Committee on Petitions. Annual report 1995-1996

1996/2007(INI) - 19/07/1996 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Adopting the report by Mr Antoni GUTIERREZ DIAZ (GUE/NGL, E) on the deliberations of the Committee on Petitions during the 1995-1996 parliamentary year, the European Parliament started by reiterating that the petition is a fundamental right of the citizens of the European Union. Accepting that, as a Community institution elected by direct universal suffrage, it had a duty to take note of the complaints, opinions and requests of the citizens and to advocate those which it considered legitimate or justified, it recommended that its Committee on Petitions meet when other committees were not in session so that petitions could be properly addressed. It called on its committees and delegations to examine all petitions passed to them and to pay particular attention to infringements and omissions with regard to Community law. It recalled that the European Union ombudsman and the Committee on Petitions had different remits and noted that the European Parliament was the institution to which the right to petition was addressed and that this right, which was enshrined in the Treaties, was an excellent way of finding out what citizens thought of Community policy and identifying shortcomings in European regulations, which was why it called for citizens to be properly informed of their right to petition by each of the institutions in question. It called in particular for close collaboration on the part of the other Community institutions in order to protect and strengthen the exercise of the right to petition in the European Union (especially by responding within a reasonable period of time) and urged the Commission to ensure that Community law was applied by the Member States. Similarly, it called on the Commission and the Committee on Petitions to make every effort to ensure that petitions were addressed as quickly and as efficiently as possible. Finally, Parliament hoped that it and the ombudsman would be able to work in close, extensive and fruitful collaboration.