



Tips on Applying to be a Parliamentary Assistant

It sounds obvious, but first you need to think about the party or political group with which you would like to work. Once you know where your own sympathies lie, check out the European Parliament Information Office guide and the list of current MEPs. This will give you information as to which region each MEP represents and in what areas their policy interests lie. This is important both so that you can match your interests to the MEPs' and to establish key points that must be included in your application. In addition to the usual criteria of a standard cover letter and CV, there are certain things you should keep in mind when applying to a MEP's office.

- **Personalize it** - avoid starting your letter with 'Dear MEP' or 'Dear Sir/Madam'. Instead, make sure you address the email / letter to the MEP personally, e.g. Dear Mr. Sturdy.
- **Tailor it** – do some research on the MEP and tailor your CV and cover letter to them. MEP's websites and social media pages are a great place to start. Find out which region they represent, what committees they are on and whether they have any specific areas of interest. Make sure to mention this information in your cover letter and, if possible, relate it to your own experiences and interests. This should make clear why you are attracted to working for the MEP, and why you are suited for the position.
- **Show an interest** - include specific information about the MEP's work in your letter. If the MEP was involved in an important piece of legislation, recently made a speech or attended an event, referencing it intelligently will help your application stand out from the rest. It shows that you have taken the time to research the MEP and their activities.
- **Think political** – these are political positions, so it is important to consider this in your application. You do not necessarily have to be a party member or have previous political experience to apply (although this may help), but you should at least be supportive of the party and its policies. Make this clear in your cover letter.
- **Timing is key** – get your application in at the right time. EP candidates will obviously be in campaign mode coming up to elections. Once elected, though, the appointment of Parliamentary Assistants will be on their immediate agenda. Make sure to get your application in early – either before the election or just after it - to give yourself the best chance of being considered.
- **Keep it relevant** – where your CV is concerned, only include directly relevant work experience. If you are a recent graduate and have limited professional experience, make sure you relate the skills acquired in your job to the work that is undertaken in a parliamentary office. The same is true for your interests - only include those that are relevant to the position for which you are applying.
- **Be like Donal Ryan** – Donal Ryan's novel *The Spinning Heart* became a literary sensation last year, winning numerous prizes in the process. Before finding a publisher though, the manuscript was rejected almost fifty times. Applying for positions in the EU can sometimes feel the same however persistence pays – keeping applying, send multiple (tailored) applications, and, if you get discouraged, remember Donal Ryan!