

**Nico Semsrott**  
Mitglied des Europäischen Parlaments

Brussels, 13.11.2019

Dear President Sassoli,

In the 1950s, the forerunner of the European Parliament began to hold some of its plenary sessions in Strasbourg for one simple reason: its friend, the Council of Europe, had a house where it could crash. Not long after, members held a vote to find a place of their own. They chose Brussels – for the first of many times.

And yet, six decades later, all MEPs still have to pack their trunks and take the train to Strasbourg. Because not only has this weird multi-seat situation endured, it has since become enshrined in a treaty. Behind closed doors, France won a promise from other member-states that the parliament would spend 12 weeks a year in Strasbourg.

The parliament has tried many different tactics to avoid making these pointless trips. There have been votes, debates, reports and petitions. MEPs have even gone so far as to do the impossible: show some creativity. For instance, they tried to turn Wednesday into a weekend, so that they could get two weeks in Strasbourg for the price of one.

But this was never enough. Our parents – the Commission and the Council – have ignored our complaints, and our rivals – France and Luxembourg – have taken us to court. Therefore, as usual in Europe, the status quo prevails. Meanwhile the EP remains the only democratic parliament in the world that cannot decide for itself where to hold its plenary sessions. Which means that, wherever it sits, it is at the little kids' table.

I want to make one more attempt to change this. In part because I cannot accept the economic and environmental cost of meeting in Strasbourg. In part because four hours in a train leaves my neck feeling a little stiff. This cannot go on any longer.

Fortunately, my team of top legal minds has found a way forward. The treaty protocol that determines parliament's place of business says simply that it must meet in "Strasbourg." It does not specify whether this is Strasbourg, France or Strasbourg, Saskatchewan – or even whether "Strasbourg" is a city at all. That is why I have renamed the Brussels plenary hall "Strasbourg," so we instead meet there 12 times a year, fully in line with the treaties.

I am writing to you, President Sassoli, with a petition simply to confirm this name change.<sup>1</sup> This should not take long. Therefore, we can focus more time on looking for a cheaper and greener way to stroke France's ego. Maybe we can just make France's star on the EU flag twice as big as the rest.

Sincerely,  
Nico Semsrott, EU Citizen (and MEP)

---

<sup>1</sup> In accordance with Article 227 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and Rule 226 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament.