

ECR Group Financial Rules

Article 1

1. The financial year begins on 1 January and ends on 31 December. During the European election year, the financial year is divided into two parts; the first part runs from 1 January to 30 June, the second part runs from 1 July to 31 December.
2. Accounts shall be prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. Purchase of minor office equipment shall be expensed when incurred; major items shall be capitalised and amortised over their useful lives

Article 2

1. The European Parliament makes available to the ECR Group funds from item 400 on an annual basis.
2. These ECR Group internal Rules lay down the rules governing the use of such funds.
3. In general, these rules apply to all types of specific political group expenditure (documentation, publications, missions, meetings, seminars, individual employment contracts, etc.)

Article 3

1. The funds made available to the ECR Group from item 400 must be used to finance activities carried out by the Group in accordance with the Rules on the use of appropriations from budget item 400, adopted by the Bureau of the European Parliament on 14 April 2014.
2. The Group's activities shall be financed solely from resources made available to it from budget item 400 or from the resources derived there from, in accordance with the abovementioned Rules.
3. The Group shall not receive either donations or legacies.

Article 4

1. The Group, represented by the Group Chairman, shall have authorizing officer powers. The Chairman shall be responsible for the use of appropriations made available to the ECR Group. He shall ensure that such appropriations are used in accordance with the abovementioned Rules and, if necessary, take appropriate action to prevent any expenditure which is not in accordance therewith.
Under the Group's internal rules, the Secretary-General shall be appointed authorizing officer by delegation.
2. Responsibility in respect of appropriations under item 400 shall not be delegated to third parties.
3. The Group may, as a general rule, authorize the use of item 400 appropriations to cover travel expenses for a Member for a Group mission, authorized in advance, within the country in which he/she was elected, provided that the

activity concerned takes place in a locality at least 150 km away from his/her home.

4. The expenses concerned shall be reimbursed to the Member upon presentation of originals of supporting documents, provided that:
 - the mission must be approved in advance,
 - the mission date must be linked to the Group activity,
 - air travel shall be reimbursed on the basis of actual costs,
 - travel by train shall be reimbursed on the basis of the first class fare,
 - travel by car shall be reimbursed on the basis of the first class train fare,
 - appropriate supporting documents corresponding to the actual expenses must be produced (invitation to meeting, work programme, boarding pass(es), train ticket(s) or declaration on the Member's honour in the case of travel by car).
5. These expenses shall be charged to the budget(s) of the delegation(s) concerned.

Article 5

1. The funds made available to the Group under item 400 may be used to cover:
 - the secretariat and operational expenditure of the Group;
 - expenditure on political and information activities conducted by the Group in connection with the European Union's political activities.
2. Funds made available to the Group under budget item 400 may not be used to finance electoral campaigns at European, national, regional or local level. Funds intended for information activities may not be made available to political groupings (parties, federations) or to their dependent bodies.
3. Funds made available to the Group under budget item 400 may not substitute for expenditure already covered by other budget items within the European Parliament, in particular expenditure under the rules governing Members' expenses and allowances, or be used for the acquisition of immovable property.
4. The use of the European Parliament logo by Members is to be subject to an authorization procedure by the Group.
5. The Group may organize political or information activities jointly with third parties. In such cases the Groups' involvement must be genuine. The name and/or the logo of the Group must feature as prominently as those of the other organizers. The likely expenditure of each co-organizer must be determined in advance.
6. In its political and information activities the Group may mention third parties involved in those activities. In such cases the names and/or logos of those third parties shall be less prominent than those of the Group.
7. Under certain conditions, the Group may support financially from item 400 appropriations to an external organization of which it is a member.

Article 6

1. The Groups' name must be mentioned in connection with any political or information activity financed by the appropriations entered under item 400.
2. All expenditure committed under item 400 shall be supported by original invoices or certified true photocopies.
3. The nature of expenditure shall conform to the common accounting plan, which forms an integral part of the institutions' internal implementing rules.

Article 7

1. The Co-Treasurers shall have the necessary powers to authorize payments from the Group's accounts, on the basis of their dual signature.
2. Each item of expenditure must be authorized prior to committing the Group vis-à-vis a third party.
3. Any expenditure incurred on the initiative of a Member, without prior authorization, shall not be reimbursed.
4. Payments made from funds allocated to item 400 shall be effected by the treasurers.

Article 8

1. The adoption of the Group's annual budget and the approval of the annual statement of expenditure shall be placed on the agenda for a meeting of the Group as close as possible to the end of the financial year.
2. No revenue shall be generated, no commitment or payment made without reference to a chapter, an article or an item within the budget.
3. The Chairman of the Group, or the person(s) to whom the relevant authority has been delegated, shall have overall responsibility for the implementation of the annual budget.

Article 9

The Group's books shall be kept in accordance with the Rules on the use of appropriations from budget item 400.

Article 10

1. At least six times a year, monthly management accounts shall be prepared under the direction of the Group's accountant within two weeks of the month-end for presentation to the Treasurers. Management accounts at June 30th each year shall be prepared for presentation by the Treasurers to the Bureau
2. Pursuant to the rules of the European Parliament, the Group shall be required to have an external audit carried out in order to verify its accounts.
3. Annual accounts are to be audited by a firm of independent public accountants appointed by the Bureau, such audited accounts to be distributed to Members for approval after presentation and approval by the Bureau. The Group in approving the accounts, grants discharge to the Treasurers.
4. The purpose of the audit shall be to establish that all revenue has been received and all expenditure incurred in a lawful and proper manner having

regard to the budget, these rules and other internal regulations and that the financial management has been sound. Based on the mandate approved by the Bureau of the European Parliament, it shall in particular establish that:

- the expenditure has been charged to the correct item in the budget of the Group,
 - the appropriations are available,
 - the expenditure is in order and conforms with the relevant decisions and in particular with the budget of the Group and these rules,
 - the principles of sound financial management and prior authorisation have been applied,
 - the payment order is supported by original documents (or certified true copies),
 - internal controls are satisfactory
5. Within this context, the Group shall introduce an internal control system and ensure that each budgetary transaction is processed by
- the staff member responsible for initiating tasks;
 - the staff member responsible for ex ante verification;
 - the responsible authorising officer.

Initiation and ex ante verification duties are mutually incompatible, as are authorising officer and accounting officer duties. Staff members responsible for ex ante verification may not come under the authority of staff members responsible for initiation tasks.

Article 11

1. Other than staff employed in conformity with the Staff Regulations of officials and other servants of the European Communities, the Group may employ staff using funds from budget item 400.
2. A contract, complying with the provisions in Article 14 of the rules governing the payment of expenses and allowances to Members, and in conformity with national legislation, must be duly signed.
3. Employment contracts or contracts for the provision of a service (freelance work) lasting six months or more which are concluded by the Group shall be forwarded to the Secretary-General of the European Parliament for information purposes.

Article 12

Mission expenses for missions undertaken by the Secretariat shall be determined in accordance with the rules laying down the conditions for payment of mission expenses of staff of the European institutions.

Article 13

1. Unless the provider is an institution or has already been selected by an institution, following an invitation to tender, all purchases must be made

through procurement procedures, account being taken of political groups' specific circumstances, as follows:

- a consultation procedure involving at least five candidates must be used for contracts with a value of more than 60 000 euros; there must be at least three valid tenders before a decision is taken;
 - a consultation procedure involving at least three candidates must be used for contracts with a value of between 15 000 euros and 60 000 euros
 - for any contract with a value of more than 15 000 euros, the choice of supplier or provider must be substantiated and all the procurement-related documents must be kept by the authorizing officer.
2. The Group may award a contract by negotiated procedure on the basis of a single tender, by way of derogation from the provisions of this article, in the instances referred to in Articles 124 and 125 of the Commission Regulation laying down detailed rules for the implementation of the Financial Regulation of the European Union.

Article 14

1. An inventory detailing numbers and value (for items with a value of more than 420 euros with a life of more than one year) shall be established and maintained by the Group in respect of purchases financed by the appropriations under budget item 400.
2. At the end of each financial year, the value of the inventory, with appropriate depreciation, subdivided by the type of asset, shall be recorded in the Groups' financial statements.
3. Assets purchased by the Group shall be entered in its inventory.
4. Any sale of assets entered in the inventory shall be published and offers for the assets on sale invited.

Article 15

1. The funds made available to the Group each year, apportioned under budget item 400, shall be allocated within the Group via a central fund and on the basis of an amount earmarked for each national delegation.
2. The amount allocated to the common fund, which is intended to meet the Group's common expenditure needs, shall be determined within the framework of the annual budget of the Group on the basis of the amount actually spent and shown in the statement of expenditure for the previous financial year.
3. The amount earmarked for each national delegation shall be in direct proportion to its size, based on the result of dividing the amount remaining (apart from that earmarked for the common fund) by the total number of Members in the Group and then multiplying by the number of Members in the national delegation concerned.

Article 16

1. Each national delegation shall be responsible for deciding on activities to be financed from the selection earmarked for the national delegations pursuant to the above article.
2. Each national delegation shall appoint one of its Members to assume responsibility for authorising expenditure in connection with the activities of the delegation concerned and/or of its Members, expenditure which shall be chargeable against the funds made available to each national delegation.
3. Surplus funds are to be carried forward for expenditure in future years. Amounts allocated to a national delegation in any year but unused at the end of that year shall revert to, and form part of that Delegations surplus funds at the year end. At the end of the 5 year legislature, claims from individual Members for reimbursement will not be considered after 1 month following the end of the financial period.
4. Funds carried over from one financial year to another may not exceed 50% of the annual appropriations received from the European Parliament's budget. Amounts exceeding 50% shall be repaid to the institution's budget together with any interest that may be accrued.
5. Funds carried over from one year to another and not used during that year shall be repaid to the European Parliament's budget.
6. The Groups funds may be placed on deposit and be converted into such currency or currencies as the Bureau, or by delegation to the Treasurers, consider appropriate. The funds may not be utilised to purchase securities or property. The Treasurers may delegate to the Secretary General the responsibility for administering funds under this rule. Under normal circumstances the Group shall observe the policy of maintaining a level of funds equivalent to at least three months expenditure.

Article 17

The group, or a national delegation in the context of decentralised political or information activities, may use appropriations from Budget Item 400 for office rental in a Member State, provided that the activities undertaken therein (including the activities of any staff employed and located there):

- are carried out in the name of the Group or a delegation of the Group only
- do not bear the name of an individual MEP other than as a participant of the Group activity

and that such office is clearly identified as an office of the Group/delegation of the Group, and is not used as an MEP's constituency office, and is not used to accommodate an MEP's assistant or for receiving or meeting the general public in a representational capacity as an MEP. (Where the circumstances

give rise to reasonable doubt a Member may be called on to demonstrate that s/he is using his/her general expenditure allowance for office expenditure in his/her capacity as an MEP as evidence that Budget Item 400 appropriations are not being substituted for such expenditure).

Article 18

Prior to making payments and committing the Group vis-à-vis a third party, any expenditure committed on behalf of the Group must be authorised by:

- a) the Chairman or by delegation the Secretary-General
- b) the Member responsible in the respective national delegation for expenditure connected with the delegation.
- c) Before the Group is committed vis-à-vis a third party, an expenditure authorisation form must be used and signed by the Secretary-General as the authorising officer by delegation.

Article 19

In the event of a dispute, only the Rules on the use of appropriations from budget item 400, adopted by the Bureau of the European Parliament on 14 April 2014 shall be applicable.

Article 20

Modifications to a budget once approved may be made only with Bureau approval

These internal Rules shall enter in force on the first day of the month following their adoption by the Bureau of the Group.