

Petitions Committee. 2000-2001 annual report

2001/2010(INI) - 20/06/2001

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Felipe CAMISÓN ASENSIO (EPP-ED, E) on the work of the Petitions Committee. It stressed the importance of the right of petition as a means of making the institutions aware of the problems and legitimate aspirations of EU citizens and enabling the latter to draw attention to shortcomings in, or failure to implement, Community legislation. The committee also expressed support for initiatives by the European Ombudsman, such as the drawing up of a code of good administrative behaviour, and recommended that the right of petition be included on the agenda for the planned Convention on future EU integration. Although it praised the constructive role of the Commission in dealing with petitions, the report was critical of the Council and stressed the need for fruitful cooperation between the 3 institutions. It called for a new interinstitutional agreement to be drafted for processing petitions more effectively and rapidly, for example by introducing mandatory deadlines and compulsory attendance by the Council at meetings where petitions were considered. The agreement should also confirm the Petitions Committee's rights to obtain the information and documents it needed to carry out its tasks. The committee was also critical of the failure of the EU institutions, particularly Parliament, to exploit the potential of computer technology. It called for the development, in electronic form, of a body of case-law and data-bases for the consideration of petitions, which could be made available to the general public through Internet. It also recommended establishing an Internet website as part of an information campaign for citizens on the right of petition. Lastly, looking ahead to the applicant countries joining the EU, the report stressed the need to take account of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, especially Article 21 thereof, when investigating possible cases of discrimination.