

## **Brussels gravy train is like 'last days of Rome': EU MEPs earn up to 740% more than average citizen and enjoy free haircuts and gallons of petrol**

- **MEP perks receive free haircuts and 52 gallons of petrol a month**
- **Their salaries cost £137million a month but do not include allowances**
- **Research finds French MEPs earn 740% more than average French citizen**

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Huge salaries and lavish expenses are allowing Members of the European Parliament to live like 'latter-day Roman senators', a report warned yesterday.

The shocking study found that cosseted MEPs now have incomes up to 20 times higher than the people they represent.

While millions of families across Europe have had their incomes squeezed, most MEPs have enjoyed large increases in their salaries – while continuing to vote through ever-higher budgets for the EU.

# THE PAY DIVIDE

**How Eurocrats' £182,826 a year dwarfs their countrymen's average pay**

**UK average salary £23,038**

**Ireland £21,217**

**France £21,800**

**Spain £20,234**

**Portugal £15,471**

**Luxembourg £38,290**

**Germany £23,665**

**Italy £20,466**

**Austria £24,665**

**Malta £14,884**

**Greece £18,502**

**Slovenia £17,010**

**Bulgaria £8,518**

**Cyprus £19,460**

**Romania £9,340**

**Hungary £12,262**

**Slovakia £14,204**

**Poland £11,753**

**Czech Rep £15,383**

**Lithuania £11,121**

**Latvia £11,313**

**Estonia £12,286**

**Finland £22,666**

**Denmark £24,910**

**Sweden £24,445**

**8,185 parliamentarians are paid £3.3bn\***

\*per legislative period

**40 years**  
How long an average Briton would have to work to match MEP salary

**108 years**  
How long an average Bulgarian would have to work to match MEP salary



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**MEPs in Brussels from the member nations earn £137million a year before allowances and expenses**

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The study found that MEPs now enjoy an average income of £182,826 including allowances for attendance and travel.

The figure is almost ten times higher than the average EU wage of £18,617 a year. It is also 695 per cent higher than the average UK salary of £23,000.

The biggest discrepancy is in Bulgaria, where the average wage is just £8,500 – less than a twentieth of the salary of an MEP.

Over a five-year term MEPs now have an income approaching £1million. The report, by the German website Preisvergleich.de, estimates it would take the average Bulgarian 108 years to earn the same sum.



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**Research likely to fuel resentment in the UK with the European Union project**

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Unlike MPs in this country, MEPs still vote on their own salaries and perks. Until 2010 they received the same salary as an MP in their own country – equal to £65,738 in this country, but just £9,046 in Bulgaria.

But at that point they decided to 'equalise' salaries based on those of the best-paid countries, Germany and Italy.

The decision has led to most MEPs getting a huge boost in income at a time when their own citizens have been suffering as a result of the recession.



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**MEPs like Nigel Farage earn about 200 per cent more than Westminster MPs, according to the research**

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The report says the situation is reminiscent of ancient Rome, adding: 'The survey results show the huge income disparities between the EU citizens battered by the economic crisis and their EU parliamentarians, concluding with one thesis only; we are dealing in Brussels and some national parliaments of the EU countries with conditions similar to ancient Rome, because just like in the former Roman Senate none of these "new class EU senators" are controlled in any way.

'The extreme differences in pay structure between politicians and citizens are very serious.

'There is at least as much need for discussion on this issue as on the EU's plan to cap the manager salaries of public companies.'

The salaries and allowances of the MEPs of the 27 EU states now total £137million.

But this does not include the cost of the £217,000 office allowance available to each MEP.

The report also looks at some of the extraordinary perks available to MPs in some national parliaments.

In Italy, MPs are allowed to claim expenses for haircuts, while Maltese MPs get 240 litres of petrol a month.

The revelations will add to concern about the cost of the European Parliament, which maintains expensive legislatures in both Brussels and Strasbourg but still has relatively few real powers, except over the EU budget where it has repeatedly voted for above-inflation increases.