Deliberations of the Committee on Petitions in 2023

2025/2027(INI) - 14/04/2025 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Petitions adopted the own-initiative report by Gheorghe FALC (EPP, RO) on the deliberations of the Committee on Petitions in 2023.

Petitions received in 2023 compared to 2022

In 2023, Parliament received **1 452 petitions**, which represents an increase of 16.2 % compared to the 1 217 petitions submitted in 2022. The number of users supporting one or more petitions on Parliament's Petitions Web Portal was 26 331, which represents a considerable increase compared to the 22 441 users recorded in 2022 (both numbers are considerably lower than the 209 272 supporters recorded in 2021). **82.4 %** of the petitions received in 2023 were submitted via Parliament's Petitions Web Portal, which is a slight increase compared to 2022 (79.05 %), thus reconfirming it as by far the most used channel for citizens to submit petitions to Parliament.

However, 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 of their right to petition and the possible usefulness of petitions as a means of drawing the attention of the institutions and the Member States to matters that affect and concern citizens directly.

Scope of responsibility

Of the 1 452 petitions submitted in 2023, 429 were declared inadmissible and 13 were withdrawn. The high percentage (29.55 %) of inadmissible petitions in 2023 confirms that there is still a widespread **lack of clarity about the scope of the EU's areas of responsibility**. In this regard, Members called for an EU-wide enhanced structured information and communication campaign in all EU official languages in collaboration with national and regional ombudsmen, NGOs, and educational institutions to increase awareness of petition rights among citizens from all Member States, particularly addressing rural and disadvantaged communities and marginalised groups, as well as, remote islands and regions.

Issues covered by the petitions

The report highlighted a slight decrease in the number of petitions submitted on **external relations** issues compared to 2022. This could be explained by the new geopolitical context in 2023 and in particular a decrease in the number of petitions on the war in Ukraine and a significant increase in petitions dealing with the new conflicts in the Middle East. The Committee on Petitions took account of citizens' concerns about, *inter alia*, sanctions, security, conflict resolution, refugees, visa policy, border checks, free movement of persons, progress of EU candidate countries and single standard for hand luggage dimensions.

Health and environmental issues appeared to continue to play an important role in 2023.

Increased transparency

Members reiterated their call on the Commission to provide legal clarifications on the key criteria underpinning its strategic approach to enforcing EU law and to regularly update the Committee on Petitions on developments in infringement proceedings and to ensure that the Committee on Petitions gets

access to the all relevant documents on EU Pilot and infringement procedures and legislative initiatives that were launched based on petitions received. Increased transparency and regular feedback on the handling of ongoing infringement procedures by the Commission would be beneficial for the Committee's follow-up of open petitions.

In addition, the Commission is encouraged to put in place all necessary measures to improve transparency and effectiveness of its management of infringement procedures, which can be perceived as **opaque** by citizens.

The committee emphasised the need for enhanced and more active cooperation between Member States and the Committee on petitions in order to unblock those petitions requiring prompt responses and reactions from the national authorities. Member States should guarantee responses to petitions within the three-month deadline requested.

European citizens' initiatives (ECIs)

The report took note of the significant number of new ECIs registered by the Commission in 2023, which shows that citizens are seizing the opportunity to use participatory instruments to have a say in policy and law-making processes.