

QUESTION AND ANSWER FACT SHEET

Caroline Lucas MEP's allowances for her work as a Euro-MP representing the Southeast – January 2010

1. How much money does an MEP get each year?

MEPs are paid an annual salary of 91,980 euros*. This figure was proposed by an independent panel, who suggested MEPs should be paid the equivalent of 38.5% of the salary of a European Court judge.

In order to perform their duties, MEPs can make formal applications for an allowance of up to 210,480 euros* per year to employ staff in the Parliament and constituency, and up to 50,424* for office running costs. The Parliament also allows MEPs to apply for funds to meet their travel costs and accommodation when moving between UK, Brussels and Strasbourg. **These figures are for the maximum amount claimable by each MEP and do not reflect Caroline's actual spend.** To learn more about these allowances and what Caroline spends them on please visit <http://www.carolinelucasmep.org.uk/euro-parliament/#pay>

2. How does Caroline's expenditure compare to that of other MEPs in the region?

MEPs in the South East of England represent over 9 million constituents so it is important to have a staffing and office infrastructure in place to do this job properly. Not all of them publish information about how allowances are spent so it is difficult to make comparisons. However, from what we can calculate, Caroline's spending is at or below average when matched against that of the other South East MEPs.

3. What have been Greens been doing to try and clean up the MEPs allowances system?

Greens in the European Parliament have been in the forefront of proposing reforms across the MEP allowances system. The rules which came into force in July 2009 requiring MEPs to present tickets to claim back travel expenses at cost, rather than simply receiving a flat mileage rate, are a result of work by Greens. However, these reforms have not been more far reaching because of the refusal of the other political groups, including those to which Conservatives and Labour belonged, to agree proposals.

One of the reforms Greens have been promoting for many years is for MEPs to provide supporting documentation for at least 50% of the general expenditure allowance that they can claim for running costs. This was one of the recommendations made by an independent panel looking at the salary and allowances system, and ways of making them more accountable and transparent. Greens have always argued that MEPs themselves are not the best people to review salaries and allowances and that the Parliament should be guided by an independent body on such matters.

Despite the proposal being opposed by other political groups, Caroline decided to publish receipts along these lines on a voluntary basis from the start of the new parliamentary term ie July 2009 onwards. To date, neither Conservative nor Labour MEPs publish any receipts at all.

Caroline's accounts are verified by an independent firm of auditors and you can read their certificates for the years ending December 31 2008 and 2009 at <http://www.carolinelucasmep.org.uk/euro-parliament/#pay>

Caroline's personal commitment to parliamentary reform has been recognised by the campaign group Open Europe, which in May of last year, gave her top ranking among all UK MEPs for transparency on expenses and accountability. See www.openeurope.org.uk/media-centre/pressrelease.aspx?pressreleaseid=110

The CPR has also named her as the UK's most pro-reform MEP, on the basis of analysis of voting behaviour in 40 votes on parliamentary reform since she was elected in 1999.

Each MEP has to declare any financial interests each year in the Parliament's register. You can see Caroline's here - http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-dif/4524_17-06-2009.pdf

From 2010 onwards she is also recording what lobbying she is subject to in the European Parliament and will be posting this information on her MEPs website on a regular basis. The website allows anyone to access all Caroline's speeches in plenary, formal written questions, written declarations (like Early Day Motions in the Westminster Parliament) and motions in the European Parliament. It is a comprehensive record of her work and an important part of Caroline's commitment to being open about her role as an MEP.

4. How does an MEP's salary compare to what MPs are paid?

At the current exchange rate* a UK MEPs salary is £80,025. MPs are paid an annual salary of £64,766 – and the Mayor of London gets £250,000.

MEPs used to be paid the same amount as MPs from their member states but because MP salaries across Europe differ enormously, this system was recently changed. When the new rules were introduced the exchange rate would actually have meant a pay decrease for UK MEPs, something Caroline supported.

A typical MEP in the South East of England represents over 9 million constituents, compared to the average MP who represents around 90,000 people. The South East MEPs effectively represent 83 Westminster parliamentary constituencies.

MEPs work on a huge range of European legislation. For example, Caroline is currently piloting new legislation through the European Parliament which would ban the import of illegally logged timber into the EU. She is also proactive when it comes to making sure that the UK government upholds European law designed to protect eg workers rights and the environment. She actively campaigns on a range of issues including consumer protection and human rights, regularly winning awards for her work. You can read more about her extensive activities as an MEP via her MEP website, www.carolinelucasmep.org.uk

Caroline takes her responsibilities as an elected representative very seriously and has an excellent track record of responding to constituent's enquiries. She receives around 100 of these each day on average and aims to respond in full within 6-8 weeks.

If you still have questions or need clarification after reading the Q&A sheet please visit <http://www.carolinelucasmep.org.uk/euro-parliament/#pay> or contact Caroline by email to carolinelucas@greenmeps.org.uk

* Exchange rate 22nd January £1=1.15 euros.