

28 February 2018

Dear Members of the European Parliament Bureau ad-hoc Working Group  
on the General Expenditure Allowance,

Dear Friends,

I am writing to you concerning the ongoing discussions about the reform of the General Expenditure Allowance. I am grateful for having been a member of the ad-hoc Working Group on the GEA and therefore having been able to take part in discussions about its reform.

The reform of the GEA is overdue. The tolerance for opaque spending of the tax-payers' money is quickly diminishing. We simply do not have a mandate from the European citizens to go on like we have done before.

In its resolution on the General Budget, on 25th of October 2017, the European Parliament called the Parliament's Bureau to make concrete changes to the GEA, by way of ensuring that the GEA would be handled in all cases in a separate bank account; that all receipts pertaining to the GEA should be kept by the Members and that the unspent share of the GEA should be returned at the end of the mandate.

I furthermore add that without increasing the accountability and transparency of the GEA, the three principles contained in the Parliament's resolution do not amount to much. A way to achieve this, could be, for example, by putting in place administration checks for at least of 5% of Members each year, on the basis of the bank statements. In addition the Members should be obliged to publicise the breakdown of the GEA expenditure.

I must add that I do not believe that splitting the allowance into an accountable sum and an unaccountable sum is the solution. It does not console me that the unaccountable sum would be smaller than the accountable sum; the principle of unaccountability in itself is simply wrong - and something we in this Working Group have been working to do away with.

The mandate for the Working Group has ended and we have arrived at an impasse. Let us make a final attempt to come together and try to bring forward measures of transparency and accountability, as is expected from us.

Yours,



Heidi Hautala