

# renew europe.

*David Sassoli, President of the European Parliament*

*cc: Klaus Welle, Secretary General of the European Parliament*

*Brussels, 4 April 2020*

***Subject: Teleworking measures for APAs and EP staff***

*Dear President Sassoli, dear David,*

*Last week staff of the European Parliament was informed about the decision of the Secretary General on temporary part-time work away from the place of employment for family reasons in response to Covid-19. It authorises 75% part time work with 75% of the salary and without expatriation or foreign residence allowances being granted. This decision mentions that the applicable rules on teleworking in the European Parliament, adopted by the Secretary General on 23 October 2019, provide that telework must be performed from the address that the Member of staff has communicated to the administration of the Parliament.*

*Yesterday, the Accredited Parliamentary Assistants (APA) were informed that the same regime would be applied to them, if they are to telework in any other Member State, different from their place of employment. Our assistants, while still doing their work would lose 25% of their salary and both expatriation and foreign residence allowances.*

*Given the current exceptional circumstances, there is a very little understanding within my group as regards the approach taken by the Administration. While I fully appreciate that the EP rules for its civil servants were drawn up at a time when no-one even contemplated the current extraordinary circumstances we are all subject to, there is now a great need for the EP to demonstrate an element of flexibility and humanity as we all try to grapple with both the health, social and economic aspects of this unprecedented crisis.*

*It is true that the underlying approach for all of us is to self-isolate and travel only when absolutely necessary to do so. Given the multinational nature of our institution and the speed with which lockdowns were imposed in several Member States, those who found themselves stranded beyond the usual Brussels/Luxembourg/Strasbourg place of work should not be penalised financially in view of the Covid 19 pandemic. And again, with colleagues from 27 Member States working under our roof, from a caring and human point of view, we have to*

*acknowledge that some - hopefully a limited number of - colleagues may be called upon to return home to look after family members who become infected with the highly contagious virus. Teleworking is exactly that, and to insist that teleworking can only be done from Brussels, Luxembourg or Strasbourg is, to put it bluntly, nonsense.*

*Horrendous and all as this pandemic is and will continue to be for some time, I also greatly fear the economic impact that is likely to last even longer. There is, already now, an onus on all of us to avoid punitive economic measures so that each in his own way avoids reducing the amount of money circulating through our societies.*

*As the Appointing Authority for the Renew Europe Secretariat, allow me to inform you that I have no intention whatsoever of imposing a 75% teleworking regime on any colleague who needs to return home to be present and supportive for any close family member who has been infected by this horrifying virus. Furthermore, in the current situation staff are not choosing voluntarily to telework, but are obliged to do so because of the situation,*

*For all those reasons listed above, my Group cannot agree with this decision concerning both staff and APAs. Once again, we find it extremely rigid in a time of crisis when none of us feels fully safe and secure and all of us would want to be closer to our family members should they need to be taken care of.*

*We are aware that Monika Benova, current Chair of the College of Quaestors, and Gilles Boyer, Quaestor of the Renew Europe Group, already asked that this decision be cancelled at the next Bureau meeting, and we would like this to happen as quickly as possible to avoid any uncertainty for our APAs and staff in these troubled times. We expect that an appropriate and time limited decision will be taken which, unlike the one currently in force, would be supportive and non-financially punitive for EP staff, be they civil servants or APAs.*

*Kind regards,*

*Dacian Cioloş, Renew Europe President*

*Dita Charanzova, EP Vice-President*

*Nicola Beer, EP Vice-President*

*Gilles Boyer, Quaestor*