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Transparency and the right to access information in the Spanish Congress of Deputies

Mateo Maciá
Miguel Angel Gonzalo

Congress of Deputies -Spain

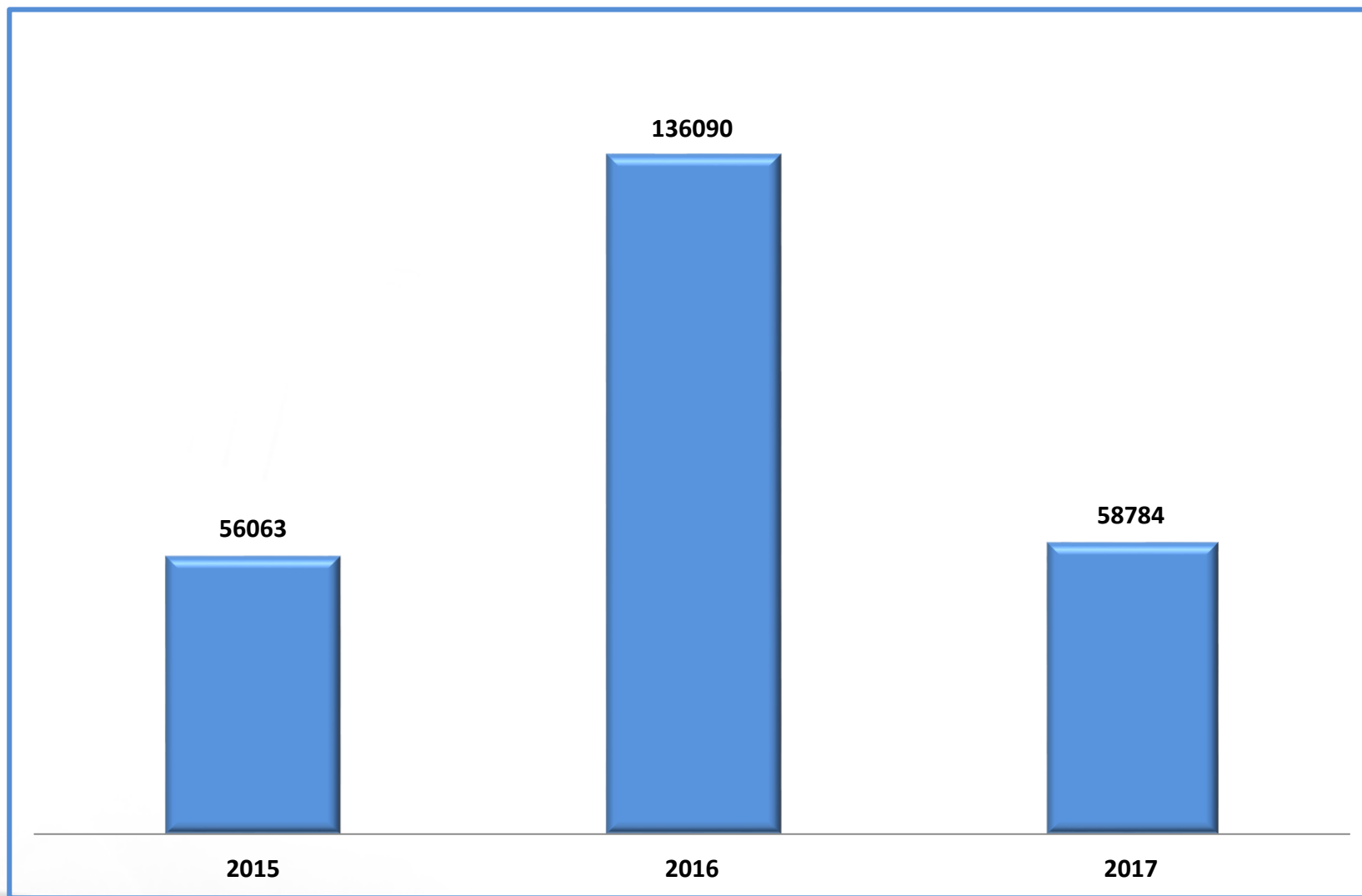
Measures adopted by the Congress of Deputies (2015)

- The Congress has been taking **gradual steps** both as regards to active transparency, by means of the publication in its web page of
 - information on the MPs economic regime
 - publicity of the declarations of assets and activities
- The Bureau of the Chamber, in its meeting of **January 20, 2015**, adopted the **Rules** for the enforcement of the provisions of the **The Transparency, access to public information and good governance Act (Act 19/2013, December 9)**,

Active Transparency

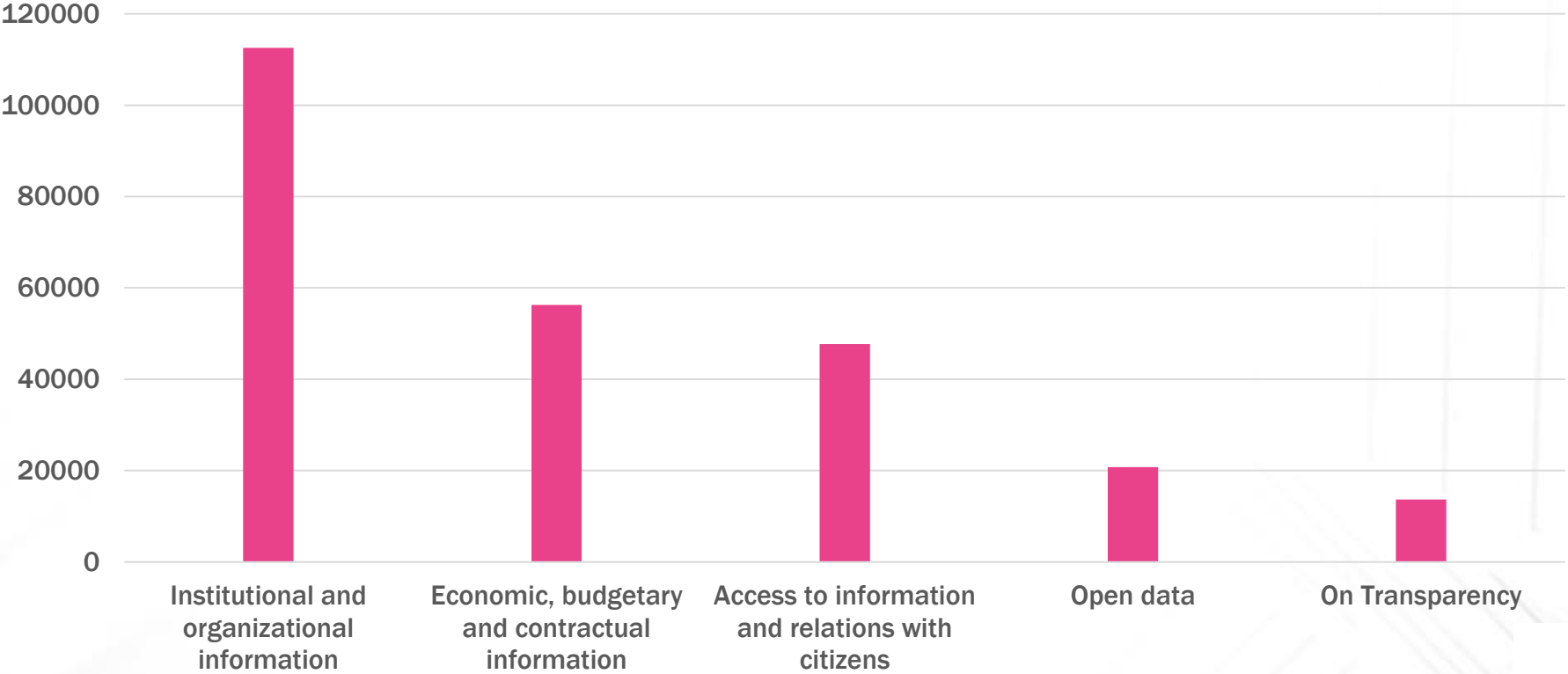
- The first relevant decision was taken in the sense of making available all information in a “**Portal of Transparency**”, and doing so in a clear, structured and accessible way
- The Portal has five main sections:
 - A) On transparency
 - B) Institutional and organizational information
 - C) Economic, budgetary and contractual information
 - D) Access to information and relation with citizens
 - E) Open Data

Portal of Transparency (website) – Access



Portal of Transparency (website) - Access

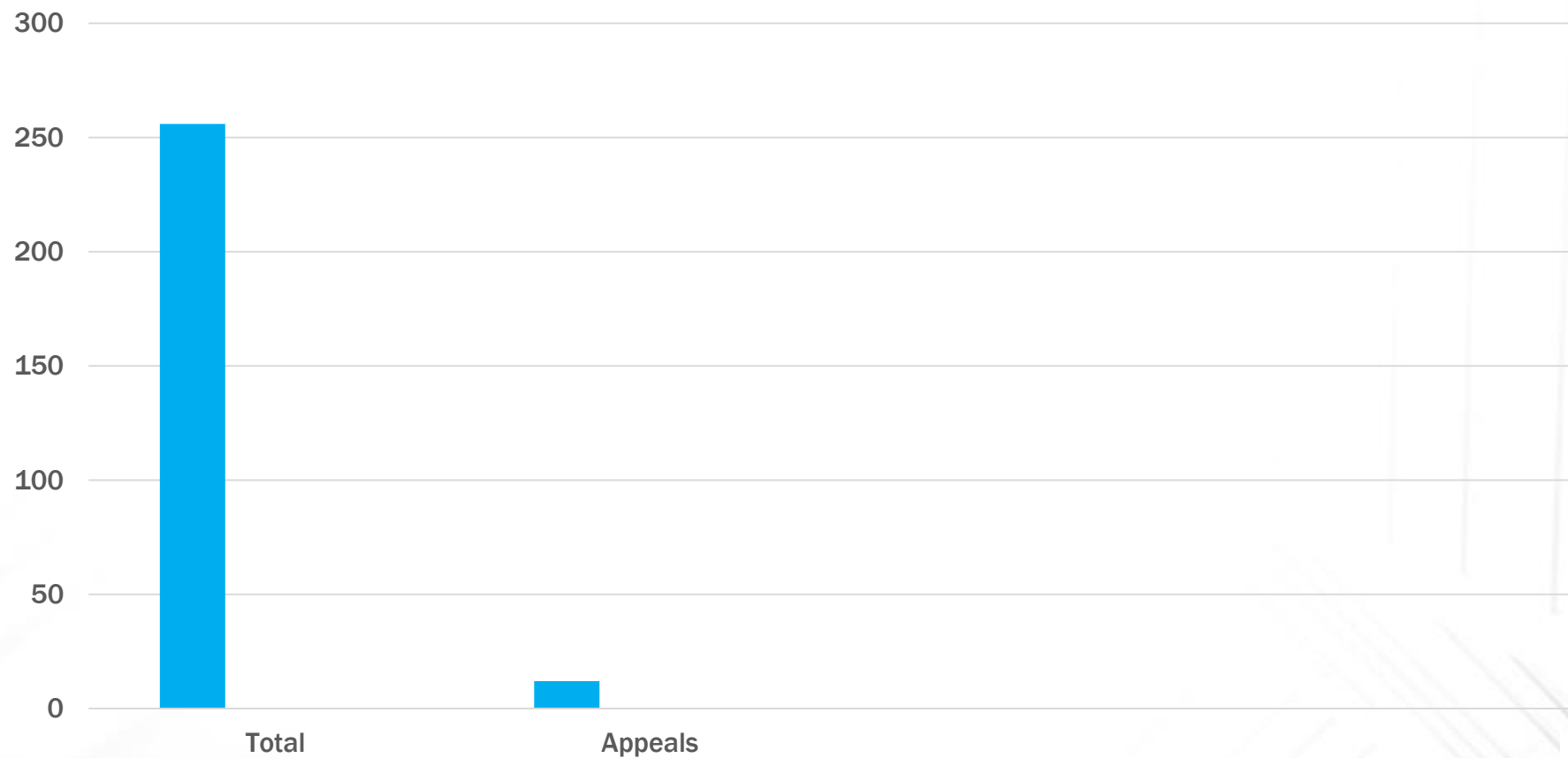
Main topics



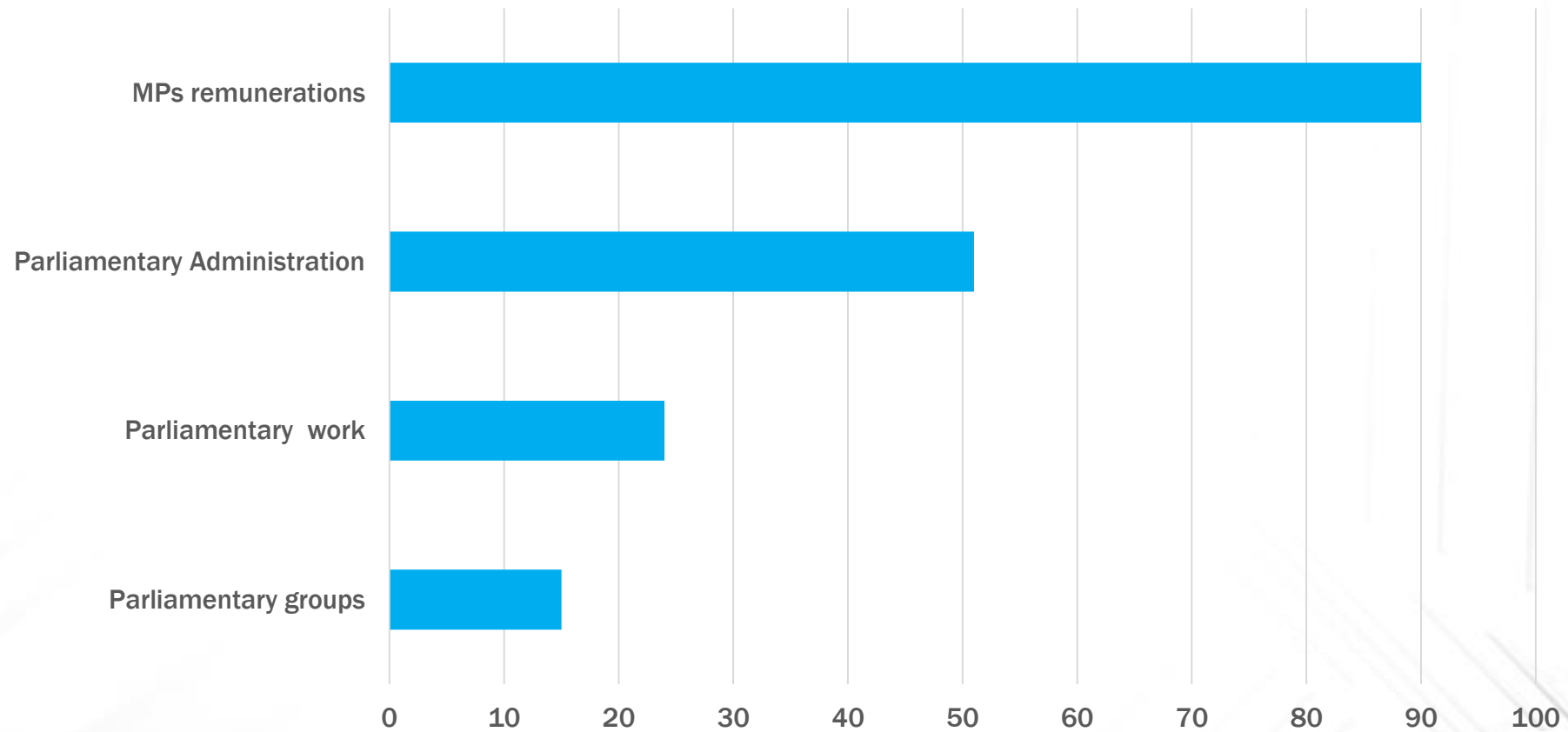
Passive Transparency

- **No electronic identification** mechanisms are introduced to submit an information request
- The right to access covers public information of the Congress, regarding **only the activity subject to administrative law**
- The deadline for answering is **one month**
- The **Secretary General** shall settle the requests
- The person requesting information whose request is denied, can initiate a legal procedure before the **Supreme Court**
- **Librarians** keep the **Portal updated**
- Librarians ask for the information required and **draft the answers**

Requests of information / Appeals (2015- July 2017)



Topics more demanded



Conclusions

- The implementation of Transparency in the Spanish Congress of Deputies is an **outcome of the Transparency Act, 2013**
- The **number of requests** of information (100 per year aprox.) is **significantly low**
- The compliance of the TA entails a **review of administrative procedures**, for example, as regards the publicity of contracts
- Adapting to transparency entails a **change of mentality of the parliamentary administration** itself, since from then on a steering principle of the actions of administrative services shall be “that the public information of the Chamber is an asset at the disposal of citizens”

Conclusions (2)

- A significant number of requests comes from **journalists**
- More than fifty per cent of the requests are about **parliamentary matters, not administrative** ones
- **Librarians** play an **important role** in the implementation and day to day running of transparency
- The **more public information provided by the chamber** in the transparency portal (active transparency), the **less necessary to devote efforts to reply to citizens' requests** for information (passive transparency)

Questions

- - Do all MPs in your country support openness and transparency or are there different views?
- - What else would you like to see published on your parliament's website that would improve transparency?

Thank you!

