

# Annual report of the 2013 activities of the Committee on Petitions

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The Committee on Petitions adopted an own-initiative report by Jarosaw Leszek WASA (EPP, PL) on the activities of the Committee on Petitions 2013.

The report acknowledged the substantial and fundamental role of the Petitions Committee in defending and promoting the rights of EU citizens and residents. The petition procedure should be made **more efficient, transparent, and impartial**, while preserving the participatory rights of the Members of the Committee on Petitions, so that the handling of petitions will stand up to judicial review even at a procedural level.

Members noted the **variety of thematic key areas** concerned in the citizens' petitions, such as fundamental rights, internal market, environmental law, public health issues, child welfare, transport and constructions, Spanish Coastal Law, new Regulation on good administration, persons with disabilities, age discrimination, public access to documents, European Schools, Fiscal Union, and the Steel Industry, animal rights and many more.

Petitions which fall under said thematic areas lend proof to the issue that the frequencies of widespread situations of unsatisfactory transposition of EU legislation or misapplication of the law are still occurring. This is why Members consider it important to **enhance cooperation with Member States' parliaments and governments, based on reciprocity**, and, where necessary, to encourage Member States' authorities to transpose and apply EU legislation with full transparency.

**New horizons and relations with other institutions:** the report underlined the importance of making this Committee work more substantial inside the House by raising its profile as a **scrutiny Committee**. It invited the newly elected Petitions Committee to nominate internal Annual Rapporteurs on the major policies, which are of concern of European petitioners, and to enhance cooperation with other parliamentary committees.

Members highlighted the need to reinforce the Petitions Committee collaboration with the other EU Institutions and bodies, and the national authorities in the Member States. Structured dialogue and systematic cooperation with Member States especially with the National Parliaments' Petitions Committees should be enhanced. For their part, Member States are urged to play a proactive role in responding to petitions related to the implementation and enforcement of European law.

**Working methods:** the committee is invited to adopt **final internal rules** to ensure maximum efficiency and openness in the work of the Committee and to make proposals to revise accordingly the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament.

The Petitions Committee is called upon to adopt **clear deadlines** in the process of petitions in order to **speed up the petitions life-cycle** in the European Parliament and make the whole process even more transparent and democratic. This could put in place a **defined lifecycle** of the petition from registration until their final closure in the European Parliament.

These deadlines should establish an **alert mechanism** which automatically draws Members' attention to petitions on which there has not been any action or correspondence for a considerable amount of time, in order to avoid old petitions staying open over years without substantial reason.

Lastly, Members called for an **urgent revision of the relevant rules**, in order to enable the newly elected Members to carry out efficient visits and report swiftly back to the petitioners and the Committee on their findings and recommendations.