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Disappointment at ECJ Strasbourg Ruling

"We will keep campaigning until this pointless practice ends" - MEP

MEPs from the European Free Alliance (EFA) Group in the European Parliament have expressed disappointment at today's court decision which favours the European Parliament's wasteful monthly visits to Strasbourg.

The decision by the European Court of Justice to uphold a complaint brought by France was widely anticipated. MEPs had sought to reduce their number of annual visits to Strasbourg by combining two in a single month.

This was seen as an important first step in doing away with a practice which sees thousands of MEPs and staff decamp from Brussels to Strasbourg for three days per month. The cost to Europe's taxpayer is estimated at upwards of 180 million euros per year, and the environmental impact is significant.

Flemish nationalist **Frieda Brepoels** (N-VA) commented:

"I'm disappointed but not surprised by today's ruling. We must as MEPs continue opposing this wasteful and unnecessary monthly visit to Strasbourg.

"I have always said that Strasbourg is a beautiful city which has been a historically important symbol of European peace and reunification. But that alone is no longer reason enough for an entire parliament and its staff to change cities for just three days each month. A constructive alternative option for the Strasbourg region should be investigated.

"Whilst I respect the position of the French government, it is an attack on democracy to insist that the elected European Parliament may not choose where it meets. We will continue working within the 'single seat' group to reduce parliament's visits to Strasbourg."

Welsh MEP **Jill Evans** (Plaid Cymru) said:

"The European Parliament's moves between Brussels and Strasbourg are financially and environmentally indefensible. Most MEPs do not support this wasteful practice and are demanding the parliament has a single seat. My constituents are horrified to hear about the money wasted in this way.

"Abolishing the monthly Strasbourg session would save around 180 million euros per year. It would also significantly reduce our carbon footprint. Estimates have put the environmental impact of the monthly move at around 19,000 tonnes of CO2 per year.

"We must have an alternative. We will keep campaigning until this pointless practice ends."

Notes

- * 88 per cent of MEPs voted for a single seat in October this year
- * 1.27 million European have signed a petition calling for a single seat in Brussels
- * France is set to halve its three year subsidy to Strasbourg's European activities, from 117m to 47m euros

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