# Committee on Petitions. Annual report 1996-1997

1997/2004(INI) - 10/06/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Adopting the report by Mr Roy PERRY (PPE, UK), the European Parliament noted that the number of petitions illustrating serious shortcomings in Community law continued to rise, causing numerous political and legislative problems. Petitions were therefore an excellent way of obtaining the public's view on questions of Community policy directly, identifying shortcomings in European legislation and monitoring the non-application or non-transposition of Community law. Noting that, in accordance with Article 138 D of the EC Treaty, petitions are addressed to the European Parliament, it undertook to give a suitable response to the petitions submitted to it as quickly as possible. Petitions gave an overview of the difficulties encountered by national and Community administrations in applying Community law (bureaucratic behaviour, failure to adhere to the principles of Community law and shortcomings in legislative provisions). Parliament considered that the malfunctions encountered should serve as a basis for widening and/or improving existing legal provisions. Parliament called on all its committees and delegations to examine the petitions filed promptly, taking account of the infringements noted in their individual areas. The Committee on Petitions should also be notified of and consulted on any political or legislative initiative which resulted from the examination of a petition. Parliament also called on its departments to ensure that the right to petition and important petitions brought to its attention were published at regular and frequent intervals. The European Parliament also wished to continue close and fruitful cooperation with the European ombudsman, who is authorized to receive complaints. Parliament also called on the Commission and its Committee on Petitions to finalize efficient procedures for a fast and satisfactory examination of petitions. It suggested that this could be achieved by enlarging and/or coordinating existing computer systems and, more importantly, by examining the degree to which computerized information should be made available to the European institutions and its citizens via Intranet and/or the Internet. It also requested that deadlines for replies to and investigations into the petitions submitted be laid down with other Community institutions within the framework of institutional agreements. It then called on the Commission to clarify the standards which should be met by the services which European citizens are entitled to expect. These standards should comply with the following principles: - high, controllable standards based on published statistics; - exhaustive and transparent information, especially on the financial management and administration of the departments concerned (especially appropriations spent); - accessibility of services to the public; - a courteous attitude when examining replies and rapid responses. Finally, the European Parliament called for close collaboration between its Committee on Petitions and the Commission departments in charge of the "Citizens First" initiative. Parliament also invited Council representatives to attend meetings of the Committee on Petitions more regularly.