

In mid 2008 questions were raised in the press and media concerning my secretarial allowances. I immediately contacted the European Parliament authorities and they conducted a painstakingly detailed investigation with my full co-operation. In order to give myself space and time for this process free of press and media harassment I resigned as Leader of Conservative MEPs of my own volition.

Three months later I received a letter from the Secretary General of the Parliament which cleared me completely of any suggestion of conflict of interest or self-enrichment and confirmed that the funds were properly applied to the intended purpose of providing secretarial assistance.

I employ two full-time, five part-time and two occasional staff in support of my parliamentary and constituency work in the South West region covering over 50 Westminster constituencies and Gibraltar.

Giles Chichester