Seven declarations are completely blank (no previous or current activities or revenues).
- 46 MEPs indicated a previous income of less than €1,000 per month, according to their declarations. Of those, eight were members of the previous Parliament, who failed to declare their previous mandate.

“The number of paid side jobs shows the potential for conflicts of interest in the European Parliament,” says Carl Dolan, Director of Transparency International EU. “Trust in decision-making requires effective checks and credible sanctions on possible conflicts. Unfortunately, the Parliament’s current efforts pay only lip-service to this principle”.

A total of 1210 activities have been declared. Unfortunately, the way in which some MEPs declare these activities, using terms such as “consultant”, “freelancer”, “manager” or abbreviations such as “RvC FMO” or “ASDCAM”, does not allow an assessment of potential conflicts of interest.

“Meaningful monitoring of conflicts of interest is impossible with the current declarations”, said Daniel Freund, Policy Officer at Transparency International EU. “The European Parliament administration should improve checks on the declarations for possible errors and remind MEPs to provide accurate, useful and updated information. False declarations should lead to sanctions”.

Transparency International’s recommendations:

- Members need to provide more detailed, accurate and timely information on their activities and incomes to allow a meaningful monitoring of potential conflicts of interest.
- The financial bands on the declaration forms (e.g. ‘income between 1.001 and 5,000 EUR per month’) should be narrowed. Current rules that allow MEPs who earn more than EUR 10,000 per month to provide no further information should be changed.
- The European Parliament should issue clearer guidelines on how to fill out the declarations and it should better monitor the submitted declarations.
- All declarations should be translated into all official EU languages to allow all European citizens to monitor all their MEPs.
- An independent ethics committee should monitor compliance and issue binding recommendations for sanctions against MEPs in case of false declarations.

Transparency International is the global civil society organisation leading the fight against corruption.

For further information please contact:

Daniel Freund

Policy Officer EU Integrity

E. dfreund@transparency.org

T: +32 489 58 7140