



Mr. President of the European Parliament,

The European Association of Young Entrepreneurs (AEJE) advocates a stronger Europe. A Europe dedicated to its values, easier to understand and closer to its citizens. Hence, a more democratic Europe.

Since 2011 our action has focused to promote Europe, a stronger Europe. For us, the fury against Strasbourg is an intolerable wrong fight at the expense of real issues, as evidenced challenges by the news particularly busy. We published the results of our research in February 2012 in the report “Le siège dans tous ses Etats”.

We are convinced that the European Parliament is the key to achieve this goal. It also requires respecting European diversity, our History, our common painful heritage, and the construction of Europe, of which Strasbourg is the symbol. Historically, Strasbourg is the capital of European democracy. It is in Strasbourg that European democracy must be rooted, grow stronger and turn towards the future.

Far from these key principles, the main but simplistic preoccupation of Strasbourg’s opponents is the alleged costs of the European Parliament. Throughout the past two years they have multiplied fanciful or falsified estimations, which even contradict each other, by claiming in turns costs of 204, then 200, 185 or 169 million Euros. Faced with the robustness of our study that concluded with a cost of 51.5 million Euros per year, they have just produced a new estimation of 119.9 million Euros.

We refute the idea that the value of a democratic institution can be reduced to its mere cost. However, we thank you, Mr. President, for your contribution to a more objective debate by ensuring full transparency of information since your election. Since two years your services have published the annual cost of the seat; 51,5 million Euros in 2010 and 53 million Euros in 2011. These figures are included in the budgetary documents approved by the MEPs.

The second argument of Strasbourg’s opponents is related to the ecological cost of the seat, the carbon footprint, which they estimate at 19000 tons of CO₂. This figure is taken from an old study performed in 2002, whose authors had the honesty to express multiple reservations about the approximations in the method used and its inadequacies for a parliamentary institution.

Once again, the AEJE referred to official documents distributed by your services, in particular the “environmental declaration of the European Parliament” established since 2006 by the Parliament’s EMAS team. These detailed annual studies show that the carbon footprint attributed to the seat in Strasbourg, including transport, amounts to a total of 3250 tons of CO₂ for 2011. This low level and its constant decrease is a result of exceptional environmental measures that raises Strasbourg to the rank of the greenest of the working places of the Parliament.

Despite the efforts of the European Parliament to ensure transparency, calculations of hypothetical hidden costs of the seat have again been demanded. It would be just as interesting to examine the costs of pooling the Parliament’s working places in Brussels: the political cost of leaving Strasbourg, the social cost related to transferring the Secretariat from Luxembourg to Brussels, the cost of investments made since 1952 and the cost of maintaining empty buildings in Luxembourg and Strasbourg, and of which the Parliament would remain owner.

Furthermore, the opponents of Strasbourg demand a medical study on the alleged negative psychological effects and stress related to the “transhumance” between Brussels and Strasbourg. It would be interesting to add an assessment of the positive effects for MEPs and European officials to meet once a month on fixed dates at the seat of their institution in order to take decisions, whereas many other professions suffer work-related travel in often unpredictable and difficult circumstances.

Our aim is to remind MEPs of the meaning of their mission and their responsibilities and, more importantly, to alert and inform citizens about the reality of European construction. It is now essential, after all the time devoted by the elects on a nonexistent question that has no reason to be, to promote a Europe of the People and of the citizens, recognised by the Nobel Peace Prize, and of which Strasbourg is the symbol. It is through our collective memory that we can launch new projects and renew the impetus for a Europe close to its citizens.

The AEJE team