

Le siège dans tous ses Etats



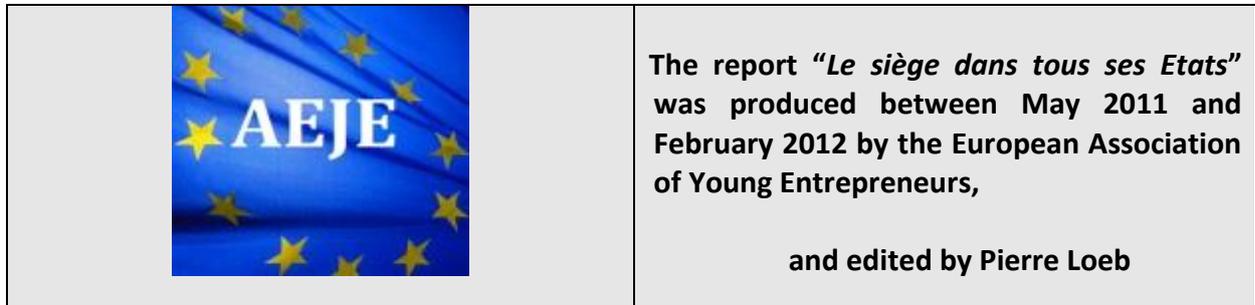
For **or** Against the European Parliament Seat in Strasbourg ?

Careful examination of the historical, institutional,
political and environmental arguments



Report by the European Association
of Young Entrepreneurs

Under the direction of Pierre Loeb
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FOREWORD

Why a report on the issue of the Seat of the European Parliament?

The European Association of Young Entrepreneurs (AEJE) is resolutely pro-European, i.e. it is in favour of building a strong, integrated and mutually-supportive EU, capable of addressing internal and global challenges. Initially, when we created this association in June 2010, we set ourselves the objective of working to help young entrepreneurs both by undertaking concrete programmes (project assistance and support) and by looking at possible ways of improving their status at European level, in cooperation with the European institution.

Concurrently, the AEJE was prompted to take an interest in the issue of the European Parliament's Seat following the publication, in February 2011, of a report, under the chairmanship of a British MEP, which sets out to demonstrate, by fair means or foul, that it is urgent and necessary to amend the European treaties in order to permit the relocation of the European Parliament's Seat from Strasbourg to Brussels, with what are at the very least disputable arguments. The publication of the report by the opponents of Strasbourg was heavily publicized by a major public relations campaign, revealing the existence of a powerful and clearly well-funded lobby group, which has received the public support of a European prime minister.

We were surprised to find that some MEPs spend part of their working time on the issue of their Assembly's Seat, arguing against its Strasbourg location. Is this justified and pertinent given today's particularly pressing challenges? Indeed, the European Union is gravely affected by the financial crisis and has to address very many global challenges. Even though it has new rules since the Lisbon Treaty came into effect in December 2009, it is struggling to deal with the crisis and its consequences, and pursuit of the principle of solidarity between the Member States seems to have reached its limits, as the current crisis is showing.

We have noted, in our frequent contacts with people at the European Parliament, that the partisan approach of the opponents of Strasbourg does not reflect the general feeling. Many of our interlocutors, MEPs, assistants and officials, reported that they were hoping to see a counter analysis, based on objective and irrefutable data.

This is the purpose of this report.

The AEJE, with far slenderer means than the above lobby group (team made up solely of volunteers), wanted to carry out an objective investigation of the justifications for this battle, reliability of the arguments expressed and ways to counter them. To do this it has striven to employ a scrupulous methodology so as to obtain verified and indisputable data.

Pierre Loeb and Jean-Loup Karst,

***Co-chairmen of the European Association of Young
Entrepreneurs***

INTRODUCTION

For several years the location of the European Parliament's Seat in Strasbourg has been the subject of a debate initiated by the advocates of its transfer to Brussels. Supporters of Strasbourg have reacted by arguing the need to respect the treaties, or even bring all the Strasbourg Parliament's services together in Strasbourg.

Adopting a resolutely neutral stance, because of its independence, determination and the fact that it works on a voluntary basis, the European Association of Young Entrepreneurs (AEJE) decided that the issue deserved a detailed and objective examination. This report is the fruit of a survey of stakeholders' views and a quest for objective data, which led it to go through all the arguments put forward with a fine toothcomb and to assess their validity.

The AEJE noted that even the opponents of Strasbourg protesters do not dispute the city's role or place in the history of the European enterprise. City of symbols, Strasbourg became Europe's parliamentary capital, providing since 1949 the location of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly and since 1952 that of the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community, forerunner of today's European Parliament. Thus the current European treaties do not artificially create the status of European parliamentary capital, they only confirm it.

The AEJE found weaknesses and inadequacies, which justify some of the criticisms, but also uncovered very many untruths about the Parliament's Strasbourg Seat, partly motivated by an anti-European approach. It has thus been able to set the record straight on the figures, especially on the financial cost and environmental impact of the Strasbourg location, by refuting the pro-Brussels campaigners' truncated estimates, four times higher than the actual ones.

The report concludes that it is necessary to respect the existing treaties which provide for the European Parliament having three places of work: Strasbourg (Seat), Brussels and Luxembourg; this also complies with the geographical diversity principle, one of the foundations of the European Union to which the great majority of the players are committed.

At the end of this study, the AEJE comes down in favour of maintaining the Seat in Strasbourg. However, in terms of the practical aspects, there remain justified criticisms of the working arrangements and comfort of everyone who comes to work in Strasbourg, particularly the MEPs and their parliamentary assistants, as well as the Parliament's staff, journalists and European experts.

In this first report, the AEJE presents a series of recommendations to remedy the weaknesses in the current situation as regards access to Strasbourg and transport within the city, the services provided, accommodation and working conditions. These remedies are the direct responsibility of the host country France, the Alsace region, City of Strasbourg and relevant economic partners, in close cooperation with the European Parliament's services.

The AEJE intends to follow up these recommendations, liaising with all the interested parties, and to produce a new report looking at the progress achieved.

PRINCIPAL RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION AND RECOMMANDATIONS

1. The European Parliament's Seat in Strasbourg derives its legitimacy from Europe's history. Symbolizing Europe's painful past, Strasbourg acquired the status of parliamentary capital of Europe back in 1949 when chosen as the location for the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly, and since 1952 has also been the Seat of the successive Parliamentary Assemblies, up to the European Parliament today. The European treaties simply record and confirm this legitimacy.
2. In treaty after treaty, the European Parliament has seen its powers substantially extended and strengthened. Now co-legislator of virtually all European Union policies, the Parliament exercises its powers wholly independently. **All the major political and institutional decisions have been taken in Strasbourg** and it is here that the visits of foreign dignitaries invited by the Parliament are hosted. Locating its Seat in Strasbourg has in no way limited the strengthening of its powers or its independence.
3. The European Parliament's three places of work, in Strasbourg, Brussels and Luxembourg, reflect the European Union institutions' **geographical diversity principle**.
4. The concept of **geographical mobility**, integral to the European idea, is embraced by all national and European political leaders and officials. For MEPs this mobility is inherent to their jobs, shared between their constituencies, national capitals and the multiple meeting places of the European Parliament. Moreover, when it comes to the Parliament's Committees, groups and political parties, MEPs frequently decide to meet in places other than Strasbourg and Brussels. Consequently, bringing all the European Parliament's services onto a single site would have little impact on this mobility.
5. The opponents of Strasbourg constantly refer to the British MEP Mr McMillan-Scott's report ("A tale of two cities"), marked by a flagrant lack of objectivity. Its arguments turn out to be a **tissue of untruths and truncated, incorrect or approximate data**. For example, the two main figures published – the annual cost (between €169 and €203 million) and carbon footprint of the Strasbourg Seat (19,000 tonnes of CO₂) – do not stand up to analysis. **The AEJE has demonstrated that they are four times higher than the actual ones**, based on recent official European Parliament documents.

	« A tale of two Cities »	« Le siège dans tous ses Etats »
Annual cost (€)	169 / 203 millions	51,5 millions
Carbon footprint	18 884 tonnes CO ²	4 199 tonnes CO ²

6. Indeed, supporting evidence, provided by documents published by the European Parliament and appended to this report, show that the **annual cost of the Strasbourg Seat amounts to €51.5 million (i.e. 10 cents € per citizen per year) and the carbon footprint to 4,199 tonnes of CO₂ (2010 figures)**.

7. Paradoxically, some MEPs are against the Strasbourg seat because of the inconvenience caused by the need to travel to the city, whilst they make an increasing number of **trips outside the Parliament's three places of work** for meetings of political groups, Committees and delegations (5 million kilometres travelled in 2010, +42% in four years).

8. In terms of respect for the environment, the **Strasbourg Seat appears a trailblazer compared with the European Union's other places of work**. CO₂ emissions were cut by 57% between 2006 and 2010 thanks to specific measures in the fields of energy (in particular 100% green electricity) and transport (more train than plane journeys between Brussels and Strasbourg). Over the same period, the European Parliament as a whole reduced its carbon footprint by 14%.

AEJE's recommendations

General recommendations:

1. **The French government and the local authorities must, working in synergy, make an active, strong and determined effort to strengthen Strasbourg's European and international remit. Together, they must also strive to develop a proactive coordinated communication policy to explain and promote their actions. This will send clear signals to the MEPs and all European political leaders regarding their support for and commitment to the French Seat of the European institutions.**

2. **At the practical level, the AEJE strongly recommends creation of the office of "mediator", a link between the European Parliament and French authorities, who would be responsible for relaying and taking on board the expectations, needs and criticisms of MEPs, assistants and officials.**

Recommendations on access

3. Take forward the direct Brussels-Luxembourg-Strasbourg rail link project (EuroCapRail project).

4. Develop TGV links between Brussels and Strasbourg via Roissy Airport.

5. Develop the complementarity between rail and air services and facilitate rail access so that Strasbourg is less than an hour away from a nearby European airport, giving priority to the service between Basel-Mulhouse and Strasbourg.

6. Look into and facilitate the bringing in of air taxi operators where this does not duplicate existing services and add stops in Strasbourg to scheduled long-distance services during the Parliament's sessions.

7. Align the taxes applied to Strasbourg airport taxes with those of airports in the surrounding region.

8. Bring a low-cost airline to Strasbourg.
9. Consider ways of improving links with certain hubs.

Recommendations on transport within the city

10. Establish a direct tram link between the *Gare centrale* (main station) and European Parliament, on the existing network.
11. Create a special “**European Parliament Pass**” an inter-modal travel ticket valid for the duration of each plenary session.
12. Convene a round-table discussion bringing the authorities together with taxi drivers’ representatives in order to improve taxi services during plenary sessions, dealing both with the number of taxis available and quality of the service.

Recommendations on accommodation

13. Organize a series of round-table discussions with the various parties involved (authorities, hotel managers and the different categories of clients in Strasbourg during plenary sessions) to identify the difficulties they encounter and seek appropriate solutions.
14. Make concrete progress on producing a “**Hotel Quality Charter**” for the City of Strasbourg to promote hotels offering appropriate room capacity, services and prices.
15. Create a “**European Parliament label**” for hotels signing up to and complying with the charter.

Recommendations on working conditions

16. Maintain the high level of security felt in Strasbourg, which is far above that found in Brussels.
17. Encourage the policy of providing more office space to address the needs of MEPs and assistants, as has recently been done with the acquisition of B building from the Council of Europe.
18. Reduce the resources currently employed to transport documents between Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg, taking on board the real needs expressed by the MEPs.
19. Allow all MEPs to invite groups of visitors to Strasbourg under the same conditions as in Brussels (payments to reimburse groups’ expenses).

Recommendation on arrangements and facilities for MEPs in Strasbourg

20. Conclude an agreement between the city of Strasbourg and European Parliament to develop existing partnerships and joint actions in order to improve the information services available to MEPs and other visitors to Strasbourg. Set up an information network to help all MEPs, assistants and officials, giving details of all the events and cultural, artistic and social activities taking place during the plenary sessions, with partners such as the tourist office, Alsace region and the different private-sector players.
21. Promote and systematize exchanges and meetings between the local authorities and MEPs.
22. Make concrete progress on the project to create a "*Lieu d'Europe*" (Place for Europe) for citizens and particularly groups of visitors invited by MEPs.

« Le Siègè dans tous ses Etats »

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1. History and state of the debate

1.1 History

Why is the Seat of the European Parliament in Strasbourg?

The choice by Europe's founding fathers of Strasbourg out of all the European cities is the most legitimate one. Strasbourg symbolizes better than any other the reconciliation of the European Nations as the Briton Winston Churchill announced back on 10 August 1949: "We are meeting to set up an assembly which we hope will one day be the parliament of Europe. We have taken the first step and it is the first step that counts. This magnificent gathering of the people of Strasbourg was summoned by the European Movement to show the world what strength lies in the idea of a united Europe, what force it has."

For 62 years, Strasbourg has been the European capital of democracy and human rights: since 1949 the home of the Council of Europe and its Parliamentary Assembly and since 1952, that of the first Parliamentary Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community, predecessor of the current European Parliament. Strasbourg is also the Seat of the European Court of Human Rights, guardian of the fundamental freedoms of eight hundred million Europeans.

In the eyes of European citizens, Strasbourg is associated with European values and perceived as the European parliamentary capital. This decentralization from Brussels strengthens the independence of the legislative power and upholds the principle of geographical diversity of the European Union's different institutions.

Thus history, cultural factors and the geographical diversity principle, as well as the choice of Europe's founding fathers legitimize Strasbourg as European parliamentary capital.

What the treaties say

The issue of the Seat is legally settled by the treaties which, since that of Amsterdam in 1997, have confirmed the European Parliament's Seat in Strasbourg and, with Brussels and Luxembourg, its three places of work. Thus the European treaties do not artificially create the European Parliament's Seat in Strasbourg, they only endorse it. The treaties commit all the States and all the institutions which have to respect them.

This is why the European Parliament's Seat, established since 1952 in Strasbourg, was confirmed by the Edinburgh European Council in 1992, and in the Treaty of Amsterdam in 2004: "*The European Parliament shall have its seat in Strasbourg where the 12 periods of monthly plenary sessions, including the budget session, shall be held. The periods of additional plenary sessions shall be held in Brussels. The committees of the European Parliament shall meet in Brussels. The General Secretariat of the European Parliament and its departments shall remain in Luxembourg.*" These provisions were not modified by the Treaty of Lisbon which came into force in December 2009.

Why are all the European Parliament's services not in one place?

Some of the people the AEJE questioned think that the European institutions should be together in one place. Yet, its geographical diversity and the mobility of all its players are in fact important features of the European Union.

- Because the European Union is an association of States it cannot be compared to a single State, either as regards its structures or operation. The argument that its powers should be geographically concentrated is not pertinent. The **European institutions' geographical diversity thus faithfully upholds the constant will to bring Europe ever closer to its citizens and not isolate it in a single centre**. This is why the judicial power, the Court of Justice of the European Union has its Seat in Luxembourg, the European Bank in Frankfurt and the numerous agencies are located all over Europe (cf. Appendix 1). This rationale is consistent with the geographical diversity principle and need to spread the activities harmoniously throughout its territory.

- Mobility is a major feature of the jobs of all the European Union's players – MEPs, government ministers, local elected representatives, economic and social partners, and officials. The 27 Member States' ministers (Finance, Foreign Affairs, Justice, Agriculture, Transport, etc.) meet regularly, the main ones monthly, coming from their respective capitals, in different places, either in Brussels or, three months a year, in Luxembourg, and, in the case of informal meetings, in the Member State holding the EU presidency.

The same applies to the **MEPs, whom mobility is inherent to their job**. They regularly travel between their constituencies, in their home countries, and the cities in which the institutions are located. None live all the time in their constituencies, Strasbourg or Brussels. Consequently, regardless of whether the sessions and meetings take place in Strasbourg, Brussels or elsewhere, the MEPs have to travel, most often from their home countries. In its internal organization, the European Parliament itself upholds this geographical diversity principle. Indeed, the AEJE found that MEPs, including those demanding "for convenience" that all their work be brought onto a single site, frequently participate in meetings of Parliamentary Committees or their political group or party held outside Strasbourg, Brussels and Luxembourg. In this respect, a Parliament report of March, 2003 "*Is astonished that the cost of committee meetings outside Brussels, Strasbourg and Luxembourg amounts to €1,144,530 per annum*" (document A5-0082/2003 of 25 March 2003). Moreover, these trips produce higher CO₂ emissions than the Strasbourg Seat (6,350 tonnes of CO₂ as against 4,199 tonnes. See details on page 24).

Why does the European Parliament reportedly not have the power to decide where its Seat should be?

One of the main arguments of the opponents to Strasbourg, drawn exclusively from Mr McMillan-Scott's report, is to claim the MEPs' right themselves to choose where they meet. But paradoxically, the same report recognizes that the Parliament's power to organize its own internal affairs is limited by the treaties, quoting the judgement of the European Union Court of Justice of 1 October 1997 (case C345/95).

This judgment clearly states that the location of the institutions' Seat falls within the remit of the States: *“Whilst the Parliament is authorized, under that power of internal organization, to take appropriate measures to ensure the proper functioning and conduct of its proceedings, its decisions in that regard must respect the competence of the Governments of the Member States to determine the seat of the institutions.*

The judgment also makes it clear that *“The decision [taken in Edinburgh] must be interpreted as defining the seat of the Parliament as the place where 12 ordinary plenary part-sessions must take place on a regular basis, including those during which the Parliament is to exercise the budgetary powers conferred upon it by the Treaty. Additional plenary part-sessions cannot therefore be scheduled for any other place of work **unless the Parliament holds the 12 ordinary plenary part-sessions in Strasbourg, where it has its seat.**”*

1.2 State of the debate

- Advocates of a single Seat in Brussels

- The main reference for the opponents of Strasbourg is the report entitled “[A tale of two cities](#)”¹ presented in February 2011 by the British MEP, Mr McMillan-Scott. The clearly announced goal is to demonstrate the need to bring the European Parliament’s Seat to Brussels. The main arguments are, on one hand, the MEPs’ right to decide where they work and, on the other, the significant economies which would be generated by bringing all the services to Brussels, in budgetary and environmental impact terms. **This AEJE report shows both the partisan nature of the arguments developed and that the estimates are truncated, approximate or obsolete.** These figures, widely picked up in the media, also appear, without being checked or updated, in a recent report published in October 2011 by two Eurosceptic MEPs of the European Conservative and Reformists Group.²

On 9 March 2011, MEPs adopted, by secret ballot, amendments whereby the calendars for the plenary sessions in 2012 and 2013 provide for two sessions in the same week every October. **These amendments tabled by Mr Ashley Fox, British MEP from the European Conservative and Reformists Group, have in fact led to the removal of one of the two normally scheduled four-day plenary sessions** in October 2012 and October 2013. So there will be a two-day plenary session on the Monday and Tuesday, a break on Wednesday, and a second plenary session on the Thursday and Friday. **This “trick” is designed to bypass the European treaties, which provide for the Parliament holding twelve plenary sessions a year in Strasbourg.**

- France, reacting as a Member State, referred the issue to the Court of Justice of the European Union, considering that *“those decisions, which in fact amount to abolishing one of the twelve annual sessions, violate Protocol No. 6 (to the Treaty on the European Union) on the location of the institutions’ seats”*. Luxembourg has joined France in the court case.

In the framework of France’s referral of the issue to the European Court of Justice, backed by Luxembourg, objecting to the Parliament’s vote on the calendar for the sessions in 2012 and 2013, the lobby led by Mr McMillan-Scott in pursuit of his battle for the transfer of the Parliament’s Seat to Brussels, appealed to the European governments, and particularly the British government, to give official support to the European Parliament at the European Court. No government has done so. For its part, the British government declared that it would not intervene in the procedure, provoking sharp reactions from some British MPs and MEPs who, like Mr McMillan-Scott, have accused Mr Cameron of “betraying” his commitments and the coalition government agreement”.

¹ “[A tale of two cities](#)”. The political, financial, environmental and social impact of the European Parliament’s “two-seat” arrangement. Report for the Brussels-Strasbourg Seat Study Group. Chairman Edward McMillan-Scott MEP, Vice-President of the European Parliament. Brussels/Strasbourg, February 2011.

² [Ending Excess: Cutting the Costs of the European Parliament](#), Geoffrey Van Orden, Derk Jan Eppink. October 2011.

- **Advocates of bringing everything together in Strasbourg**

The advocates of Strasbourg as the European Parliament's Seat basically argue the need to respect the European treaties and draw attention to the legitimacy of Strasbourg and its symbolic nature when it comes to the history and principles of the European enterprise. Considering that Strasbourg's status is self-evident, they most often confine themselves to reacting to the anti-Strasbourg lobby. Some of them call for all the Parliament's services to be brought together in Strasbourg.

No comprehensive large-scale report has been produced since the report to the Prime Minister drafted in 2001 by M. Roland Ries, the current mayor of Strasbourg, whose aim was to put forward innovative new proposals both to improve access and services to Strasbourg and strengthen the city's international role and European activities, based on the European Parliament. The report defends the principle of European polycentrism and presents proposals which, with hindsight, make it possible to assess the progress achieved and what still has to be done. Some of these proposals, still relevant, concur with the recommendations formulated by the AEJE (Report entitled "*Renforcer la vocation européenne de Strasbourg*" [in French: "Reinforcing Strasbourg's European mission"], by Roland Ries, October 2001, drafted at the Prime Minister's request.

- **MEP Bernd Posselt's nine "preconceptions"**. In a document published in March 2010 "**Why should the European Parliament in Strasbourg be reinforced**", the German MEP Bernd Posselt mounts a strong protest against the opponents of Strasbourg and argues for bringing all the European Parliament's services together in Strasbourg. He denounces what he calls nine "preconceptions" regarding the Strasbourg Seat, particularly in respect of the importance and symbol of Strasbourg, the cost of the Seat and access. (translation in Appendix 1).

- Some voluntary organizations, particularly in Alsace, are also promoting the idea of bringing all the European Parliament's services together in Strasbourg, by virtue of its status as "European parliamentary capital" and the need for a "clear geographical separation of powers".

- Finally, at national level, the French National Assembly published a report on the issue (National Assembly Report presented by Mr Christophe Caresche³) and, on 5 May 2011, the French Senate passed a "*Resolution on holding the European Parliament's plenary sessions in Strasbourg*". Presented by the Senator Roland Ries, mayor of Strasbourg, this resolution asks "*the European institutions and in particular to the Council to prevent the holding of the European Parliament's plenary sessions in Strasbourg being called into question*". This is clearly a reaction to the European Parliament's vote on 9 March 2011.

³ [Report on the draft resolution on the holding of the European Parliament's plenary sessions in Strasbourg](#) April 2012

* *

Bringing all the services together on a single site, regardless of whether it is in Brussels or Strasbourg, would require modifying the European Union Treaties, a lengthy and risky procedure which would open the door to a review of the locations of all the European institutions, or even haggling between Member States. Such negotiations could not be successfully concluded without the unanimity of the 27 Member States.

2. Results of the AEJE's investigation

As its survey progressed, the European Association of Young Entrepreneurs noted that, on the issue of the Parliament's Seat, its many interviewees, MEPs, MEP assistants and other stakeholders (journalists, experts, etc.) could be divided into three categories:

- **Opponents of the Strasbourg Seat**, who defend the principle of a "single Seat" in Brussels. Outnumbered but particularly determined, they are influenced by the British MEP Mr McMillan-Scott, initiator of the "*A tale of two cities*" report (February 2011). These opponents are behind a powerful, well-funded lobby group, with a network of mainly British journalists. Moreover, this lobbying has gone on for years, which has among other things imprinted various pictures in every European citizen's mind, such as the famous picture of the canteens (trunks) in front of the offices and articulated lorries loaded with documents - a direct consequence of this media influence. Every often simplistic or imprecise argument in the propaganda-report "*A tale of two cities*" is used, to justify the goal they are pursuing (a single Seat in Brussels).
- **Declared advocates of Strasbourg**, who stress the need to respect the treaties and Strasbourg's legitimacy in the light of European history. Also outnumbered, and despite genuine efforts to bolster support for the Strasbourg Seat, they cannot fully counter their opponents' concrete arguments. Most of them argue in favour of the status quo, while others champion the idea of bringing all the Parliament's services to Strasbourg, which would also necessitate reopening the treaties.
- **A great majority of stakeholders, who are not persuaded either way**. They adopt, to varying degrees, the arguments of the advocates or opponents. A great many recognize the legitimacy and value of the Strasbourg Seat, while criticizing the working environment of the MEPs and the staff, the difficulties they encounter with regard to access, transport, accommodation and services.

2.1 How much credence can be given to the “A tale of two cities” report ?

- **Lack of objectivity**
- **Biased and non-representative study**
- **Truncated, erroneous, approximate estimate of the cost of the Strasbourg Seat**
- **Erroneous, approximate and out-of-date assessment of the carbon footprint**
- **Mr McMillan-Scott’s report ignores the warnings of the baseline study’s drafters on the approximate and extrapolated nature of some of the basic data**
- **The methodology used is open to dispute and based on erroneous references**
- **Mr McMillan-Scott’s 2011 report ignores the developments since 2006**

The sole aim, clearly expressed in its introduction, of the report presented in February 2011 by Mr McMillan-Scott, is to show by fair means or foul the drawbacks of the current situation and need to bring all the European Parliament’s services together in Brussels, **without making clear the costs** (investment and additional fixed costs) the transfer would involve.

The two main figures given, deliberately chosen to influence minds and European public opinion, are **the cost of the Strasbourg Seat and its carbon footprint**. The AEJE disputes these estimates and, supported by European Parliament documents, sets the record straight on the figures :

	Mr McMillan-Scott’s Report	AEJE report/European Parliament documents
Cost of the Seat €million	169 to 203	51.5
Carbon footprint tonnes CO₂	18,884.5	4,199

On examination, the report was found to lack objectivity, refer to a biased and non-representative “opinion survey” and present excessively high erroneous assessments of the Seat’s financial cost and environmental impact :

-Lack of objectivity. First of all, the report was drafted by Mr Michel Van Huiltten who is presented as both an “independent consultant based in Brussels” and a former Member of the European Parliament, initiator of a campaign aimed at bringing all the European Parliament’s services together in a “single location” in Brussels. This explains why there is a blatant lack of objectivity throughout the report. In the introduction to the report, Mr Van Huiltten explains that most of those interviewed asked to remain anonymous because of a “code of silence”, an “omerta” on the issue within the European Parliament. He also claims that he could not find any MEPs in favour of Strasbourg willing to answer to his questions. This is at the very least astonishing in that a great majority of the 250 people interviewed by the AEJE supported the Strasbourg Seat, but were realistic and critical with respect to certain deficiencies. So **the purpose of this “Le siege dans tous ses Etats” report is to provide an objective overview of how Strasbourg is really viewed.**

-A biased and non-representative study. Mr McMillan-Scott’s report presents a study carried out by the University of Zurich, based on a questionnaire with “leading” questions. Indeed, two main questions for MEPs [and assistants] were: “*Do you believe the Treaty should be amended to give Parliament the official right to decide its own Seat and places of work?*” and “*If the Parliament had the right to choose to hold all the plenary sessions in one place, which do you believe it should be?*” (between Brussels and Strasbourg). The replies were very predictable because of the way the questions were framed.

Not surprisingly in favour of Brussels the results of this questionnaire are marked by a blatant lack of representativity. **Only 61 MEPs, i.e. 8%, answered it. The other 417 replies (out of 2,260 questionnaires sent out, ie. a low 18.45% response rate) mainly came from MEP assistants.** The study’s conclusion is that 88% those who replied would like to change the treaty and 91% would opt for Brussels – there was no indication of whether the respondent was an MEP or assistant. Interestingly, 44% of the respondents justify their choices on the basis of cost, 41% on the proximity to other institutions and 38% on the general working conditions.

2.2 How much does the Strasbourg Seat cost?

Using only official documents which the European Parliament has published in the past few years, the AEJE has obtained all the data showing the bad faith of the opponents of Strasbourg, who put the annual cost at between €169 to €203 million for the Strasbourg Seat.

The actual cost was €51.5 million in 2010 → 10 cents € per citizen per year

2.2.1 According to the opponents of Strasbourg : truncated, erroneous or approximate assessment

Mr McMillan-Scott's report asserts that the Strasbourg Seat is expensive for European taxpayers and suggests an annual cost of **between €169 and €203 million**. The report refers to a 2002 European Union Secretariat-General document, which mentions a €169 million-estimate for 2000), adding that "After enlargement, that figure might rise to EUR 203 million".

Mr McMillan-Scott is careful not to make it clear that these figures do not relate solely to the Strasbourg Seat. Indeed, he omits to mention two important reservations in this European Parliament Secretariat-General document.

Firstly, the Secretariat-General warns that the estimates concern the annual "cost of maintaining three places of work" (paragraph 47 of the document) and include costs unrelated to the Strasbourg Seat. Moreover **he draws attention to the difficulty of estimating the actual costs**. The document also makes clear that "Any concentration of activities in one place of work would entail one-off infrastructure and removal costs and would probably be offset by Parliament's vacating the larger premises currently occupied. Recurring costs might also arise" (paragraph 2 8). **The study underlines the difficulty of estimating the size of these costs (paragraph 23).**

In other words, Mr McMillan-Scott's report cites estimates from 2002 which do not apply only to the Strasbourg Seat, but also cover the Luxembourg Secretariat as well as the latter's secretariat staff travel costs between Brussels and Luxembourg.

- Estimated at €78 million, on the basis of 2000 figures, **the infrastructure costs** have been significantly reduced since then because the European Parliament has purchased the whole Strasbourg Seat complex. Strasbourg's fixed infrastructure costs in Strasbourg can today be estimated at €35 million.

- **The operational cost** cited in Mr McMillan-Scott's includes all the operating costs during the sessions (€42 million for equipment, translation, publications and technical installations) **and MEPs' travel costs (€18 million)**. These costs turn out to have nothing to do with the fact that the sessions take place in Strasbourg. The MEPs' travel expenses, which are included in this inventory, would arise regardless of the meeting's location since the MEPs go to Strasbourg or Brussels from their home countries. The costs would be similar in Brussels or any other place.

Mr McMillan-Scott's report	AEJE Report (Secretariat-General documents)
€169 million to €203 million	€51.5 million

2.2.2 According the AEJE (official documents of the European Parliament)

On this point, the AEJE challenges the way the advocates of bringing all the European Parliament's services into one place put forward estimates of potential cost savings without also accurately calculating the expenses involved in doing this (additional fixed costs, investments, and cost of vacant buildings).

As regards the method, we have added up all the costs generated in Strasbourg, taking care to distinguish between those genuinely inherent to the Seat and the holding of the plenary sessions in Strasbourg (infrastructure and operating expenses) and those which, although generated in Strasbourg, would be the same regardless of the Seat's location.

Going back several years we have arrived at an amount close to €50 million, mainly by using the documents regularly released by the European Parliament's Secretariat-General to the Committee on Budgetary Control (COCOBU), especially the "replies and follow-up to the discharge" for the different years.

In order to obtain the most recent figure, the AEJE instigated some parliamentary questions on the exact infrastructure and running costs for 2010. **The answers the Secretariat-General provided on 19 January 2012 ("replies and follow-up to the discharge for 2010" and its appendices) confirm our conclusions and give the specific figure of €51.5 million for the overall cost (page 40 of the document). It means 10 cents € per citizen per year.**

This cost is broken down into fixed infrastructure costs and operating costs :

-Fixed infrastructure costs: €33.5 million a year

Since all the buildings of the Strasbourg Seat have been purchased, the infrastructure budget cost remains limited (€33.5 million in 2010) and is in no way comparable to **the equivalent costs in Brussels (€81.4 million in 2009)**. Moreover, this imbalance raises questions.

-Operating costs: €18 million a year

In reply to a parliamentary question in 2009, all the costs relating to the plenary sessions in Strasbourg were recorded and amounted (gross) to **€7,445 000 per session**. This total amount is mainly split between the **costs which are "irrespective of part-session location"** and to a lesser extent those which are **"partly irrespective of part-session location"**.

Indeed, the document "*Responses to the discharge questionnaire 2009*" states that "*In any case, if plenary sessions in Strasbourg are to be replaced by plenary sessions in Brussels, specific costs related to any Plenary session and subsistence allowances, travel expenses and related costs for Members as well as local assistants would be similar*" (page 12 of the document).

Consequently, about 80% of the expenditure is fixed and irrespective of the session's location. It is essentially expenditure on equipment, publications, technical installations, translation, telecommunications, etc. Similarly, MEPs' travel expenses from their constituencies cannot be reduced and are almost identical regardless of their destination, Strasbourg or Brussels.

As regards the expenditure which is "partly irrespective of the part-session's location", the specific operating costs directly relating to the Seat's location and holding sessions in Strasbourg can be calculated using the figures given in the document.

It became possible to determine the exact cost of a session following the transfer of two plenary sessions from Strasbourg to Brussels, due to the unavailability of the Strasbourg Chamber. The European Parliament Secretariat-General was thus able to calculate that a session cost €1.5 million, i.e. an operating cost of €18 million a year.

Actual cost of the European Parliament's Strasbourg Seat (2010)

NATURE OF THE EXPENDITURE	COSTS PER SESSION (€)	ANNUAL COSTS (€)
Fixed infrastructure costs:		33,481,000
Rents		53,000
Fitting out of premises,		8,655,000
Cleaning, maintenance and upkeep,		13,088,000
Energy consumption,		3,219,000
Surveillance, security and safety of the buildings.		8,466,000
Operating costs per session	1,500 000	18,062,000
Mission expenses and travel costs for assistants, officials and interpreters not domiciled in Strasbourg	1,224,166	14,690,000
Conference Interpreters and technicians	90,000	1,080,000
Operation of <i>crèches</i>	1,000	12,000
Recruitment of temporary staff	157,500	1,890,000
Travel costs to Strasbourg for MEPs (official and transfer vehicles) and canteens (trunks)	32,500	390,000
ANNUAL TOTAL		51,543,000

I.e. 0.04% of the European Union's annual budget

and 10 eurocents per citizen per year

2.3 What is the actual “environmental cost” of the Parliament’s Strasbourg Seat?

The quantitative data in the European Parliament’s most recent documents put the Seat’s carbon output at 4,199 tonnes of CO₂ for the year 2010, far lower than the estimate of 19,000 tonnes (for 2006) given in Mr McMillan-Scott’s report.

2.3.1 According to the opponents of Strasbourg : an erroneous, approximate and non-updated assessment

The environmental impact of the Seat of the European Parliament is one of the main arguments put forward by the opponents of the Strasbourg Seat.

The “A tale of two cities” report released in February 2011 by Mr McMillan-Scott picks up the conclusions of **a study two MEP members of the British Green Party**⁴ commissioned in 2007. This estimates the Seat’s carbon footprint at **18,884.5 tonnes of CO₂ a year**, based on data from 2000 and 2006.

Like that for the financial cost, this figure, widely published in the media, is regularly cited by Strasbourg’s opponents and often used in briefs justifying the need to bring all the Parliament’s activities together in Brussels. The AEJE has carried out an in-depth analysis of this study, its arguments and the methodology used. It has compared all this with the most recent data published by **the European Parliament’s Secretariat-General**.

For the AEJE, three things are evident from this analysis: the study is partly based on **extrapolated and approximate data, as its authors admit**; it results from a questionable methodology based on incorrect baseline figures; finally, it takes the 2008 results without updating them and fails to take into consideration the important progress made in reducing the carbon footprint. These three arguments are detailed below.

-Mr McMillan’s report ignores the warnings given by the baseline report’s authors regarding the approximate and extrapolated nature of some of the basic data

Mr McMillan-Scott’s report presents the results of the environmental impact study as indisputable and accurate, **while its authors give several warnings about the quality of the data**. In the preamble, they write “*we have not had access to high-quality data on all aspects of personnel and transport*” and “*we have not carried out a compensatory analysis for any additional energy*”

⁴ European Parliament two-seat operation: Environmental costs, transport & energy, Eco-Logica Ltd, November 2007

expenditure in Brussels if the Strasbourg operation were to cease.” (page 6 of the study). In its conclusions, they reiterate *“Our analysis (...) must be regarded as indicative rather than a precise quantification”* and *“we have overcome data deficiencies by constructing scenarios”* (page 62).

-The methodology used is questionable and based on incorrect figures

The study was conducted using British ISA methodology which allows CO₂ emissions to be extrapolated from the costs and operating budget of the body being looked at. For the Strasbourg Seat, the authors took **the incorrect and over-estimated figure of €203 million, dating from 2002,** which was also used in Mr McMillan-Scott’s report (see previous paragraph). Besides its questionable nature, **use of this method means that all expenses are included, without separating those not directly linked to the Strasbourg Seat or the fixed charges which would be transferred if the sessions were held in another location.**

Nevertheless, the study’s authors decided to use this methodology even though they acknowledge that *“applying this methodology to the European Parliament will only give an approximation to reality”* and needs to *“be verified in the future”* (pages 56 and 62 of the study). **This led them to increase the results obtained by 9,352 tonnes of CO₂ i.e. nearly 50% of their estimate.**

- Mr McMillan-Scott’s 2011 report ignores the developments since 2006

Although released in February 2011, Mr McMillan-Scott’s report ignores the important changes which have occurred since the environmental impact study, which uses figures from 2000 and 2006. In fact these are no longer up to date. Thanks to various measures and actions implemented in the framework of the European Parliament’s environmental plan, **the environmental impact decreased by 14.6% between 2006 and 2010** for all the Parliament’s sites.

For the Parliament’s Strasbourg Seat alone, the efforts have led to an even more significant decrease (**-56.9% between 2006 and 2010**), mainly due to two measures. On the energy front, thanks to use of 100% renewable electricity since 2008, total carbon emissions fell by 20%. According to the figures in this environmental study, this resulted in the emission of **3,392 fewer tonnes of CO₂** which the authors of the report presented by Mr Mc Milan-Scott should have deducted from the total of 18,885 tonnes. As regards transport (freight and people), there was **a 26% reduction in emissions** mainly due to a greater use of trains (instead of planes) between Brussels and Strasbourg and the rationalization of travel.

2.3.2 According the AEJE (official documents of the European Parliament)

Supporting documents

To calculate the carbon output of the European Parliament's Strasbourg Seat, the AEJE used the most recent data from various official documents released by the European Parliament's Secretary-General, and especially the "2011 Environmental Statement of the European Parliament for 2010". According to the documents:

-this annual statement is produced as part of the Environmental Management System which complies with the relevant European regulation and the European Parliament's EMAS (*Eco-Management and Audit Scheme*) Action Plan.

-the European Parliament's carbon footprint has been calculated by **external Consultants who applied the Bilan Carbone™ method developed by ADEME [French Environment and Energy Management Agency] which is compatible with Standard ISO 14064.** It takes account of the six greenhouse gases targeted by the Kyoto Protocol; it is expressed in tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per flow.

-the Strasbourg Seat fully benefited from this Action Plan by significantly reducing CO₂ emissions since 2006, especially in the energy sphere (100% of green electricity since 2008), freight transport between Brussels and Strasbourg (considerably less use of planes and correspondingly more of trains). **Consequently, Strasbourg's emissions decreased by 57% between 2006 and 2010, a far greater reduction than that achieved by all the European Parliament sites put together (-14% over the same period).**

-The Strasbourg Seat's carbon output accounts for 3.6% of total European Parliament CO₂ emissions.

Method of calculation

Using the information provided in this document, the AEJE adopted the following categories in its calculation of the Seat's carbon output: energy consumed (electricity, gas, fuel oil, urban heating and cooling, freight transport (freight between the three sites) and transport of persons (home-office travel, journeys inside Strasbourg, to and from Strasbourg by car, train and plane).

The emissions resulting from activities carried out irrespective of the Seat's location were not taken into consideration (purchase of supplies and services, waste, office furniture, IT and telecommunications equipment). However, it was decided to include all the emissions generated by the energy consumed in the Strasbourg buildings. Similarly, all the emissions resulting from the transport of freight between the three sites (Strasbourg, Brussels and Luxembourg) were included because of the impossibility of separating those not specifically due to the Strasbourg Seat.

Finally, the 2011 Environmental Statement reveals the continuing increase in the number of journeys MEPs make outside the three places of work: “*The emissions per employee-equivalent due to air travel by MEPs away from the three sites for political group, committee and delegation meetings increased by 23.8% between 2006 and 2010*”, due to an increase “*of nearly 5 million km, i.e. +43.6%, between 2006 and 2010*” (page 26 of the environmental statement). So it is paradoxical that some MEPs argue against the Strasbourg Seat because of the inconvenience caused by the need to travel there, when they are increasing the number of trips they make outside the three places of work. In terms of CO₂ emissions, this accounts for 6,525 tonnes of CO₂ for 2010, a figure far higher than the Strasbourg Seat’s carbon footprint (4,199 tonnes of CO₂).

Using the figures given in this document (pages 68 to 70) the Strasbourg Seat’s carbon footprint comes to 4,199 tonnes of CO₂ in 2010.

STRASBOURG emission flows	2010 In tonnes of CO₂
<u>ENERGY CONSUMED</u>	
Natural gas	1,487
Fuel oil	46
Urban heating and cooling	0
Electricity	0 (100% green electricity)
<u>TRANSPORT OF GOODS: Internal freight between the three sites (sessions and mail)</u>	265
<u>TRANSPORT OF PERSONS</u>	
Home-office travel	55
To and from Strasbourg by car	1,957
To and from Strasbourg by train	156
To and from Strasbourg by plane	233
Grand total for Strasbourg Seat	4,199 tonnes of CO₂

(see details in appendix 3 of this report)

3. AEJE's recommendations

The AEJE questioned two hundred and fifty people, of different statuses and nationalities, within the European Parliament and among senior figures in national and local government (Ministries, Prefecture, Alsace Region, Municipality and Urban Community of Strasbourg). As the interviews progressed, an initial verdict became clear. For very many of those we questioned "*Strasbourg's problem is purely technical*" and virtually everyone agreed that "*Strasbourg is the heart of Europe, that's indisputable*", according to one interviewee. For another MEP, who isn't French, "*the anti-Strasbourg people are made up of different categories: Eurosceptics, political politicians (with their eyes on gaining political advantage from opposing the Strasbourg Seat) and egoists who think only about their personal comfort, since they are happily settled in Brussels.*"

The European Association of Young Entrepreneurs' survey revealed that Strasbourg is considered to have undeniable strengths. While there was recognition of some gaps and weaknesses, the AEJE found support for the Strasbourg seat and is issuing a series of recommendations to the national and local authorities, relevant industries and businesses and the European Parliament designed to remedy them.

The European Association of Young Entrepreneurs has listed and analyzed all the criticisms and expectations and formulated **concrete proposals and recommendations** for remedying them. They are addressed not only to the **City of Strasbourg, Bas-Rhin Department, Alsace Region and French government**, guarantors of Strasbourg's European status but also to the various economic partners involved in providing services for visitors staying in the city during the parliamentary sessions. Implementation of some of these recommendations is also the responsibility of the **European Parliament Secretariat-General**.

Among the different categories of people consulted, the AEJE wishes to pay **special attention to the MEP assistants**. Key people in the organization and running of the plenary sessions, the assistants also suffer the most directly from the drawbacks encountered in Strasbourg, because their special circumstances, and particularly their limited means.

Beyond this, implementation of these recommendations should also address the expectations of very many other people, particularly from abroad, who visit the **other European institutions located in Strasbourg**, such as the Council of Europe and European Court of Human Rights.

These proposals and recommendations are divided into four major subject groups: access, accommodation, working conditions, services and information channels.

In its preamble, under **general recommendations**, the AEJE stresses the need, identified throughout its investigation, for the national and local authorities to pursue and develop a proactive policy to **strengthen Strasbourg's European role**.

Interviewees' responses reveal little awareness or inadequate knowledge of the progress achieved: **a more pro-active and coordinated communication policy** could remedy this.

Given the scale of the issues to be dealt with and as very many MEPs and other stakeholders have requested, the AEJE is recommending to the City of Strasbourg that it create a post of "**mediator**". Present at all times on the European Parliament's premises during sessions, s/he would listen to the MEPs and be responsible both for informing them about services and facilities at their disposal and finding out what they want and expect in order to improve the services the City of Strasbourg, cultural providers and various local economic sectors make available to them. In addition to this, the Mediator could cover all the areas referred to in this report.

General recommendations

The French Government and local authorities must, in synergy, strongly and determinedly, **mobilize politically** in order to strengthen **Strasbourg's European and international role**. They must also, together, strive to develop a **pro-active and coordinated communication policy** to explain and promote their action.

This is in order to send clear signals to MEPs regarding their support for and commitment to the French Seat of the European institutions.

At the practical level, **it is strongly recommended that a "mediator" post be created** – a bridge between the European Parliament and the French authorities, who would be responsible for relaying and taking on board the expectations, needs and criticisms of MEPs, assistants and officials.

3.1 Access

Strasbourg's accessibility has always been a problem, but its air access has got worse with the European Union's enlargements, in 2004 and 2007, bringing in a total of 10 new Member States. There are few or poor services between it and the European capitals in Eastern Europe, as an MEP affected by the problem confirmed: "*Several delegations have to get up in the middle of the night to go to Strasbourg. It takes over 10 hours for some delegations to get there!*"

Yet for very many years, the French State has been devoting substantial resources to developing and improving this accessibility. All the relevant players are investing massively in Strasbourg, European capital, as shown by the funds dedicated to it in the successive three-year contracts, through which the French State invests alongside the local authorities: Alsace Regional Council, the Urban Community of Strasbourg and City of Strasbourg. The main goal is generally to contribute to raising the profile and increasing the economic development of the city and the whole region and in particular to bolster the status of Strasbourg, Seat of the European Parliament and Council of

Europe and a city which is home to very many other institutions and bodies with a European or international remit.

The State contributed around €117.54 million through the 2009-2011 three-year contract, which totalled €244.48 million, geared to 3 priority objectives, with the main one to improve the **accessibility** of the European parliamentary capital (€110.4 million): air services and road and rail access. The other two objectives concern the Strasbourg's role as European city of education, higher education and research (€61.8 million) and its importance as a European cultural centre (€72.1 million).

3.1.1 Rail access

Since 2007, the opening of the Strasbourg-Paris TGV link has cut the journey time to 2 hours 20 minutes.

Thanks to the high-speed line, inaugurated in December 2011, passengers will in the near future be able to travel from Strasbourg to Lyon initially **in under 3 hours**, then in 2 hours 10 minutes, compared with over 5 hours just a few months ago.

Concrete substance is also being given to other improvement projects involving airport-train station links. These will considerably improve Strasbourg's accessibility:

- Strasbourg-Basle/Mulhouse airport in 50 minutes.
- Brussels-Strasbourg via Paris-Roissy, with no changes, in 3 hours.
- Frankfurt Airport-Strasbourg in 2 hours with the possibility of Baden Airport-Strasbourg in 30 minutes.

As regards accessibility, we can very clearly see the changes and progress achieved between 2004 and 2011. By 2016, thanks to the projects under way, Strasbourg will be the centre of the European rail network and one of the best-served cities in Europe with model accessibility.

Nevertheless, other links are posing problems for Strasbourg's accessibility, especially the uncompleted link between the three European capitals Brussels-Luxembourg and Strasbourg (EuroCapRail project) which should have been linked years ago. Here, one MEP put the Belgium authorities in the frame:

"Why, in 2011, aren't the three European capitals linked? The French government must exert pressure on the Belgium government to get it to agree to implement the Brussels-Luxembourg-Strasbourg line project. Only France can get the work on this line speeded up; the Belgians have been delaying it year after year."

One of those questioned was of the view that *“the accessibility problem is a non-problem, if tomorrow Strasbourg is the European Parliament’s only Seat, its airport will be one of the best served in Europe”*.

3.1.2 Air access

When it comes to the air links, the situation seems more complicated. Strasbourg-Entzheim Airport does not have services to enough European capitals, especially in Central and Northern Europe but also some neighbouring countries. Some avenues could be explored, following the example of Italy, whose parliamentary delegation is now authorized to travel to Strasbourg by private jet, which saves a considerable amount of time and some money.

From the very many interviews, carried out since early 2011, it transpired that **a majority of MEPs are in favour of the introduction air taxi services**. According to one MEP: *“We have to develop air taxis! So let France stop financing all-year-round services at a loss and establish air taxi services every Monday and Thursday during the sessions so as to make best use of financial resources, the MEPs will be satisfied and will no longer be able to criticize accessibility, whilst the State will save money. It’s win-win”*. Another MEP asks: *“Why not bring in air taxi services or get regular airline services to make a stop in Strasbourg just during the sessions? It would cost less than investing at a loss in lines losing money throughout the year and would silence a good number of the opponents of Strasbourg, quite apart from achieving an extraordinary gain in accessibility”*.

Another solution: the creation, during the sessions, of a stop at Strasbourg on a regular service. For example, the Brussels-Athens service stops in Strasbourg during the sessions, on Mondays and Thursdays. It’s a success and avoids the need to subsidise a loss-making line for 3 and a half weeks a month, while facilitating access to Strasbourg for the MEPs involved. Judging by our survey, over 75% of our interviewees are in favour of this type of solution.

The various authorities concerned are mobilizing on the issue of Strasbourg’s accessibility:

Three examples:

-In a statement made in September 2010, the mayor of Strasbourg and burgomasters of Brussels and Luxembourg called for the rapid completion of the EuroCapRail project. This statement underlines its “priority importance” for “improving the quality, performance and frequency of the rail links” between the three cities, Seats of European Institutions.

Philippe Richert, Chairman of Alsace Regional Council, who is setting himself the goal of *“making our European capital less than an hour away from one of the European airports in the 50 million annual passenger club; that would help reduce the difficulties encountered by Strasbourg”*.

-And Jean-Claude Mignon, the new President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, in his inaugural address: *“I believe in Strasbourg’s role as European capital; but the logistic means for this have to be provided. I have already established a whole series of informal contacts with my country’s political authorities on this subject. Some possible lines of approach are beginning to emerge, which I would like to share with you: align the taxes applied to Strasbourg airport with those of airports in the surrounding region; bring a low-cost airline to Strasbourg; consider ways of improving links with certain hubs and improve services between Basel-Mulhouse*

airport and Strasbourg. I cannot promise you any miracles, but I undertake to be extremely active on this issue and to ensure that you are involved. In particular, I will try to organize a meeting between Alsatian political leaders and the members of our Assembly in the months ahead."

Recommendations on access

- take forward the direct Brussels-Luxembourg-Strasbourg rail link (EuroCapRail project);
- develop the TGV links between Brussels and Strasbourg via Paris-Roissy;
- look into and facilitate the bringing-in of air-taxi operators where this does not duplicate existing services and add stops in Strasbourg to scheduled long-distance services during the sessions;
- develop complementarity between rail and air services and facilitate rail access to make Strasbourg less than one hour away from one of the airports close by, giving priority to the service between Basel-Mulhouse and Strasbourg;
- align the taxes applied to Strasbourg airport with those of airports in the surrounding region;
- bring a low-cost airline to Strasbourg;
- consider ways of improving links with certain hubs

3.1.3 Transport within the city: bus, tram, taxis

On the subject of transport inside the city, the survey was far more positive and MEPs are generally happy with the possibilities offered.

Since the 2000s, clear progress has been made. Today, with 6 tram lines, which serve virtually every part of the city, Strasbourg has had France's best tram network. Extensions are planned or under way. In addition, the bus shuttle the City of Strasbourg runs during plenary sessions improves access to the European Parliament and satisfies its users.

Nevertheless, two improvements could be implemented quickly in order to address the needs of passengers going to the European Parliament:

-firstly, **a direct tram service between the station and the European Parliament** beckons, particularly as it could use the existing network, without any infrastructure work, since the entry into service of line E.

Such a direct service between the main station and the European Parliament via the Wacken district would be useful for many other passengers. Indeed, the Strasbourg's European quarter is

close to the Strasbourg Parc Exposition (Exhibition Centre) and the Rhénus (a 5,000 seat sports complex). There will soon also be a new business district nearby. To go by tram from the main station to the European Parliament, you currently have to change onto another tram line. Passengers find it really incomprehensible that this service does not yet exist. Such an improvement would send a positive signal to all the stakeholders, including the many investors involved in the projected business district.

-secondly, those of our interviewees who use public transport reported their wish to have a **season ticket valid on the whole urban network for the duration of each session**, essentially for practical reasons. The “Compagnie des transports de Strasbourg” (Strasbourg Transport Company) offers a range of tickets for one or more days for families, various categories of users and groups as well as weekend tickets, but there is no ticket specifically designed to meet the needs of people attending the European Parliament sessions.

Such a specific “**European Parliament season ticket**”, valid for the duration of the sessions (Monday to Thursday) on the entire network would be greatly appreciated.

Even though some MEPs and assistants regret the ending of free transport during the sessions, the aim here is not to defend the principle of preferential pricing, but simply to facilitate and encourage use of public urban transport by those coming for the sessions. Such a measure would also be a way of informing Strasbourg’s residents that public transport is not free for MEPs as many of them believe.

-Furthermore, **there are not enough taxis around** during the plenary sessions. A round table bringing the authorities together with taxi drivers’ representatives should enable discussion of the number of taxis available (number of licences, pricing) and quality of services.

Recommendations on transport within the city

-establish a **direct tram link between the Gare centrale (main station) and European Parliament** (existing tram track network)

-create a “**European Parliament season ticket**” valid for the duration of plenary sessions.

-convene a round table bringing together the authorities and taxi drivers’ representatives **to improve taxi services** during the plenary sessions, dealing with both the number of taxis available and quality of services.

3.2 Accommodation: capacities; prices, especially for assistants

During our interviews, accommodation in Strasbourg was the most frequently-mentioned source of difficulties, regardless of the category of the person questioned. Analysis of the very many criticisms voiced reveals two main causes of dissatisfaction: **difficulty in finding accommodation at an acceptable price during the sessions and the questionable quality of hotel services**

- difficulty in finding accommodation at an acceptable price during the sessions

The problem is twofold. Firstly, Strasbourg has a surfeit of available accommodation for a large part of the year, except during the Christmas market, special events (e.g. congresses, sports tournaments and important events like the future World Democracy Forum) and the parliamentary sessions (European Parliament and Council of Europe). Secondly, during these very busy periods, there is **neither sufficient hotel capacity**, particularly in middle-of-the-range hotels at reasonable prices, **nor a broad-enough range of accommodation** on offer to satisfy all the visitors.

So MEPs feel they are victims of the system and think they are paying premium prices to keep the Strasbourg hotels afloat. Indeed some of them pointed out that outside the parliamentary sessions the average price has remained the same for the past five years, whereas in session weeks it is now apparently one and a half times higher

According to the hoteliers, there are two justifications for this: firstly, the need to amortize the new hotel building work which has taken place over the past 10 years and, secondly, the offer of discounts during quiet periods, which is normal practice in the industry.

A hotelier is the head of a business. Hoteliers naturally take advantage of busy periods to charge the rack rate, in Strasbourg as in every other town, including Brussels, since they receive high numbers of guests during important events (Congresses, festivals, etc.). For most of them, good management means not giving discounts when the occupancy rate is above 90%, as a Strasbourg hotel manager explained: *“there are no price increases during the high occupancy periods, plenary sessions, Christmas market, congresses and so on, but discounts, sometimes large ones, during the lower occupancy periods”*.

However, several MEPs the AEJE interviewed think that **the growing shortage of rooms at acceptable prices** both considerably limits competition in terms of prices, and leads to higher prices in luxury hotels, the only hotels with available rooms, particularly for late bookers. Some maintained they had seen increases of around 50% during plenary sessions and pointed out that, compared with a similar room in the same category of hotel in another city, prices in Strasbourg during the sessions were frequently higher. **The perception that what are deemed excessive prices are being charged in Strasbourg is seriously harming the city’s image and the quality of the accommodation the MEPs are entitled to expect.**

Even people who often stay at the same hotel and book their rooms in advance, for all the sessions, complained about big price increases, from one year to another.

Finally, some important points: MEPs have a daily allowance of €290 (accommodation and meals) compared with €120-160 for MEP assistants. **The main victims of this situation are very clearly the assistants.** With this allowance, given the prices charged in Strasbourg during the sessions, it is very hard to find decent accommodation. This is why, every month, we can see **increasing “outsourcing” benefiting hotels in Germany, Kehl or a bit further away.** As an MEP assistant explained *“In Germany, the prices are reasonable for what you get and the service is impeccable. In Strasbourg, it’s too expensive and the service deplorable. I advise everyone to go and sleep in Germany. So far, I haven’t heard of a single colleague leaving a German hotel to come back to Strasbourg.”*

Service quality in hotels

Besides the recurrent criticisms about hotel capacity and prices, there were also very many comments on **the low quality of services and particularly poor treatment in hotels.** According to most of those we interviewed, the concept of service *“no longer exists in a large majority of Strasbourg hotels.”* What used at one time to be charming about the Strasbourg sessions, whether in hotels, restaurants or shops, is today non-existent, as the following comments show.

According to a French MEP assistant, *“Some Strasbourgers regularly treat us as privileged people, but in the hotels we are neither privileged nor clients, we are numbers, “nuisances”, according to some hotel managers, who have no hesitation in telling us so. Nuisances which make them a lot of money... Far too much! And moreover, I’m French, so just imagine how they behave with MEPs who don’t speak our language. A disaster!”* A European official explained: *“We have just received the new 2012 price list for hotels in Strasbourg. Some hotels have had the cheek to up their prices by 20% compared with 2011, with an average rise of 2 to 3%. It’s terrible! MEPs travel regularly. When they go to a franchised hotel in Strasbourg and pay €150 a night, whereas they normally pay €100 in other hotels in the same chain, in France or abroad, they consider, rightly, that there’s a problem. Not counting the near-zero service in Strasbourg. We don’t expect to be treated as kings, only as clients. Here, we’re not. I’ve never met this problem anywhere else in the world!”*

During our discussions with various hoteliers, we were surprised to find that a number of them are convinced that the Strasbourg location of the European Parliament’s seat has been decided once and for all and that it doesn’t need defending, as one hotel manager said: *“You know, for years now, from time to time there’s been a buzz around this Seat. Now, I can reassure you, be realistic, there are treaties in which the Strasbourg Seat is laid down in black and white. In other words, those clients who regularly complain, have been, are and will be obliged to come to Strasbourg once a month. As it is, the sessions have been shortened...”* This kind of statement is not necessarily representative, but damages the whole industry and the city’s image. It also reveals a lack of communication and information on both sides between the European Parliament and Strasbourg’s

economic players. The latter have noted that the sessions have been shortened, and sometimes see it as a negative, without being informed as to the actual situation. As far as MEPs are concerned, they are not fully informed about all the available offers and services. In fact, the AEJE found that outside the centre of Strasbourg, some good hotels which have not greatly increased their prices (less than 10%) still had rooms available during the sessions.

To discuss these various points – capacities, prices and services – and as the City of Strasbourg had envisaged, **the AEJE suggests the organization of a round table with the various parties involved** (hoteliers, City of Strasbourg, representatives of MEPs, assistants and officials **in order both to improve the mutual communication of information on the situation and identify the ways of resolving the difficulties encountered.**

The AEJE believes that the aim of these meetings could be **to produce a “Quality Charter” and suggest that hoteliers who wish to do so sign up to it.** Their hotels would receive a **specific “European Parliament” label,** which could contain a number of commitments particularly on prices and changes to them, quality of service and information for the European Parliament, although it would also be useful for clients going to the other European institutions.

The label would identify establishments keen to comply with the Charter all year round, i.e. including outside the parliamentary session periods.

During its long investigation, the AEJE received several suggestions which could be discussed in this framework: setting a price ceiling based on the average of the year, offering, in partnership with the City’s services, a welcome pack containing, for example, the calendar of cultural and social activities during the session – and even transport tickets for the entire session – following the example of the United Nations in Geneva. Indeed, MEPs took Strasbourg’s abolition of free public transport a few years ago as a negative signal: “You’re no longer welcome”.

Finally, the round table participants should look into ways of finding specific solutions for **MEP assistants and interns:** listing the hotels or Apart Hotels (apartment hotels) in Strasbourg or nearby in France and in Germany, which they can afford or which are ready to give them preferential rates.

In addition – and this is a more structural solution – modernization of the *Parc des Expositions* (Exhibition Centre) and renovation of the *Palais des Congrès* (Congress Hall) will give Strasbourg facilities capable of hosting major events and high-level international meetings, such as the NATO Summit in April 2009. The economic development resulting from this investment should also enable hoteliers to improve their year-round occupancy rates and even out prices.

Recommendations on accommodation

- Organize a series of **round-table discussions** with the various parties involved (hoteliers and the different categories of clients in Strasbourg during plenary sessions) to identify the difficulties they encounter and seek appropriate solutions.
- Give concrete substance to the City of Strasbourg's project to create a "**Hotel Quality Charter**" to promote hotels offering appropriate room capacity, services and prices.
- Envisage the creation of a "**European Parliament Label**" for hotels signing up to and complying with the charter.

3.3 Working conditions

Another series of criticisms concerns working conditions.

The majority of those we interviewed readily agreed that the **quality of the work accomplished was markedly better in Strasbourg than in Brussels**, like this MEP from Central Europe: "*in Strasbourg, we feel as if we've come to a congress, a workshop, a real breath of fresh air*".

First of all, most of the people we questioned appreciate the **quality of the working environment and friendly atmosphere in Strasbourg**, unmatched in Brussels: bringing together, for a limited period of time in one place, all the relevant people (MEPs, assistants, senior government and European Commission officials, experts, lobbyists and journalists) considerably facilitates the exchanges and contacts which cannot spontaneously take place equally efficiently in Brussels.

Another reason why Strasbourg is preferred to Brussels is the **security of the premises** and personal safety. There were regular complaints about stolen personal belongings, assaults, intrusion of unauthorized persons and frequent technical breakdowns in Brussels.

For example, on 19 September 2011, the whole European quarter and immediate surrounding area were hit by a power cut following a fire in a high-voltage electrical station. The European Parliament was paralyzed and its staff evacuated, with difficulty. Everyone then realized the shortcomings in the security system in the Brussels European Parliament building in the event of an emergency. As Michèle Striffler, MEP explained: "*The alarm didn't work; the electrically-operated emergency doors didn't open and the security services didn't give out any information on the evacuation. We were able to get out of the building only because information circulated among the staff. Moreover, there was no provision for helping the disabled*".

Another issue which came up: the limited number, in Strasbourg, of lobbyists and interest group representatives, which some MEPs view as an advantage, as this telling view from a frank MEP shows: *“To my mind, the absence of lobbyists provides real added value to Strasbourg. It means we aren’t disturbed every 10 minutes and allows us to devote ourselves entirely to our work, to do our job of MEPs the way people expect us to. That also goes for all the cocktail parties constantly taking place in Brussels!”*

However, among the criticisms, **the inadequate office space was singled out for particular criticism**. One of our interviewees summed up his feelings: *“If in Strasbourg we were offered offices as spacious as in Brussels, I can guarantee you that even the most extremist opponents of Strasbourg would have to acknowledge a quality of work and working conditions in Strasbourg infinitely superior to those in Brussels, not to mention the insecurity, every day a veritable curse in Brussels.”*

Indeed, in Strasbourg, each MEP has only a small office, shared with his/her assistant(s), hence with room for no more than one additional person.

When it comes to buildings policy and thus working conditions, Strasbourg is stagnating while the situation in Brussels is improving daily. There is a great difference in the speed of acquisition of new premises between Brussels and Strasbourg. **MEPs keep asking for more office space in Strasbourg**, like people are getting in Brussels and Luxembourg.

As one of them made clear : *“Everybody prefers Strasbourg for its quality of life, cleanliness, security, and good restaurants. But you’ve got to think about moving forward, not just rest on your laurels ...”* Another went on: *“In Strasbourg, it’s urgent to invest in buildings. The purchase of B building from the Council of Europe [the deed of purchase was signed in early December 2011] is a genuine plus point, but it’s not enough to compete with the crazy building policy in Brussels.”*

The imperative should be to negotiate the purchase or rent of additional office space in the nearby Exhibition Centre, as provided for in the Wacken project adopted by the City of Strasbourg.

Other criticisms do not seem acceptable, like those pertaining to the transport, for the plenary sessions, of tons of documents between Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg, lambasted by the opponents of Strasbourg as the symbol of what they call the “Strasbourg Circus”. In this connection, we learned from a number of interviews that MEPs are systematically allocated canteens (trunks) even if they have no need of them, even empty ones.

An internal European Parliament regulation would make it possible to reduce the number of them and make significant savings. During our interviews, some MEPs compared the operation of the European Union to that of the big multinationals, often wondering why the latter function very well with offices right across the world, while the European Parliament cannot find an appropriate formula with just three sites, separated only by 431 kilometres.

We are now in 2012 and the new information and communication technologies (NICT) have been tried and tested for several years. Multinationals use them daily and have succeeded in spectacularly reducing their operating costs, while having offices in Beijing, New York and Europe! In particular, they make very wide use of paperless document transfer. The European Parliament must set itself the immediate objective of promoting the use of the NICT to reduce still further the transport of freight (expensive and polluting) and avoid as much as possible the inconvenience caused to MEPs by physical transfers of documents.

Finally, many MEPs complain about **not being able to invite groups of visitors to Strasbourg** as they do in Brussels, since they lack the requisite financial resources made available by the European Parliament Secretariat-General. Several MEPs mentioned this issue and asked for the “opening of a register”, a procedure that would enable them to receive groups of students, elected representatives and citizens. This issue, which has already been raised several times, has still not been addressed.

Recommendations on working conditions

- maintain the high level of security felt in Strasbourg, far above that found in Brussels
- encourage the policy of providing more office space to address the needs of MEPs and assistants, as has recently been done with the acquisition of B building from the Council of Europe
- reduce the resources currently employed to transport documents between Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg, taking on board the real needs expressed by the MEPs
- allow MEPs to invite groups of visitors to Strasbourg under the same conditions as in Brussels (payments to reimburse groups' expenses)

3.4 Special facilities and information services provided for MEPs, assistants and staff

Very many MEPs are asking for a **special information service tailored to their needs** in several areas.

-In the way of services, internal communication and information networks, the city has two information offices (Strasbourg.eu) on the European Parliament's premises. Very many interviewees praised the professionalism and efficiency of the office staff, who offer a high-quality service in order to facilitate and improve everyone's stay. Unfortunately, it is not part their job to resolve the fundamental problems: access, accommodation and working conditions. MEPs also bemoaned the inadequate number of staff in the offices.

-Many MEPs, mainly non-French, would like to see **more frequent contact with the local elected representatives and local authorities in Strasbourg**, modelled on what happens in Brussels. Keeping regularly in touch in this way would give them the opportunity to report how they feel about the Seat, their observations and criticisms, propose alternatives and get a better understanding of the constraints and projects envisaged. Even the MEPs in favour of Strasbourg emphasized the need to organize these meetings on a more regular basis.

Finally, the great majority of those we interviewed considered themselves poorly informed in advance about the different **activities and cultural, social and artistic events** likely to enhance their stay in Strasbourg. Very many of them were aware of and appreciated Strasbourg's, culture and dynamism, but too few were able to take advantage of them due to lack of information. They felt they did not have the time to find the requisite information, and would like some **logistical support**. They often compared this situation with Brussels where they are forever being contacted about the city's cultural and historical resources and the entertainment on offer, as well as indirectly informed through the numerous social events (conferences, debates and presentations) taking place every day.

-As regards the links between the City of Strasbourg and European Parliament, a great many joint events are organized, such as the annual award of the Sakharov Prize, Festival of Europe, and European Institutions Open Day. The links could be formalized through a convention, similar to the **Framework Convention signed in May 2010 between the City and the Council of Europe**. With this in mind, Strasbourg and the European Parliament could also join forces to give concrete substance to the project of creating a "*Lieu d'Europe*" (Place for Europe), a walk-in centre near the European district, with the joint aim of providing information about the European institutions, especially for visitor groups invited by MEPs, including outside plenary session periods.

Recommendation on services for MEPs

- improve the information at the disposal of MEPs and others visitors to Strasbourg by setting up an information network for the use of all MEPs, assistants and officials, giving details of all the events and cultural, artistic and social activities taking place during the plenary sessions, with partners such as the tourist office, Alsace Region and the different private-sector players
- encourage and systematize exchanges and meetings between the local authorities and MEPs
- conclude a convention between the City of Strasbourg and the European Parliament to develop the existing partnerships and joint projects
- make concrete progress on the project to create a "*Lieu d'Europe*" for citizens and particularly groups of visitors invited by MEPs.

APPENDIX 1

Bernd Posselt's nine preconceptions, March 2010

Why should the European Parliament in Strasbourg be reinforced?

1) Strasbourg is merely an expression of French prestige.

First of all, Strasbourg is the result of half a century of European parliamentary work, with the creation of the European Court of Human Rights and then the activities of the European Parliament from 1958 to 1979, before the latter started taking the most important political decisions during plenary sessions.

2) Strasbourg is the obsolete symbol of Franco-German reconciliation.

Over time the Franco-German reconciliation has become a model of its kind. On the occasion of the Eastern extension of the European Union, Lech Walesa expressed his idea that Strasbourg incarnates peace and freedom for the entire continent.

3) Strasbourg is the second seat of the European Parliament

For decades, the parliamentary work was shared between Strasbourg and Luxembourg. It was only at the end of the 1980s that Brussels became a more common place for parliamentary activities.

4) The seat of Strasbourg is responsible for an expensive "travel circus".

Intellectually, it is extremely dishonest to attribute any extra costs to Strasbourg. Additional costs are in reality mainly due to the mini-Plenary Sessions held in Brussels which compel, for example, MEPs from Cyprus and Malta to make expensive journeys. Extending the length of the plenaries to a full week would, moreover, reduce these costs.

5) An irresponsible real estate policy is taking place in Strasbourg.

The European Parliament purchased its 188,000 square metre building for €446.5 million in 2004. In comparison, the 80,000 square metre Paul Henri Spaak building in Brussels, with a smaller plenary room, cost €600 million. The necessary investments to concentrate the Parliament's work in Strasbourg could easily be financed by selling a part of the Brussels buildings.

6) The Strasbourg buildings sit empty in between plenary sessions.

The buildings in Strasbourg are visited by 100,000 people in between plenary sessions, in addition to 10,000 students thanks to the Euroscola programme.

7) Strasbourg cannot be easily reached.

Strasbourg lies in the middle of the European motorway and high-speed railway network. Soon to be 1 hour 40 minutes from Paris and 4 hours from London, in 2015 the city will be the centre of the European fast train network, with unique connections to Budapest, Munich, Vienna and even Bratislava.

8) To be efficient, the European Parliament should be near the seat of the Executive, in Brussels.

In Brussels, the Parliament is more in the category of "and others" after NATO, the European Council and European Commission. It enjoys much greater visibility in Strasbourg

9) The elimination of the Strasbourg Seat would promote the EU and make it more popular.

A clear loss of parliamentary democracy following the abandonment of the Strasbourg Seat would seriously harm the European Union's image, destroying the extremely crucial emblematic nature of the places of Europe.

APPENDIX 2

*Seats of the European Institutions and European Union organs
(as laid down in Protocol No. 6 appended to the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the
Functioning of the European Union)*

(source: French National Assembly report presented by M. Christophe
Caresche⁵)

Strasbourg
European Parliament

Brussels
*Council of the European Union
European Commission
Economic and Social Committee
Committee of the Regions
Additional sessions and Committees of the European Parliament*

Luxembourg
*Court of Justice of the European Union
European Court of Auditors
European Investment Bank
Secretariat-General of the European Parliament and its departments and services
April, June and October sessions of the Council of the European Union
Various European Commission services (Eurostat, translations, etc.)*

Frankfurt
European Central Bank

The Hague
European Police Office (Europol)

*Locations of the agencies and the European Union
(by country)*

Austria
European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

Belgium
*Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)
Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI)
European Defence Agency (EDA)
European GNSS Supervisory Authority (GSA)
Research Executive Agency (REA)*

⁵ Report on the draft European Union resolution on holding the European Parliament plenary sessions in Strasbourg.
April 2012

European Research Council Executive Agency (ERC)
Trans-European Transport Network Executive Agency (TEN-T EA)

Denmark

European Environment Agency (EEA)

Finland

European Chemicals Agency (ECHA)

France

Community Plant Variety Office (CVPO)

European Railway Agency (ERA)

European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS)

Germany

European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)

Greece

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP)

European Network and Information Security Agency (ENISA)

Hungary

European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)

Ireland

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound)

Italy

European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)

European Training Foundation (ETF)

Lithuania

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)

Luxembourg

Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union (CdT)

Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC)

Netherlands

European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit (EUROJUST)

European Police Office (EUROPOL)

Poland

*European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders
(FRONTEX)*

Portugal

European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)

European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA)

Spain

European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA)
Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market (Trade Marks and Designs) (OHIM)
European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (OSHA)
European Union Satellite Centre (EUSC)
European Joint Undertaking for ITER and the Development of Fusion Energy (Fusion for Energy)

Sweden

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

United Kingdom

European Medicines Agency (EMA)
European Police College (CEPOL)

APPENDIX 3

Environmental impact of the European Parliament's Strasbourg Seat in tonnes of CO₂

Detailed analyses of the evolution of the carbon footprint (pages 68 to 70 of the [Environmental Declaration of the European Parliament](#). May 2011)

STRASBOURG emission flows sources in Strasbourg	2006 CO ₂ equivalent per flow	2010 CO ₂ equivalent per flow	Percentage of Parliament's total carbon footprint	Change 2006-2010
ENERGY CONSUMED IN THE BUILDINGS				
Natural gas	2,443	1,487	1.3%	-45.90%
Fuel oil	52	46	0	-21.20%
Urban heating and cooling	0	0	0	NA
Electricity	3,392	0 (100% green electricity)	0	-100%
TRANSPORT OF GOODS (internal freight between the three sites (sessions and mail))	349	265	0.2%	-
TRANSPORT OF PERSONS				
Home-office travel	43	55	0	+14.10%
To and from Strasbourg by car	1,967	1,957	1.8%	-11.50%
To and from Strasbourg by train	61	156	0.1%	+127.50%
To and from Strasbourg by plane	1,175	233	0.2%	-82.40%
STRASBOURG GRAND TOTAL (emissions by employee-equivalent)	9,482 (0.65)	4,199 (0.28%)	3.6%	-55.70% (-56.90%)
Parliament GRAND TOTAL (emissions by equivalent-employee)	114,713 (8.9)	110,919 (7.6)	100%	-3.3% -14.60%

APPENDIX 4

Annual cost of the Strasbourg seat

Excerpt from the European Parliament Secretariat-General document

REPLIES TO THE DISCHARGE QUESTIONNAIRE 2010 (page 40)

What are the exact costs of using Strasbourg as seat of the Parliament, not including those costs due to a three site Parliament or if there was a single seat in Brussels?

The annual infrastructure costs for Strasbourg come to €33.5 million. The additional operational costs for 12 sessions in Strasbourg compared with these sessions in Brussels is €18 million, i.e. a total of costs specific to Strasbourg of €51.5 million (for the details see Appendix)

Costs of using Strasbourg as the seat of the EP (point 28)

Seat of the Parliament in Strasbourg

Estimated costs (€)

1. Infrastructure costs

ITEM	BUDGET HEADING	2009	2010	Comments
2000/02	Rents: Strasbourg	53,000	53,000	Parking Europe, costs directly attributable to STR
2001/02	Annual lease payments	0	0	Buildings owned by EP
2007/02	Fitting out the premises: Strasbourg	14,268,000	8,655,000	costs directly attributable to STR
2022/02	Cleaning and upkeep: Strasbourg	11,096,000	13,088,000	costs directly attributable to STR
2024/02	Energy consumption: Strasbourg	3,143,000	3,219,000	costs directly attributable to STR
2026/02	Security and surveillance of the buildings: Strasbourg	8,325,000	8,466,000	costs directly attributable to STR
Total in EUR		36,887,000	33,481,000	

2. Operational costs of the 12 sessions

	BUDGET HEADING	2009	2010	Comments
1004/01	Ordinary travel expenses (MEPs)	19,744,000	19,139,000	Identical expenditure irrespective of the session location (STR/BRU)
1202	Paid overtime	156,000	160,000	Identical expenditure irrespective of the session location (STR/BRU)
1400	Other personnel	1,914,000	1,890,000	Estimated saving of €1,890,000 if session held in Brussels
1402/01	Conference interpreters: conference interpreters and technicians	33,192,000	33,192,000	Estimated saving of €1,080,000 if session held in Brussels
1420/01	External services: translation of verbatim reports of proceedings	9,000,000	8,375,000	Identical expenditure irrespective of the session location (STR/BRU)
1654/03	Early childhood centre and approved day nurseries: operation of family room in the Strasbourg Parliament premises	12,000	12,000	Estimated saving of €12,000 if session held in Brussels
2140/11	Technical equipment and installations: audiovisual – audiovisual and telecommunication equipment and technical installations for press rooms in Brussels and Strasbourg (upkeep and assistance)	963,000	1,040,000	Identical expenditure irrespective of the session location (STR/BRU)
2160/01	MEPs' travel to Strasbourg	1,580,000	1,691,000	Estimated saving of €320,000 if session held in Brussels
2160/02	Transport of canteens (trunks) to Strasbourg	120,000	120,000	Estimated saving of €70,000 if session held in Brussels

2350/02	Telecommunications: Strasbourg	429,000	348,000	Identical expenditure irrespective of the session location (STR/BRU)
2360/02	Postage on correspondence and delivery charges: mail to Strasbourg (postal charges and charges for delivery by a courier service,	15,000	20,000	Same level of expenditure irrespective of the session location
3000/1	Staff mission expenses: travel between three places of work	13,826,000	14,736,000	Estimated saving of €9,900,000 if session held in Brussels
4220/02	Parliamentary assistance: accredited assistants (mission expenses)	1,850,000	4,790,000	Estimated saving of €4,790,000 if session held in Brussels
3242/01	Expenses for publication, provision of information and participation in public events: publications, briefings, public events	300,000	309,000	Identical expenditure irrespective of the session location (STR/BRU)
3248/01	Expenditure on audiovisual information: coproduction and broadcasting of audiovisual programmes	3,120,000	3,213,000	Identical expenditure irrespective of the session location (STR/BRU)
3248/02	Expenditure on audiovisual information: Internet broadcasting of plenary sessions and meetings	921,000	304,000	Identical expenditure irrespective of the session location (STR/BRU)
Total in EUR		87,142,000	89,339,000	Average estimated potential saving of €1.5 million per session of operational costs if session held in Brussels

Observations on the assessment:

This table charts the directly identifiable costs for session activity in Strasbourg in 2009 and 2010. In the interests of transparency, it should be remembered that all the buildings had already been acquired.

