# Report under Rule 227(7) on the deliberations of the Committee on Petitions during the year 2019

2020/2044(INI) - 17/12/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 619 votes to 11, with 59 abstentions, a resolution on the outcome of the Committee on Petitions' deliberations during 2019.

***Statistical overview***

Members recalled that Parliament received 1357 petitions in 2019 compared to 1220 in 2018, an increase of 11.23%, despite the period of suspension of parliamentary work due to the European elections. Of the petitions presented in 2019, 41 were co-signed by one or more citizens, 8 by more than 100 citizens and 3 by more than 10 000 citizens.

Of the 1357 petitions presented in 2019, 938 were declared admissible and 406 inadmissible, and 13 were withdrawn. The relatively high number (30%) of petitions declared inadmissible in 2019 shows that there is still a general lack of awareness of the EU's areas of activity.

***Strengthening the role of the Petitions Committee***

Members considered that the Petitions Committee should strengthen its role in defending and promoting the rights of EU citizens and residents, ensuring that petitioners' concerns and complaints are examined within a reasonable timeframe and resolved through an open, democratic and transparent petitions procedure, as well as through enhanced cooperation and dialogue with other EU institutions and national, regional and local authorities.

The resolution highlighted the importance of a permanent information campaign and public debate on the Union's policy areas to raise public awareness of the right to petition the European Parliament. It called for a more active press and communication service and a more active presence on social networks.

***Processing of petitions***

Members stressed the need for enhanced cooperation between the Petitions Committee and the committees responsible, the European institutions and national, regional and local authorities in the Member States in the context of investigations or proposals relating to the application and enforcement of EU legislation. They welcomed the commitment of Commissioner-designate Maroš Šefovi to improve the Commission's handling of petitions and to ensure that accurate responses are provided within three months.

***Main areas of concern***

Members noted that the environment - waste management, climate change denial, nuclear safety, endocrine disrupters and health protection - was the petitioners' main concern in 2019. They therefore called on the Commission and Member States to ensure proper implementation of EU legislation in this area.

Parliament insisted that the Petitions Committee should continue to fight climate denial by promoting the adoption of effective and dissuasive sanctions against interest groups lobbying the EU institutions and whose activities are directly or indirectly linked to the denial of climate change.

The report also drew attention to:

- the frequency of complaints about breaches of the rule of law by certain authorities: Members called on the Commission to promote a culture of respect for the rule of law, strengthen cooperation with national authorities and ensure an effective joint response to real threats within the Union;

- the large number of petitions on Brexit submitted in 2019, mostly calling for the protection of EU citizens' rights before and after Brexit;

- the special role played by the Committee on Petitions within the EU in the context of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in particular with regard to petitions on inclusive education for disabled children;

- the important work undertaken by the Petitions Committee to ensure the protection of animal welfare in the EU: Members considered it essential to launch a new EU strategy on animal welfare aimed at filling all existing gaps and ensuring the full and effective protection of animal welfare through a clear and comprehensive legislative framework.

***Citizens' initiatives***

Parliament considered it essential that citizens should be directly involved in the initiation of legislative proposals.

While noting the significant number of new European Citizens' Initiatives (ECIs) registered by the Commission in 2019, Members deplored the fact that to date the majority of successful ECIs have not resulted in a legislative proposal from the Commission. They encouraged the Commission to approach European Citizens' Initiatives in as open and responsive a way as possible, in order to make this instrument a real success of European participatory democracy.

***Online petitions portal***

Given that 73.9% of the petitions received in 2019 (1003 petitions) were submitted via Parliament's Petitions Web Portal, Members suggested increasing the visibility of the portal on the Parliament's website and making it more accessible to people with disabilities, including the possibility for petitioners to submit petitions in EU national sign languages.