Request for defence of parliamentary immunity of Renato Brunetta

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The Committee on Legal Affairs adopted the report drawn up by Aloyzas SAKALAS (PES, LT) on the request for defence of the immunity and privileges of Renato BRUNETTA (a former Italian MEP). The committee believes that the immunity of Renato Brunetta should be defended, for the following reasons:

At the sitting of 4 June, the President of Parliament announced that he had received a request for the defence of the parliamentary immunity of Renato Brunetta. The request relates to criminal proceedings brought by Giuseppe De Michelis Di Slonghello, a former Italian diplomat, against Mr. Brunetta and others, in response to material published in a book entitled "Le Mani rosse sull'Italia" [The Red Hands on Italy], which was sold with the daily newspaper "Libero" in August 2006. Renato Brunetta is the co-editor of the book in question. Mr De Michelis Di Slonghello complains that he is described in Chapter four of the book as being a former spy of the KGB according to the so-called “Mitrokhin Archive”, which he claims is defamatory and injurious to his reputation.

Mr Brunetta argues that there is a nexus between his political activity and his function of editor, and calls for the application of the first paragraph of Article 68(1) of the Italian Constitution, which provides that: “Members of Parliament cannot be held accountable for the opinions expressed or votes cast in the performance of their functions”. Since the request for defence of immunity is made by a (former) member of the European Parliament, it should be construed as calling for the application of Article 9 of the Protocol.

On the basis of the above considerations, the Committee on Legal Affairs, having examined the reasons for and against defending immunity, **recommends that the immunity of Mr Renato Brunetta be defended**.