

## Out of the jargon jungle: what is a Quaestor?

In the European Parliament, there is one job title that might sound a bit old-fashioned: the Quaestor. Does it ring a bell? No? Well, no wonder! It's not a position that is often discussed. Nevertheless, it is essential for the proper functioning of the European Parliament.

There are five Quaestors in the Bureau, a political body which was the subject of another episode of this podcast series. Together, the five Quaestors make up the College of Quaestors. They meet roughly once a month, during plenary sessions.

The College of Quaestors is the body of the European Parliament responsible for administrative and financial matters that directly affect MEPs and their working conditions. Its duties include dealing with the medical service, transport, trainees and language courses, as well as preparing office spaces. In short, everything directly related to MEPs, as former First Quaestor Anne Sander explained at the European Parliament's open day in May 2024:

*'Basically, we Quaestors are five elected representatives who deal with the internal functioning of the European Parliament. So that means that we take care of the access rules, the operating rules, catering and the financial entitlements of MEPs. As well as ensuring that Parliament functions internally, we're also a sort of union for the MEPs. We represent them. When something is not right in this house, the MEPs turn to the Quaestors. For example, we try to make dealing with the administration easier for them.'*

The European Parliament elects the Quaestors after electing the President and the 14 Vice-Presidents. The Quaestors are elected by secret ballot in three rounds. An absolute majority of the votes cast is required for the first two rounds, while, for the final round, a relative majority is enough. An absolute majority means half of the votes cast plus one. A relative majority, or simple majority, is obtained by the candidate who simply receives the largest number of votes out of all the candidates.

But how do you become a Quaestor? Well, candidates looking to become a Quaestor can be put forward either by the political groups or by a minimum of 40 MEPs. Just like the European Parliament President, Quaestors have a two-and-a-half year term of office.

The Quaestors have an advisory role in the Bureau. This means they assist the Bureau in an advisory capacity, but do not take part in votes. They may submit proposals to amend or rewrite texts on all the rules adopted by the Bureau.

All MEPs are entitled to ask questions about the Quaestors' activities.

To find out who is in the College of Quaestors, you can consult the list of members and their remits on the website of the European Parliament.

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