Annual report on the activity of the Petitions Committee 2008

2008/2301(INI) - 31/03/2009

The Committee on Petitions adopted an own-initiative report drawn up by Mairead McGUINNESS (EPP-ED, IE) on the deliberations of the Committee on Petitions during the year 2008.

MEPs welcome the involvement and contribution of petitioners at each meeting of the Committee on Petitions, which allows for a direct and open dialogue with European Parliament representatives. They encourage individual EU citizens and community associations to come forward with issues which concern the area of activity of the European Union and which affect them directly. The Commission is called upon to ensure that **greater recognition** is given to, and greater emphasis placed on, the petitions process.

The report urges **national and regional parliaments**, as representatives of EU citizens, to remain vigilant in relation to the way in which Member States apply the Treaties and EU legislative acts, notably as regards issues related to the environment, social and employment rights, the free movement of persons, goods and services, financial services, citizens' fundamental rights including their right to legitimately acquired property, recognition of their professional qualifications and all forms of discrimination.

MEPs call on the Commission, all Member States and their national, regional and local institutions, together with their Permanent Representatives, to **cooperate fully** with the responsible committee of the European Parliament when investigating allegations or proposals contained in petitions, on a loyal and constructive basis, with a view to finding solutions to issues raised through the petitions process. They request that a **new interinstitutional agreement** incorporating reinforced powers for committees of inquiry be negotiated in order to further strengthen the rights of EU citizens.

The committee is concerned by the large number of petitions received seeking voting rights for resident ‘non’-citizens of Latvia in local elections. It calls on: the Romanian authorities to adopt measures to conserve and safeguard Romania's cultural and architectural heritage; the French authorities to prepare an epidemiological assessment to determine the impact on the area close to Fos-Berre, in the immediate vicinity of the incinerator plant under construction at Fos-sur-Mer.

The Commission is also called upon, inter alia, to: ensure that the **Habitats and Birds Directives** are applied by the Member States in a manner which is consistent with the objective of ending biodiversity loss in the EU by 2010; step up its monitoring of the implementation of Directive 2006/114/EC concerning **misleading and comparative advertising** with regard to misleading business-directory companies.

MEPs welcome the **constructive cooperation** between the Ombudsman and the EU. They endorse the Ombudsman's repeated calls for the adoption of a **Code of Good Administrative Behaviour**, common to all EU institutions and bodies. Moreover, they believe that the Ombudsman, the Commission and Parliament should develop a **common EU portal** for the treatment of complaints addressed to the EU institutions.

The report recalls the recommendations contained in the 2007 Annual Report of the Committee on Petitions with a view to reviewing the administrative procedures for the treatment of petitions, such as, for instance, the transfer of the registration of petitions to the Petitions Committee secretariat, close

cooperation with SOLVIT, further enhancement of the petitions database, the development of an EU portal for European citizens, etc. It welcomes the drafting by Members of a Code of Good Practice for the treatment of petitions, which would come into force at the beginning of the next parliamentary term.

Lastly, MEPs note that the **"one-seat petition"** signed by 1 500 000 people, which seeks to have the European Parliament meet in one location, has not yet been fully addressed. They recommend that the Committee on Petitions deal with this matter as a priority during the next parliamentary term.