Deliberations of the Committee on Petitions in 2022

2023/2047(INI) - 23/11/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 488 votes to 12, with 62 abstentions, a resolution on the outcome of the Committee on Petitions' deliberations during 2022.

In 2022, Parliament received **1 217 petitions**, which represents a decrease of 12,6 % compared to the 1 392 petitions submitted in 2021 and a decrease of 22.6 % compared to the 1 573 petitions submitted in 2020. The overall number of petitions remains modest in relation to the total population of the EU, revealing that efforts still need to be stepped up to increase citizens' awareness about their right to petition.

Parliament emphasised the fundamental role of the Committee on Petitions in protecting and promoting the rights of EU citizens and residents by ensuring that petitioners' concerns and complaints are examined in a **timely, effective, appropriate and non-discriminatory manner**, and that the petitioners are informed about the actions taken and progress made on their petitions, and that they are resolved through an open, democratic and transparent petition process.

Members reiterated that it is important that the Commission revises its strategic approach on the handling of petitions in order to **ensure an adequate follow-up of all petitions denouncing violations of EU law**. The Commission is called on to raise awareness among its staff about the need to use plain, simple, empathetic and appropriate language in order to convey clearly understandable responses to the petitioners.

The resolution stressed the huge increase in the number of petitions submitted on **external relations** issues compared to previous years which could be explained by the geopolitical context in 2022 and in particular the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

Health, which was one of the main areas of concern for petitioners in 2021, mainly due to health concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, appeared to become less important in 2022.

Parliament drew attention to the significant number of petitions discussed in relation to various aspects of the protection of the **rights of rainbow families** in the EU, in particular the different stances regarding the free movement and mutual recognition rights of LGBTI+

families in the EU. It pointed out that petitions related to the **rights of national minorities** remained on the agenda of the Committee on Petitions, especially in the areas of discriminatory practices concerning their right to education in their mother tongue and the use of languages.

Environmental issues remained an area of serious concern for petitioners in 2022, with more than 20 % of petitions dedicated to environmental issues. In this regard, the Commission to **launch without delay** an infringement procedure that should be finalised within a reasonable time frame in order to prevent further deterioration of the environment. Members stressed the importance of delivering on EU citizens' expectations regarding the protection of the environment, and in particular of taking action in the field of **illegal logging**.

It is also important to reflect on EU citizens' demands with regard to the significant number of petitions received in 2022 calling for improvements to **animal welfare** standards.

The important contribution of the Petitions Committee in defending the rights of **persons with disabilities** was highlighted.

The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) is an important instrument for active citizenship and public participation. Members underlined the need to improve the Commission's commitments in its responses to valid ECIs in order to foster citizens' trust in the ECI as the most significant instrument for participatory democracy.

Parliament welcomed the Commission's commitment to create an interinstitutional IT tool with Parliament, and urged its swift implementation, as a means of sharing information and documents on all follow-up actions taken on petitions. It recalled that the **Petitions Web Portal** is an essential tool for ensuring a smooth, efficient and transparent petitions process.