# Confiscation of vehicles by the Greek Authorities

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Michael CASHMAN ( PES , UK ) on the confiscation of automobiles by the Greek authorities, which has been the subject of numerous petitions to the European Parliament. The petitions describe a number of irregularities which have occurred in Greece when the customs authorities, suspecting that the petitioner's foreign-registered vehicles were being illegally imported and used in Greece , confiscated the vehicles. Although the petitioners fulfilled the conditions for the tax exemptions laid down in Directive 83/182/EEC for temporary imports of vehicles from one Member State into another, since they all had their "normal residence" in a Member State other than Greece, they were fined heavily and also required to pay an increased duty consisting of up to ten times the normal customs duty. Despite their repeated representations to the various legal authorities in Greece , the judgement the European Court of Justice in case C-262/99 (Paraskevas Louloudakis v. Elliniko Dimosio) and the legal action by the European Commission against the Hellenic Republic (Case C-156/04), the problem of the confiscation of the automobiles has not yet been resolved.

MEPs expressed "great concern" that the Greek authorities did not apply the relevant exemption to these specific cases, and said that the seizure, confiscation and sale of a very substantial number of vehicles was incompatible with the principles of the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights. They added that the confiscation of the vehicles, and the fact that the petitioners were deprived of the use of them for many years, was "contrary to the right of property and freedom of movement", and said that the petitioners had a right to be "properly compensated". The report concluded by urging the Greek authorities to comply with the rules laid down in Directive 83/182/EEC, failing which the Commission should "proceed without delay" with its legal action against the Hellenic Republic .