Deliberations of the Committee on Petitions in 2023

2025/2027(INI) - 22/05/2025 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 260 votes to 194, with 110 abstentions, a resolution 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.

Work carried out by the Petitions Committee

Parliament welcomed the work of the Petitions Committee on petitions concerning the Akamas Peninsula, the most biodiverse area in Cyprus, which has been subject to systemic and repeated violations of the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive for decades. It highlighted the essential work of the Petitions Committee on protecting workers' rights against discrimination and the abusive use of fixed-term contracts in the public sector in Italy. It also welcomed the PETI Committee's examination of petition 1168 /2023, submitted by Mihai Igna on behalf of the 'Together We Bring Prosperity' association, which calls for the return of Romania's national treasure and historical archives currently held in Russia.

Intensify information and awareness

Parliament recalled the importance of a continuous public debate on the Union's areas of action, in order to adequately inform citizens about the scope of the Union's competence and the different levels of decision-making. It called for a structured and reinforced **information and communication campaign** at Union level to be carried out at no additional cost in all official languages of the Union, in cooperation with national and regional ombudsmen, NGOs and educational institutions, in order to raise awareness among citizens in all Member States of the rights of petition, and also to reach out to rural and disadvantaged populations, marginalised groups, as well as inhabitants of islands and remote regions.

Members recommended exploring the potential of existing IT tools to strengthen citizens' support for the **portal**, including through options redirecting users to appropriate complaint mechanisms.

Issues covered by the petitions

Parliament noted 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 appear to continue to play an important role in 2023 with the examination of petitions on banning chemicals and heavy metals in children's toys, on supporting healthy and environmentally friendly food systems and lifestyles, and on implementing EU regulations on added sugars in foods for infants and young children.

In view of the large number of petitions submitted in relation to citizens' concerns about the **reintroduction of border checks** between certain Member States, Parliament recalled that Member States may reintroduce internal border controls in the event of a serious threat to public policy or internal security, or in exceptional circumstances which jeopardise the overall functioning of the Schengen area.

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.

Members 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)

Parliament urged the Commission to take due account of parliamentary resolutions adopted on European Citizens' Initiatives (ECIs) and to strengthen its engagement with citizens, including by ensuring proper and effective follow-up to successful ECIs, which will strengthen the democratic process and ensure that citizens' voices are duly taken into account in EU policy-making.