

Cooperation of the Committee on Petitions with the Committees of the European Parliament and impact on their work



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Abstract

This study was requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Petitions. It was written and published by the Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs. The paper describes the methods and procedures of cooperation between the Committee on Petitions and other parliamentary committees on petitions sent for opinion and information and examines improvements brought by the establishment of the Petitions Network. The study analyses impact of petitions on the activities of the parliamentary committees and describes follow-up actions to integrate EU citizens concerns in the parliamentary work. It raises areas for improvement and proposes recommendations to strengthen cooperation between committees.

This document was requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Petitions.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
ECHA	European Chemicals Agency
EFSA	European Food and Safety Authority
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
REACH	Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals
TEU	Treaty on European Union
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

Parliamentary committees

AFET	Committee on Foreign Affairs
AFCO	Committee on Constitutional Affairs
AGRI	Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development
BUDG	Committee on Budgets
CONT	Committee on Budgetary Control
CULT	Committee on Culture and Education
DEVE	Committee on Development
DROI	Subcommittee on Human Rights
ECON	Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs
EMPL	Committee on Employment and Social Affairs
ENVI	Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

FEMM	Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality
IMCO	Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection
INTA	Committee on International Trade
ITRE	Committee on Industry, Research and Energy
JURI	Committee on Legal Affairs
LIBE	Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
PECH	Committee on Fisheries
PETI	Committee on Petitions
REGI	Committee on Regional Development
TRAN	Committee on Transport and Tourism

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The study aims to demonstrate the usefulness and potential of cooperation between the Committee on Petitions (PETI Committee) and other European Parliament (EP) committees and analyse the impact of petitions submitted by EU citizens on the parliamentary activities of the committees of the European Parliament since the establishment of the Petitions Network. It covers the impact of petitions on the work of the EP committees during the years 2017, 2018 and 2019 and the effectiveness of each committee in resolving the issues raised by the petitioners.

The Guidelines for the treatment of Petitions by the Committees adopted by the EP Conference of Committee Chairs on 14 July 1998 lay out the first rules on cooperation between committees. They are complemented by the EP Rules of Procedure (Title IX) and the PETI Committee's guidelines. The July 1998 Guidelines on the treatment of petitions by the standing committees clarified those specific aspects of the procedure to deal with petitions by the standing committees but were not reviewed in the subsequent legislative periods.

Petitions declared admissible by the Committee on Petitions concern competencies of other parliamentary committees. Therefore successful cooperation between committees on issues raised by the petitioners is crucially important.

Parliamentary committees are generally positive in their assessment of the relationship with the Committee on Petitions. The Petitions Network launched in the end of 2016 provides for enhanced cooperation between PETI and the specialised committees. The aim of the Network is to improve communication on petitions and facilitate exchange of best practice on how to bring citizens' concerns expressed in petitions into the legislative and political processes of the European Parliament.

Each parliamentary committee nominates a Member and a substitute Member to the Petitions Network, while an administrator from each committee secretariat represents the committee in the Petitions Network on staff level. Regular Petitions Network meetings on Members level provide an opportunity for Members of the European Parliament to share the impact of petitions on their work, while Petitions Network meetings on staff level enable organisational and logistical issues to be resolved through sharing best practice. As the Petitions Network meets twice a year, its meetings mainly serve to share information and experiences, while the day-to-day communication is carried out through phone calls and emails.

The Petitions Network significantly improved cooperation between the committees and helped to ensure that the petitions sent to other committees are relevant to their areas of work.

The Committee on Petitions may decide to send petitions declared admissible to other committees for information or opinion. Petitions sent for opinion require a written response from the receiving committee. The committee(s) responsible for the subject matter of a petition is expected to provide its expertise in order to allow due treatment of the petition and a response from the European Parliament. Petitions sent for information do not necessarily require a response. However, the committee in question might decide to follow up or to issue an opinion on petitions sent for information.

All committees observed that the petitions they received were generally relevant and useful for informing their work and provided them with important citizens' perspectives on topics of concern.

Procedures to process petitions vary between different committees. Most committees have a set procedure to process petitions received from the Committee on Petitions. Some committees have internal filing systems that allow petitions to be cross-referenced at a later date. Petitions sent by the Committee on Petitions are placed on the agenda of the coordinators' meeting. Petitions sent for information are added to the agenda of the coordinators' meeting for information purposes. Opinions are rarely issued on petitions sent for information. Coordinators make a decision on the appropriate action to take on petitions sent for opinion, which could be a reply to the PETI Committee or further action, such as examining the possibility of organising a hearing, or taking the petition into account in the consideration of any related legislative or non-legislative report. A committee may decide not to issue an opinion on a petition and inform the Committee on Petitions about this decision. In the opinion letter a committee may state that it has decided not to follow-up the petition. Therefore exchanging best practice in the different steps of the procedure in the Petitions Network is very valuable.

Petitions impact the work of other committees in a variety of ways. They may be placed on the committee meeting agenda and inform committee's debate on issues raised by the citizens. Petitions may present topic areas that are currently part of the parliamentary work of a committee and the competent committee may refer the Committee on Petitions to the position of the European Parliament on the issues raised by the petitioner presenting particular concern for the committee. Committees may follow-up a petition by referring to a public hearing held by one or several committees. In the opinion letter a committee may also provide information and context on the subject of the petition and then ask the Committee on Petitions to examine the issue further. Committees can also send the petition to another internal or external body for additional examination of the issue. Studies have been commissioned by the committees after the reception of petitions on a given subject.

The study includes recommendations on how cooperation between the committees of the European Parliament could continue the consistent progress made in recent years:

- The existing guidelines on the treatment of petitions by the standing committees adopted in 1998 need to be updated. The rules on cooperation with other committees could also be included in the future revision of the European Parliament Rules of Procedure.
- It would be important to provide regular awareness-raising exercise for the Petitions Network members on the functionalities of the Petitions Web Portal including access to relevant documents (including Commission's Notices to Members). In addition a presentation or training on PETI Committee's internal procedure for petitions examination in the Petitions Network would improve cooperation between PETI and other committees.
- The current architecture of the ePetition database does not allow extraction of aggregated data on petitions sent to other committees. An improved data analysis function in the ePetition database could automate this process and improve the quality of data on petitions sent to other committees.
- The Petitions Network members of the committees contacted to provide an opinion on a petition should be systematically invited to attend PETI Committee meetings when those petitions are being discussed.

1. PROCEDURES AND METHODS OF COOPERATION

1.1. Introduction

According to Article 227 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) every citizen of the Union, and any natural or legal person residing or having its registered office in a Member State, has the right to address, individually or in association with other citizens or persons, a petition to the European Parliament (EP) on a matter that comes within the Union's fields of activity and affects them directly. By granting EU citizens the right to submit petitions to the EP, the Treaties implement the requirements of participatory democracy stated in Article 10(3) the Treaty on European Union, according to which every citizen shall have the right to participate in the democratic life of the European Union.

The proper treatment of petitions is critical for the functioning of participatory democracy in the EU. The European Parliament highlighted that the manner in which the concerns of petitioners are addressed has a major impact on effective respect of citizens' right to petition as enshrined in EU law and on their opinions of the EU institutions. It reiterated that the EU institutions and Member States must do their utmost to provide prompt and effective solutions to issues raised by petitioners¹. The right to petition presents a unique opportunity to bring the EU closer to its citizens and to address citizens' concerns. Petitions allow the EU institutions to detect breaches of EU law, as well as shortcomings, inconsistencies and possible loopholes in these laws at Member State level, and to remedy them by taking the most appropriate action. Petitions submitted by citizens to the EP concern different areas of EU activities making cooperation of the parliamentary committees indispensable in their examination.

A notable example is the treatment of petitions relating to disability issues. These petitions refer to the difficulties encountered by persons with disabilities and their carers, such as access to healthcare and social protection, education and training, the labour market, the built environment and transport, goods and services, information and communication, participation in political, public and cultural life.

Disability issues may fall under the competence of several committees: the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL) is the competent committee on disability policies in general, the Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) and the Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI) are competent on issues related to access to goods and services, the Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN) is dealing with mobility and the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) is responsible for non-discrimination. Problems and policies relating to disabilities often have a transversal dimension and when the Committee on Petitions receives petitions on disability it usually informs or consults the competent committees.

Given its protection role of persons with disabilities, attributed by the EU Framework for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Committee on Petitions annually organises a public hearing or a workshop on petitions related to protection of rights of people with disabilities with subsequent debates on petitions on disability involving the committees competent on the issue.

¹ European Parliament resolution of 13 December 2018 on the deliberations of the Committee on Petitions during the year 2017 (2018/2104(INI)), pp.1 and 2.

1.2. Objective and methodology

The study aims to demonstrate the usefulness and potential of cooperation between the Committee on Petitions of the European Parliament (the PETI Committee) and other European Parliament's committees and gain a better understanding of the impact of petitions submitted by EU citizens on the parliamentary activities. It covers the impact of petitions on the work of the EP committees during the years 2017, 2018 and 2019 streamlined by the establishment of the Petitions Network.

The study provides an analysis of the methods of cooperation of the PETI Committee with other parliamentary committees competent in dealing with the issues raised by the petitioners. It includes overview of specific petitions examination procedures established by the EP committees on petitions sent by the Committee on Petitions for information or an opinion and assessment of the extent to which the Petitions Network facilitates and supports these procedures. It further provides an overview of the follow-up actions implemented by the committees on petitions submitted by EU citizens to the European Parliament. Based on that analysis it recommends how procedures could be improved to ensure that the issues raised by the petitioners are solved and better integrated into parliamentary work.

The methodology for the study uses several research techniques: compilation and analysis of data on petitions, desk research, information in existing databases (ePetition and Petitions Web Portal)², and a questionnaire sent to all committees³, structured surveys and interviews with members of the Petitions Network. Data on the outcomes of petitions also come from information in the ePetition database - the internal database of the PETI Committee designed to track the progress of petitions and any associated documents⁴. The current architecture of the ePetition database does not allow extraction of aggregated data on petitions sent to other committees and replies received. An improved data analysis function in the ePetition database could automate this process and improve the quality of data on petitions sent to other committees. The ePetition database is in the process of being redesigned, with a focus on improving its efficiency and data availability.

1.3. Petitions treatment procedure and importance of parliamentary cooperation on petitions

Petitions are a useful source of information for other EP committees in various EU policy areas in relation to their parliamentary activities. The committees responsible for the subject matter pertaining to a petition perform parliamentary activities and possess important expertise, allowing a meaningful response from the Parliament to resolve issues raised by petitioners. As stated in European Parliament resolution of 13 December 2018 on the deliberations of the Committee on Petitions during the year 2017, 'enhanced cooperation between parliamentary committees on issues raised by petitioners should enable Parliament to provide a better and individualised follow-up to petitions and respond

² Both databases are constantly updated, therefore all statistics should be interpreted with caution.

³ Sixteen of the nineteen standing committees (excluding the PETI Committee) replied to the questionnaire, as well as one of the two sub-committees (DROI). The committees that responded were: AFCE, AGRI, BUDG, CONT, CULT, ECON, EMPL, ENVI, FEMM, IMCO, INTA, JURI, LIBE, PECH, REGI, TRAN, and DROI.

⁴ Milieu Consulting contributed to the elaboration of statistical information on petitions sent for information and opinion.

much more swiftly and efficiently to citizens' concerns, delivering added value to the lives of EU citizens and residents, and to the activities of Parliament and Europe as a whole'⁵.

The procedure to deal with petitions has evolved over time. It was strengthened following the revision of the EP Rules of Procedure, in particular rules 226 and 227, and the PETI Committee guidelines adopted in 2016 and updated in 2018⁶. The Guidelines on the treatment of Petitions by the standing Committees adopted by the EP Conference of Committee Chairs on 14 July 1998 lay out the first rules on cooperation between committees⁷. The Guidelines clarified specific aspects of the procedure to deal with petitions by the standing committees but this act was not reviewed in the subsequent legislative periods.

Petitions need to be submitted by citizens in a particular format (electronically or by post in paper form). The Petitions Web Portal of the EP was launched in November 2014 to facilitate the submission of petitions and their support online. The Petitions Portal serves the function of a public register of petitions and also enables the automatic uploading of meeting agendas, minutes, Commission's Notices to Members and other documentation relating to petitions. It has therefore made these documents publicly available and increased the transparency of the work of the PETI Committee⁸.

Petitions entered in the register shall be forwarded by the President to the committee responsible for petitions which shall first establish the admissibility of the petition in accordance with Article 227 of the TFEU.⁹ Summaries of the petitions are published on the Petitions Web Portal in all official EU languages, typically within one week after the PETI Committee reaches a decision on admissibility. The Portal contains up-to-date information on petitions on which the Committee on Petitions made its decision on admissibility from 2013 onwards.

The PETI Committee is responsible for petitions and is at the forefront of the development of a petitions process, enabling petitioners to participate in its activities. The PETI Committee decides on all necessary steps related to the admissible petitions in the course of its normal activity, either through discussion at a regular meeting or by written procedure.¹⁰

The petitions submitted by citizens to the EP concern issues relating to different areas of EU competence, requiring the PETI Committee to involve other parliamentary committees in the examination of these petitions.

The PETI Committee may decide to refer admissible petitions for information or for opinion to the relevant committee(s), according to their competence and the issue of the petition. Petitions are sent to other committees when the PETI Committee considers that another committee should be aware of the topic raised or when specialised committee's expertise is required to deal with the substance of the petition.

The other committee's involvement is crucial as it provides necessary expertise on the issues raised by the petitioners. Therefore a petition sent for opinion requires a written response from the committee concerned. The 1998 EP Conference of Committee Chairs Guidelines note that the petition sent for opinion to another committee should have a clear European character and the request should be

⁵ European Parliament resolution of 13 December 2018 on the deliberations of the Committee on Petitions during the year 2017 (2018/2104(INI)), p. 7.

⁶ PETI Committee Guidelines, December 2015, updated in January 2018, PE575.044v06-00.

⁷ EP Conference of Committee Chairs, Guidelines on the treatment of petitions by the standing committees, 14 July 1998, PE225.233.

⁸ At the time of publication of this study this functionality of the Petitions Web Portal is undergoing technical upgrades and is going to be restored soon. More information is provided in the FAQ section of the Portal: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/faq>

⁹ Rule 226 (10) of the EP Rules of Procedure.

¹⁰ Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament, Rule 227 (1).

specific as to the nature of the opinion required and the relevant aspects. The Guidelines require the PETI Committee to limit requests to the bare minimum, to take into account the workload of the other committee, and to allow due time for deliberation to avoid causing disruption to the scheduling of the committee's normal legislative workload. In light of the importance of the right to petition, and taking into account the legislative workload, the committee whose opinion is sought will decide whether to give an opinion and will inform the PETI Committee as soon as possible¹¹.

When the PETI Committee sends a petition to another committee for information, it does so to inform the other committee that the subject has been brought up by a petitioner. It does not necessarily expect a response. However, the committee in question might decide to issue a response or opinion (see Chapter 2).

1.4. Statistics on petitions sent for information and opinion

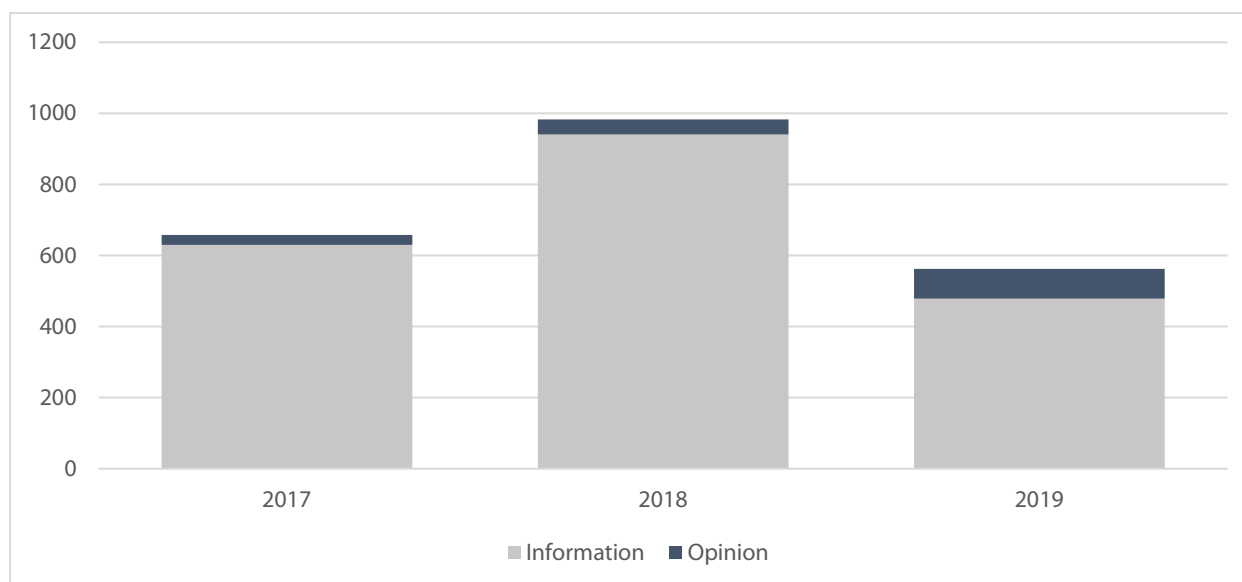
In 2017 the PETI Committee dealt with 1 271 petitions (60% of them were declared admissible). This number has stayed relatively stable, dropping to 1 220 petitions (65% of them were declared admissible) in 2018 before increasing slightly to 1 357 (69% of them were declared admissible) in 2019. During the last legislature (2014-2019) however the number of petitions dropped dramatically from a 2013 peak of 2 891 petitions. This was due to administrative changes allowing petitions to be submitted only through the Petitions Web Portal or by post, increased role of preliminary screening identifying potentially inadmissible petitions¹² and the fact that identical petitions are registered jointly.

Figure 1 shows the number of petitions sent by the PETI Committee to other EP committees in 2017, 2018 and 2019, with a breakdown by those sent for opinion and information. In 2017 658 petitions were sent to other committees. In 2018 this figure was considerably higher, at 983. In 2019 562 petitions were sent to other committees (see also Annex II).

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² Petitions considered potentially non-compliant with Art. 227 TFEU on matters seemingly not coming within the Union's fields of activity, or lacking substantial elements enabling the identification of the Union's fields of activity or providing incoherent reasoning with an unclear link to the Union's fields of activity.

Figure 1: Petitions sent to other committees for opinion or information, 2017-2019



Source: European Parliament records

Figure 1 demonstrates considerable fluctuation in the numbers of petitions sent to other committees from year to year. The 43 % decrease from 2018 to 2019 can be partly explained by the Parliamentary elections held that year, with the usual resulting changes, less committee meetings and delays compared to a normal year. The 49 % increase in all petitions sent for information in 2018 compared to 2017 could be linked to the formation of the Petitions Network the previous year and subsequent increased cooperation between the PETI Committee and other committees.

Figure 1 shows the substantial difference in the numbers of petitions sent for information compared to those sent for opinion (for more details see also Annex II). In both 2017 and 2018, 96 % of the petitions sent to other committees were sent for information, while 4 % were sent for opinion. In 2019 a significantly higher proportion of petitions were sent for opinion, at 15 %, with 85 % sent for information. In absolute terms the number of petitions sent for opinion consistently increased year-on-year, going from 28 in 2017 to 42 in 2018 and 83 in 2019.

There was considerable variation in the numbers of petitions sent to the different committees. Table 1 presents data on petitions sent for information and opinion to the EP committees during the research period (2017-2019)¹³. The Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI Committee) received the most, with 474 petitions sent for information and 20 sent for opinion. This was followed by the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE Committee), with 287 petitions sent for information and 14 for opinion, and the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO Committee), with 204 petitions sent for information and 24 for opinion.

¹³ It is important to note that the numbers refer to all petitions sent. Although several petitions concerning the same subject are grouped together and sent as a single request to a given committee, the number recorded is the total number of petitions sent on the subject. Petitions dating from an earlier period following the decision of the Committee on Petitions are sometimes sent to the same or another committee a considerable time later. For example, a petition dating from 2017 could have been sent to another committee in 2019 following an updated decision, and this would be included in the figures of petitions sent that year. It is also the case that sometimes a petition will be sent to two committees at the same time and is thus recorded in the figures for both committees for that year.

Table 1: Petitions sent for information/opinion to other committees, 2017-2019

Committee	Petitions sent for information	Petitions sent for opinion	Total
AFCO	144	4	148
AFET	40	3	43
AGRI	77	7	84
BUDG	3	0	3
CONT	16	0	16
CULT	53	9	62
DEVE	6	0	6
DROI	31	1	32
ECON	76	19	95
EMPL	189	9	198
ENVI	474	20	494
FEMM	38	5	43
IMCO	204	24	228
INTA	22	3	25
ITRE	98	8	106
JURI	85	9	94
LIBE	287	14	301
PECH	14	2	16
PEST	3	6	9
REGI	23	2	25
SEDE	4	0	4
TERR	5	0	5
TRAN	158	8	166
Total	2050	153	2203

Source: European Parliament records

The variation in the numbers of petitions sent to each committee reflects the distribution of petition subjects. The committees receiving most petitions are competent in the subject areas that frequently arise in petitions. Table 2 illustrates diversity of the main subjects of petitions submitted to the Committee on Petitions in 2017 -2019.

Table 2: Main subjects of petitions, by percentage of all petitions, 2017-2019

Petition subject	Year	Percentage
Environment and Food Safety	2017	12.1
	2018	11.5
	2019	13.4
Fundamental rights	2017	8.4
	2018	9.6
	2019	9.2
Employment and Social Affairs	2017	11.4
	2018	9.1
	2019	7.1
Justice	2017	7.4
	2018	6.6
	2019	8.9
Internal Market	2017	5.6
	2018	6.2
	2019	4.3
Health	2017	4.2
	2018	5.4
	2019	4.7
Transport	2017	2.9
	2018	4.5
	2019	4.4
Constitutional Affairs	2017	5.8
	2018	3.2
	2019	4.7
Education and Culture	2017	2.4
	2018	2.5

	2019	3.0
Immigration and Asylum	2017	2.3
	2018	2.8
	2019	2.8

Source: European Parliament records

Table 2 shows the most common subjects for petitions submitted to the PETI Committee as a proportion of all petitions received that year. The ENVI Committee received most petitions from the PETI Committee on the most popular subjects for petitions - environment and health. Similarly, fundamental rights and immigration and asylum are two of the other most common subject matters for petitions and the LIBE Committee duly received the second-highest number of petitions from the PETI Committee.

1.5. The Petitions Network

The Petitions Network was established in November 2016. The author of this study introduced the idea to establish the Network following example of successfully functioning parliamentary networks and the Gender Mainstreaming Network in particular. This idea was strongly supported on administrative level and approved by the PETI Committee coordinators.

The Petitions Network met for the first time at Members level on 21 March 2017. The main objective of the Petitions Network is to strengthen cooperation between committees and to raise awareness of issues of concern to citizens in order to facilitate exchange of information and informal dialogue on petitions received by the PETI Committee. The Petitions Network helps to structure and streamline the process of collaboration between the committees on issues raised in the petitions submitted to the European Parliament in order to ensure proper follow-up of citizens' concerns. It also works to improve coordination by ensuring that opinions from the relevant competent committees are issued (see Box 1). The PETI Committee continues to be responsible for the processing of petitions - the purpose of the Network is not to outsource this responsibility to other committees but to involve them on issues of common interest.

Box 1: Petitions Network Guidelines

I. Petitions Network

1. *The purpose of the Petitions Network is **to raise awareness and to strengthen cooperation** between the committees of the EP on issues raised by petitioners in petitions submitted to the PETI Committee and forwarded to other committees for opinion or information.*
2. *The Petitions Network was established following a decision by the coordinators of the PETI Committee. According to this decision, the PETI Committee Chair invites the Chairs of the other committees to nominate the member(s) responsible for petitions in each committee.*
3. *The Petitions Network is supported by an additional network at staff level in the secretariats of EP committees.*
4. *The Petitions Network meets at least once a year at both member and staff level. The meetings exchange information on ongoing files of interest for the members of the Network and share best practice. The Petitions Network is chaired by the PETI Committee Chair, with the support of the PETI Secretariat when meeting on MEP level, and by the PETI Secretariat Head of Unit when meeting on staff level. All political groups in the PETI Committee may have a representative at Petitions Network meetings.*

II. Role of Petitions Network members

5. *Petitions Network members:*
 - a) *receive information on petitions forwarded by the PETI Committee and recommendations made by the coordinators and follow-up consideration of petitions falling under the competence of their respective committee;*
 - b) *inform coordinators and rapporteurs of reports and opinions on petitions raising issues relevant to the files on their committee agenda;*
 - c) *initiate the consideration of such petitions at committee meetings and take petitions into account in various activities of the committee (drafting of amendments, organisations of hearings and workshops etc.).*

As stated in European Parliament resolution of 13 December 2018 on the deliberations of the Committee on Petitions during the year 2017 ‘the Petitions Network is considered a useful tool for a better follow-up of petitions in parliamentary and legislative work’ and ensuring ‘a closer contact between the committees, which may improve efficiency in planning hearings and parliamentary studies on similar subjects’¹⁴.

The Petitions Network functions on two levels and is composed of nominated contacts (MEPs in each of the EP committees and staff in the PETI Secretariat and a member of staff from each committee secretariat). Prior to the Petitions Network there was no nominated staff member in each of the committees to deal with petitions, complicating communication on petitions and reducing efficiency.

At Members level the Petitions Network comprises one Member for each committee and a substitute Member who are responsible for promoting petitions in their respective committee. The Petitions

¹⁴ European Parliament resolution of 13 December 2018 on the deliberations of the Committee on Petitions during the year 2017 (2018/2104(INI)).

Network thus creates an administrative and political procedure to ensure that citizens' concerns on relevant subjects are seen and considered by all committees of the European Parliament.

The Petitions Network aims to meet twice a year, first on staff level, then on Members level. The meetings serve as a space for exchanging suggestions to improve relations between the PETI Committee and other committees so as to better serve citizens through sharing and following-up of petitions. The agenda of Petitions Network meetings on Members level has centred on promoting the work of the PETI Committee, informing other committees on important developments and petition treatment procedures, presenting topical petitions that could be of particular interest to other committees and giving space to Members from other committees to present the impacts of petitions on their work. Creating space for MEPs to talk about the specific impact of petitions on the work of their committee offers other MEPs the opportunity to learn from these practices and apply them in their work.

Staff-level meetings take place prior to Member-level meetings. Petitions Network meetings on staff level are focused on the preparation of the agenda for the Member-level meetings. They are also an important forum for sharing best practice and feedback on petitions procedures, facilitating the development of common solutions to any shared issues in communication or processing petitions.

A substantial proportion of the liaisons between the staff of committee secretariats and the PETI Secretariat are informal. This has been directly facilitated by the Petitions Network which puts in place predefined persons to deal with petitions in each of the committees of the EP and gives structure to petition-related communications (e.g. following-up on petitions sent; asking for more details about treatment of petitions in another committee). As the Petitions Network established a point of contact in all committees of the EP such structured communication makes cooperation on petitions more efficient and constructive by creating both a working relationship between the staff involved and concentrating knowledge on issues raised by the petitioners in a specific staff member and MEP.

Staff members of the Petitions Network describe being able to quickly resolve their questions on petitions by simply talking by phone or in person with the staff member responsible for the particular petition. This description of quick and simple resolution of problems is corroborated by staff in the PETI Secretariat who describe regular informal communication with the staff members of the Petitions Network allowing committees to address specific questions about petitions sent for opinion, or about expectations on the content of replies to requests for opinion¹⁵. The Network thus streamlines communication about petitions between EP committees making cooperation simpler and more efficient. The Network has also formalised practice of sending petitions to other committees in a monthly batch following decisions of the PETI Committee¹⁶.

¹⁵ Petitions Network meeting on staff level I, minutes of 7 December 2016; Petitions Network meeting on staff level II, minutes of 16 June 2017; Petitions Network meeting on staff level III, minutes of 28 September 2017. Petitions Network meeting on staff level IV, minutes of 16 March 2018; Petitions Network staff meeting, minutes of 23 January 2019.

¹⁶ With the exception of the ENVI Committee which receives two batches each month due to the volume of petitions concerning subjects under its competence.

2. PETITIONS PROCESSING PROCEDURES IN THE COMMITTEES OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

This Chapter provides an analysis of the procedures and working methods used by the parliamentary committees to process petitions received from the PETI Committee for opinion or information.

2.1. Procedures on examination of petitions received from the PETI Committee

All of the committees that replied to the questionnaire (see Section 1.2) indicated that they had received petitions¹⁷ from the PETI Committee between January 2017 and December 2019. All of the committees also stated that petitions forwarded to them largely corresponded with their fields of competence. The committees observed that the petitions they received were generally relevant and useful for informing their work and provided them with important citizens' perspectives on topics of concern.

Most committees appear to have a set procedure to deal with petitions received from the PETI Committee. Ten committees referred to having their own procedures for following-up on petitions in place (AFCO, CULT, ECON, EMPL, ENVI, FEMM, IMCO, LIBE, PECH, TRAN Committees).

Several committees have internal filing systems for petitions constituting a permanent record of petitions received for information and opinion (AFCO, CULT, ECON, ENVI, FEMM, IMCO, LIBE, PECH, TRAN Committees). This generally takes the form of regularly updated tables, with information including the petition number and subject matter, follow-up action, dates when petitions are received/discussed/endorsed, member(s) of staff responsible, and the number for the request in the IT application recording and monitoring mail and administrative documents in the European Parliament.

The ECON Committee has put in place a set of guidelines for handling petitions that describe how petitions should be dealt with from the moment they are received. The ECON Secretariat also nominates a small permanent petitions team that manages the reception of petitions by the Committee and assigns new petitions to specific staff members in line with their policy areas.

The LIBE Committee has written guidelines that set out a procedure for dealing with petitions. This information is recorded in the 'Vademecum for LIBE Coordinators', a handbook produced for each legislature.

Once a petition is received the first step is to put it on the agenda of the coordinators' meeting¹⁸. All of the committees that replied to the questionnaire stated that petitions received from the PETI Committee are put on the agenda of coordinators' meetings.

Several committees describe a standardised process where the summaries of all petitions received from the PETI Committee since the last coordinators' meeting are collated and sent to the committee coordinators (AGRI, ECON, ENVI, INTA Committees¹⁹). In others, the committee's staff member in the

¹⁷ Only summaries of petitions are sent to the other committees, the supporting documentation can be sent following a request.

¹⁸ The coordinators' meeting is attended by the representatives of the political groups nominated for each committee. They are the political leaders responsible for coordinating the political group's views or position on certain topics. The coordinators, together with the chair and vice-chair, prepare decisions to be taken by the committee (Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament, rule 214).

¹⁹ Although such a process may be in place in other committees it was not explicitly stated in replies to the questionnaire.

Petitions Network sends a summary of the petitions received from the PETI Committee to the MEP member of the Petitions Network for comments and approval before sending it to the committee coordinators (ECON and TRAN Committees). In the ECON Committee the MEP members of the Petitions Network may be invited to coordinators' meetings to present and discuss a petition. The procedure then varies according to whether the petition has been sent for opinion or information.

2.2. Procedures on petitions sent for information

Petitions sent for information are added to the agenda of the coordinators' meeting for information purposes but they are usually not discussed. However, if coordinators nevertheless wish to propose a follow-up on a particular petition, they need to adopt a decision. LIBE Committee guidelines also indicate that absence of reaction during the Coordinators' meeting is considered as a recommendation not to follow-up on any of the presented petitions. Petitions sent for information may be passed to the rapporteurs whose parliamentary activity may involve the issue raised in the petition or the committee may send a letter to the PETI Committee to confirm receipt and noting of the petitions. This tends to be the limit of actions taken for petitions sent for information. Several committees noted that petitions sent for information are filed after being put on the coordinators' meeting agenda (AFCO, CULT, ECON, ENVI, FEMM, IMCO, LIBE, PECH, TRAN Committees). Therefore there is a system in place that allows committees to refer back to petitions received for information when necessary.

Opinions are rarely issued on petitions sent for information. Some committees specified they only reply to petitions sent for opinion (EMPL, ENVI Committees) or if the reply is deemed necessary (IMCO and PECH Committees). However some committees have provided an opinion on specific petitions sent for information. Below are some examples from the ECON and LIBE Committees:

- a petition on the abusive bank fees imposed for electronic transactions (1497/2016²⁰). The ECON Committee sent an opinion²¹ stating that the petition contains indications of possible breach of a Regulation (EU) 215 /751 on interchange fees for card-based payment transactions. This opinion was a meeting document for the debate on the petition at the PETI meeting of 22 January 2018,
- a petition on the ECB's banking practices (161/2017²²). The ECON Committee sent an opinion²³ informing of the details of a major development leading to the adoption of a Securitisation Regulation²⁴ which should address the most pressing concerns of the petitioner. This opinion was a meeting document for the debate on the petition at the PETI meeting of 11 October 2017 and as an outcome the ECON opinion was sent by the PETI Committee to the European Central Bank ,

²⁰ Petition No 1497/2016 by Panagiotis Leliatsos (Greek) on the abusive bank fees imposed on businesses for electronic transactions, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/1497%252F2016/html/Petition-1497%252F2016-by-Panagiotis-Leliatsos-%2528Greek%2529-on-the-abusive-bank-fees-imposed-on-businesses-for-electronic-transactions.->

²¹ Document reference D311788, 18 July 2017.

²² Petition No 0161/2017 by Alberto Arranz Santander (Spanish) on the ECB's banking practices, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0161%252F2017/html/Petition-No%25C2%25A00161%252F2017-by-Alberto-Arranz-Santander-%2528Spanish%2529-on-the-ECB%25E2%2580%2599S-banking-practices.->

²³ Document reference D315433, 11 October 2017.

²⁴ Regulation (EU) 2017/2402 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2017 laying down a general framework for securitisation and creating a specific framework for simple, transparent and standardised securitisation, available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2017.347.01.0035.01.ENG

- a petition on border crossings between Spain and Morocco (0077/2018²⁵). It was sent in June 2018 for information to the LIBE Committee. The LIBE Committee sent²⁶ to the PETI Committee its report of its Mission to Melilla (29-31 October 2018) so that PETI could forward that report to the petitioner.
- a petition on compulsory liquidation of a cooperative credit bank (0459/2017²⁷). The ECON Committee sent an opinion²⁸ confirming the national courts' competence for this case,
- a petition on the ban on using bitcoin in financial and economic transactions within the EU (0247/2018²⁹). The ECON Committee sent an opinion³⁰ informing that in November 2018 the European Parliament held a debate with the Commission on the topic of Regulating virtual currencies and initial coin offerings.

2.3. Procedures on petitions sent for opinion

The impact of petitions on the work of other committees is most overt where they are requested to provide opinions on petitions. Petitions may spark the committee's interest in the subject of the petition, both in following the progression of the issue through its lifecycle (e.g. debated at a PETI Committee meeting or assessed by the European Commission) and in current or potential future parliamentary work of the committee on the subject.

On requests for opinion the other committee is expected to research and draft a written response to a petition sent by the PETI Committee. The 1998 EP Conference of Committee Chairs Guidelines require the PETI Committee to be very clear on the nature of the opinion required and the aspect of the petition to be addressed³¹. Committee opinions often present a political rather than a technical evaluation of the subject which would normally be provided by the Commission³².

Table 1 (see Section 1.4) shows that 153 petitions were recorded as being sent to other committees for opinion between January 2017 and December 2019. All of the committees that responded to the questionnaire noted that petitions sent for opinion are placed on the agenda of coordinators' meetings. The recommendation for follow-up is then discussed during the coordinators' meeting. Some committees first send the proposed action for comment and approval from the MEP(s) representing the committee in the Petitions Network, and then forward it to the coordinators to adopt a decision on the content of the reply to the PETI Committee (AGRI, ECON, LIBE Committees). The Petitions Network has therefore changed internal procedures on dealing with petitions in other committees.

²⁵ Petition No 0077/2018 by Ismail Cuellar de la Torre (Spanish) on border crossings between Spain and Morocco, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0077%252F2018/html/Petition-No-0077%252F2018-by-Ismail-Cuellar-de-la-Torre-%2528Spanish%2529-on-border-crossings-between-Spain-and-Morocco>.

²⁶ Document number D305429.

²⁷ Petition No 0459/2017 by T.Z. (Italian), on behalf of the Committee for the Protection of the Rights and Interest of Members of the BCC (cooperative credit bank), against the compulsory liquidation of a cooperative credit bank, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0459%252F2017/html/Petition-No-0459%252F2017-by-T.Z.-%2528Italian%2529%252C-on-behalf-of-the-Committee-for-the-Protection-of-the-Rights-and-Interest-of-Members-of-the-BCC-%2528cooperative-credit-bank%2529%252C-against-the-compulsory-liquidation-of-a-cooperative-credit-bank>.

²⁸ Opinion document reference D303869, 7 March 2018.

²⁹ Petition No 0247/2018 by Marco Bava (Italian) on the ban on using bitcoin in financial and economic transactions within the EU, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0247%252F2018/html/Petition-No-0247%252F2018-by-Marco-Bava-%2528Italian%2529-on-the-ban-on-using-bitcoin-in-financial-and-economic-transactions-within-the-EU>.

³⁰ Opinion document reference D307271, 15 May 2019.

³¹ EP Conference of Committee Chairs, Guidelines on the treatment of petitions by the standing committees, 14 July 1998.

³² Petitions Network meeting on staff level, minutes of 16 June 2017.

Coordinators make a decision on the appropriate action to take which could be a reply to the PETI Committee or further action, such as investigating the possibility of organising a hearing, or taking the petition into account in the consideration of any related legislative or non-legislative report (see Chapter 3).

Following the decision by coordinators opinion letters are approved and signed by the committee Chair. Opinions may also be subsequently submitted to the coordinators ahead of the next coordinators' meeting for information purposes (LIBE Committee). According to the Parliament's Rules of Procedure any decisions taken by the coordinators should be announced at the committee meetings³³. The AFCO and LIBE Committees mention this process explicitly.

The reply comes in the form of a letter from the Chair of the committee in question to the Chair of the PETI Committee stating that the concerns expressed by the petitioner have been taken into account by the committee.

The PETI Committee informs the petitioner in writing of all decisions concerning the petition, reasons for the decision and provides the petitioner with all relevant information and documentation. Petitioners are offered the possibility to participate in the meetings where petitions are discussed (rule 227 of the EP Rules of Procedure)³⁴.

2.4. No follow-up

In the opinion letter a committee may state that it has decided not to follow-up on the petition.

For example, it may indicate in its letter to the PETI Committee that it has noted the petition and will take it into account in the future work of the committee but will not take any other follow-up actions at this stage. This was the case for the INTA Committee in relation to petition 0867/2018³⁵ on verification of fair production standards for the textile industry in non-EU countries³⁶. The petition was forwarded to the INTA Committee for information but the committee issued an opinion letter on it.

The Committee may not take any follow-up on the petition but provide in its opinion important background information as in the case of petitions 0663/2018³⁷, 0844/2018 and 1104/2018 on breasts

³³ 'The Chair shall announce in committee all decisions and recommendations of the coordinators, which shall be deemed to have been adopted if they have not been contested.' (Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament, 9th parliamentary term, December 2019, rule 214).

³⁴ In 2017 248 petitions were discussed in committee meetings, with 208 petitioners present, while 59 petitioners participated actively by taking the floor (European Parliament resolution of 13 December 2018 on the deliberations of the Committee on Petitions during the year 2017 (2018/2104(INI))) and in 2018 187 petitioners were present at committee meetings to participate in discussions on petitions, (European Parliament resolution of 13 February 2019 on the outcome of the Committee on Petitions' deliberations during 2018 (2018/2280(INI))).

³⁵ Petition No 0867/2018 by Max Huhn (German) on verification of fair production standards for textile industry in non-EU countries, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0867%252F2018/html/Petition-No-0867%252F2018-by-Max-Huhn-%2528German%2529-on-verification-of-fair-production-standards-for-textile-industry-in-non-EU-countries->.

³⁶ Opinion document reference D304829, 22 March 2019.

³⁷ Petition No 0663/2018 by Francoise Côte (French) on mammary prosthetics and effects on the health of women, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0663%252F2018/html/Petition-No-0663%252F2018-by-Francoise-C%25C3%25B4te-%2528French%2529-on-mammary-prosthetics-and-effects-on-the-health-of-women>

Petition No 0844/2018 by J.S. (British), on behalf of PIP Action Campaign, on PIP breast implants, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0844%252F2018/html/Petition-No-0844%252F2018-by-J.S.-%2528British%2529%252C-on-behalf-of-PIP-Action-Campaign%252C-on-PIP-breast-implants>

Petition No 1104/2018 by Marisol Vargas (Spanish) on breast implants by the company PIP and their effects on women's health, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/1104%252F2018/html/Petition-No%25C2%25A01104%252F2018-by-Marisol-Vargas-%2528Spanish%2529-on-breast-implants-by-the-company-PIP-and-their-effects-on-women%25E2%2580%2599s-health>

implants. The ENVI Committee informed (among other actions taken on safety of breast implants and medical devices in general) about its exchange of views in February 2019 on the findings of the International consortium of investigative journalists on 'implant files', relaying the figures of the results of the investigations³⁸.

The committee giving the opinion may also consider the claim made by the petitioner invalid and thus will not pursue it. An example of this occurred with petition 0607/2016³⁹ on the changing of regulatory bases for granting aid under the European Agricultural Regional Development Programme. After reiterating the reply of the Commission, the AGRI Committee gave its own reasoning on the petition and expressed the opinion that the claim made by the petitioner is not substantiated and should not be followed-up with further action⁴⁰.

The Committee may inform that the subject of the petition or part of it falls outside of the Committee's competences. The ENVI Committee was requested to provide an opinion on petition 1205/2015⁴¹ on the modernisation of the Slovakian railway road section at Liptovský Mikuláš. The Chair of the ENVI Committee addressed a letter to the Chair of the PETI Committee explaining that only part of the petition's subject is within the competence of the ENVI Committee (notably the environmental impact assessment under the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive 85/337/EEC⁴²). The assessment of whether the construction of a new bridge is necessary for the modernization of the railways as well as whether the project concerned could be co-financed by the EU funds falls outside the ENVI Committee's competence.

Finally, a committee may decide not to issue an opinion on a petition. In these cases the committee is still expected to reply to the PETI Committee, stating that it has decided not to give an opinion and why⁴³. For example, when asked for its opinion on petition 0178/2017⁴⁴ on non-discriminatory employment conditions and career prospects for non-permanent employees and contractual agents at the European institutions, the JURI Committee replied to the PETI Committee stating that its coordinators had unanimously decided not to table an opinion on the petition⁴⁵.

2.5. Time taken to deal with requests for opinion

The time taken to respond to the requests by the PETI Committee is one of the critical elements in evaluating effectiveness in dealing with petitions. Some subjects raised by petitions are particularly

³⁸ Opinion document reference D310173, 26 July 2019.

³⁹ Petition No 0607/2016 by Jorge Rodríguez Gómez (Spanish) on behalf of the Castilla la Mancha Union of Unions, on reductions in aid to organic agriculture, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0607%252F2016/html/Petition-No-0607%252F2016-by-Jorge-Rodr%25C3%25ADguez-G%25C3%25B3mez-%2528Spanish%2529-on-behalf-of-the-Castilla-la-Mancha-Union-of-Unions%252C-on-reductions-in-aid-to-organic-agriculture->.

⁴⁰ Opinion document reference D300682, 21 January 2019.

⁴¹ Petition No 1205/2015 by L.M. (Slovakian) on the modernisation of the Slovakian railway road section at Liptovský Mikuláš, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/1205%252F2015/html/Petition-No-1205%252F2015-by-L.M.-%2528Slovakian%2529-on-the-modernisation-of-the-Slovakian-railway-road-section-at-Liptovsk%25C3%25BD-Mikul%25C3%25A1%25C5%25A1>

⁴² More information available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/eia-legalcontext.htm>.

⁴³ Guidelines on the treatment of petitions by the standing committees, 14 July 1998, PE 225.233.

⁴⁴ Petition No 0178/2017 by Michael Ashbrook (German) on behalf of Non-permanent Staff Forum, bearing 108 signatures, on the implementation of non-discriminatory employment conditions and career prospects for the non-permanent employees and contractual agents at the European institutions, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0178%252F2017/html/Petition-No-0178%252F2017-by-Michael-Ashbrook-%2528German%2529-on-behalf-of-Non-permanent-Staff-Forum%252C-bearing-108-signatures%252C-on-the-implementation-of-non-discriminatory-employment-conditions-and-career-prospects-for-the-non-permanent-employees-and-contractual-agents-at-the-European-institutions->.

⁴⁵ Opinion document reference D202700, 25 October 2017.

time-dependent (e.g. political sensitivity, impact with irreversible consequences, link to an immediate political decision or adoption of an act, particular stage in the legislative procedure) and thus require prompt action on the part of the European Parliament. In all cases dealing with petitions in a timely manner is likely to increase the petition's impact and the potential to serve EU citizens effectively.

Most committees estimate the normal time taken to respond to requests for opinions as between one and three months. Several factors can influence the time taken to respond.

The most basic of these factors is the timing of the coordinators' meeting. Petitions sent for opinion are included on the agenda of the coordinators' meeting of the receiving committee, where decisions are made on how to proceed with requests for opinion (see Section 2.3). However, if there is insufficient time to discuss a petition during a coordinators' meeting the decision is postponed to the next meeting. During particularly busy periods for a committee the time taken to respond to a request for an opinion is longer. Following decision of the coordinators the opinion of the committee may also need to be re-drafted, requiring the decision to be postponed to the next coordinators' meeting.

The political sensitivity of the subject and the degree of complexity of the issue may influence the involvement of different committees in the petitions process and the response time. A committee can refer the PETI Committee to another committee that may be able to act on the issue. In April 2019, for example, the AGRI Committee opted to postpone a decision on petition 0160/2018⁴⁶ on inequality in payments under the EU Common Agricultural Policy in Lithuania to the next legislature, given the sensitivity of the issue raised. The petitioner, acting on behalf of a number of Lithuanian organisations in the agricultural sector, stated that Lithuanian farmers have been eligible for direct support under the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) since the country's accession to the EU but receive much lower payments than their counterparts in Western European countries. In its opinion⁴⁷ the AGRI Committee stressed that the future allocations for the CAP directly depend on the outcome of the negotiations between the EU institutions on the Commission package concerning the CAP post-2020 and the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021-2027. The AGRI Committee therefore was unable to give a clear response to the petitioner as long as both legislative procedures were pending. Additionally, given that this petition was signed by almost 53 000 European citizens and considering the strong link between the question of external convergence of direct payments and the CAP budget to be adopted under the MFF for 2021-2027, the AGRI Coordinators recommended to refer this petition to the BUDG Committee in order to take it into account in its further legislative activities. In accordance with AGRI opinion in May 2020 the PETI Coordinators decided to send this petition for an opinion to the BUDG Committee. In its reply the Committee on Budgets informed that the BUDG Coordinators took note of the Commission's replies received by PETI in July and December 2018 and of the opinion of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development sent to the PETI Committee in November 2019. The BUDG Coordinators agree that the degree and method of calculating the 'external convergence' is one of the distributional parameters that will be crucial in the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 deal and the BUDG Committee will be looking closely to it. The BUDG Committee informed that in its legislative activities it will continue to fight for an ambitious MFF, including with a sufficient ceiling in the CAP Heading.

⁴⁶ Petition No 0160/2018 by Jonas Vilionis (Lithuanian), on behalf of Lithuanian Agriculture and Food Council, bearing 52 359 signatures, on inequality in payments under the EU Common Agricultural Policy in Lithuania, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0160%252F2018/html/Petition-No-0160%252F2018-by-Jonas-Vilionis-%2528Lithuanian%2529%252C-on-behalf-of-Lithuanian-Agriculture-and-Food-Council-%252C-bearing-52-359%252C%252A0signatures%252C-on-inequality-in-payments-under-the-EU-Common-Agricultural-Policy-in-Lithuania->

⁴⁷ Opinion document reference D315721, 12 November 2019.

The degree of complexity of the issue is equally important: the amount of research required to respond to the request for an opinion can influence the time taken to respond, as mentioned by the FEMM and JURI Committees. The EMPL Committee also stated that providing an opinion on a petition can be time-intensive.

3. FOLLOW -UP ACTIONS AND IMPACT OF PETITIONS ON THE WORK OF EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT COMMITTEES

This Chapter describes the follow-up actions and the impact of petitions on the work of other committees of the EP.

Petitions can directly impact the parliamentary work of a committee. The issue raised by the petitioner might be investigated further by the relevant committee through different actions, such as discussions at the committee meetings or the organisation of a public hearing. It could become the subject of a legislative or non-legislative report.

Impact can also be more subtle, such as raising awareness in the Parliament of EU citizens' concerns on issues that might otherwise not be considered. Petitions might help parliamentary committees to realise that particular topics are of interest to EU citizens, increasing their chances of being addressed in future parliamentary work.

3.1. Committee debates

Nearly all committees indicated that petitions are not typically brought up during committee meetings, regardless of whether they were sent for information or opinion.

Eight committees indicated that once they receive a request from the PETI Committee they might put the petitions on the agenda of committee meetings. Of these, five consider that they do so 'rarely' (AGRI, DROI, ENVI, LIBE, JURI Committees), two 'sometimes' (FEMM and IMCO) and one 'regularly' (AFCO)⁴⁸. AFCO does submit coordinators' decisions on petitions for opinion to the full committee and the JURI Committee requires adoption by the full committee of the written replies to requests for opinion. Nine committees stated that they never place petitions on the agenda of committee meetings⁴⁹. Coordinators in the LIBE Committee decide whether or not to place petitions on the agenda of committee meetings. They may propose a decision for dealing with the petition that would then be endorsed by the Committee.

Committees that rarely put petitions on their meeting agendas noted that they would do so in specific circumstances, for example if they are organising a hearing with the PETI Committee on an issue brought up in a petition (ENVI). It was also observed that the subjects of petitions may be discussed during committee meetings even though the petition itself is not on the agenda (CULT, IMCO, LIBE). Brexit was one of the most popular subjects for petitions during the period examined, in particular the impact of the UK's withdrawal from the EU on citizens' rights. This included topics such as the loss of EU citizenship, health and social security benefits, employment, education, and others. Petitions on Brexit were concerned with complex issues pertaining to the competence of different parliamentary committees⁵⁰. Taking into account the high number of petitions related to the UK withdrawal from the EU and their political importance the PETI Coordinators made a decision to send Brexit related petitions

⁴⁸ The AFCO Committee noted that the subject in question was the recurrent issue of the progress of the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

⁴⁹ BUDG, CONT, CULT, ECON, EMPL, INTA, PECH, REGI, and TRAN Committees.

⁵⁰ The AFCO Committee is responsible for the institutional aspects of the European integration process, while the LIBE Committee's competence concerns the protection of EU citizens' rights, human rights and fundamental rights, the measures needed to combat most forms of discrimination and measures concerning development of an area of freedom, security and justice.

to the Council and the Commission, as well as to AFCO and LIBE Committees for information. In response to petitions on Brexit sent to the AFCO Committee by the PETI Committee on 8 October 2019 the AFCO Committee held an exchange of views with organisations representing EU citizens in the UK and British citizens in the EU in light of Brexit⁵¹.

Another example of impact of petitions triggering an action by a committee is petition 0947/2017⁵² on the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) Regulation refit and ban on animal testing - one of the many petitions received by the Committee on Petitions on the subject of a ban on animal testing. The petition requested to end experiments on animals and to invest in progressive and innovative research to promote alternative methods to animal testing for the implementation of the REACH Regulation. This petition was initially sent to the ENVI Committee for information and following examination of the petition and decision of the PETI Committee adopted at its 11 July 2018 meeting was additionally sent to the ENVI Committee for an opinion. In its opinion the ENVI Committee informed that it attaches high importance to the subject of animal testing. In particular, on 12 April 2018 ENVI held an exchange of views with the European Commission on the REACH review where the promotion of alternatives to the animal testing was discussed. ENVI also referred to the fact that a delegation of MEPs from the ENVI Committee visited the European Chemicals Agency in Helsinki in February 2018 and brought up the subject of animal testing and promotion of alternatives to animal testing in the framework of the implementation of REACH⁵³.

The petitions are not usually mentioned directly by other committees in their outputs, since often a decision to take a certain action, activity or decision on a matter is not linked to a precise petition or to a group of petitions but more to a political interest and decision to address a certain subject that is relevant for the committee.

The IMCO Committee noted that information provided through petitions has contributed additional information to discussions on ongoing legislative procedures and has been noted for future legislative review (e.g. European Accessibility Act; European Electronic Communications Code).

In the case of the TRAN Committee, petitions were particularly useful in the debate on the proposal for a Directive discontinuing seasonal changes of time (see Section 3.2). They also contributed to debate around the Eurovignette Directive⁵⁴ and other parts of the mobility package.

3.2. Committee reports

Petitions may present topic areas that are currently part of the parliamentary work of a committee. In such cases the committee receiving the request for opinion may be in the process of taking a position on the subject of the petition.

For instance, citizens' input with over 60 petitions received on the subject of seasonal time changes played an important role in the adoption of the legislative resolution on the proposal for a Directive discontinuing seasonal changes of time and repealing Directive 2000/84/EC. Some of these petitions

⁵¹ European Parliament, AFCO, 'Draft agenda: Meeting, Tuesday 8 October 2019, available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/AFCO-OJ-2019-10-08-1_EN.html

⁵² Petition No 0947/2017 by Julia Baines (British), on behalf of PETA, bearing 109802 signatures, on the REACH refit and the ban of animal testing for REACH, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0947%252F2017/html/Petition-No-0947%252F2017-by-Julia-Baines-%2528British%2529%252C-on-behalf-of-PETA%252C-bearing-109802%252C%25A0signatures%252C-on-the-REACH-refit-and-the-ban-of-animal-testing-for-REACH>.

⁵³ Opinion document reference D302951, 26 February 2019.

⁵⁴ European Commission, Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 1999/62/EC on the charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures, as regards certain provisions on vehicle taxation, COM(2017)276.

were discussed at the PETI meeting of 22 November 2017. On 8 February 2018 the Parliament adopted a resolution that called on the European Commission to undertake a thorough assessment of Directive 2000/84/EC and, if necessary, come up with a proposal for its revision⁵⁵. This assessment included a public consultation run by the Commission during the summer of 2018 which received 4.5 million replies from EU citizens. This resulted in the European Commission presenting a proposal for a Directive in September 2018⁵⁶, referencing the fact that the issue has been brought up by citizens.

The legislative proposal was assigned to the TRAN Committee. Six other committees also provided an opinion, including the PETI Committee⁵⁷. The European Parliament supported the Commission's proposal to discontinue the time change and adopted its position on 26 March 2019 at first reading⁵⁸.

Petition 0845/2017⁵⁹ on geothermal energy in Italy was sent to the ITRE Committee while it was working on the revision of the Renewable Energy Directive. The petitioners called on the EU to take account of the negative environmental effects of geothermal energy. In its reply the ITRE Committee referred the Chair of the PETI Committee to an amendment⁶⁰ to the Directive that addresses some of the concerns raised by the petitioners⁶¹.

The opinion by the IMCO Committee⁶² on petition 0924 /2018 on accidents caused by lack of market surveillance in the EU⁶³ pointed out to the Committee's recently concluded trilogue negotiations with the Council on the proposal for a regulation laying down rules and procedures for compliance with and enforcement of Union harmonisation legislation on products⁶⁴. The Parliament's amendment to the Commission's proposal significantly strengthened the market surveillance activities towards the direction demanded by the petitioner. The IMCO opinion served as a meeting document for the examination of the petition by the PETI Committee at its meeting of 11 April 2019.

⁵⁵ European Parliament resolution of 8 February 2018 on time change arrangements (2017/2968(RSP)), available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0043_EN.html

⁵⁶ European Commission, Proposal for a Directive discontinuing seasonal changes of time and repealing Directive 2000/84/EC, COM(2018) 639 final, 2018, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/soteu2018-discontinuing-seasonal-changes-time-directive-639_en.pdf

⁵⁷ Opinion of the Committee on Petitions for the Committee on Transport and Tourism on the proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on discontinuing seasonal changes of time and repealing Directive 2000/84/EC, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2019-0169_EN.html#title8

⁵⁸ European Parliament legislative resolution of 26 March 2019 on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council discontinuing seasonal changes of time and repealing Directive 2000/84/EC (COM(2018)0639 – C8-0408/2018 – 2018/0332(COD)), available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2019-0225_EN.html

⁵⁹ Petition No 0845/2017 by R.C. (Italian), on behalf of the Italian Culture and Sports Association, Viterbo Provincial Committee, bearing 70 signatures, on the revision of Directive 2009/28/EC on the promotion of renewable energy, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0845%252F2017/html/Petition-No-0845%252F2017-by-R.C-%2528Italian%2529%252C-on-behalf-of-the-Italian-Culture-and-Sports-Association%252C-Viterbo-Provincial-Committee%252C-bearing-70-signatures%252C-on-the-revision-of-Directive-2009%252F28%252FEC-on-the-promotion-of-renewable-energy>.

⁶⁰ Notably Amendment 37, in Amendments adopted by the European Parliament on 17 January 2018 on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources (recast) (COM(2016)0767 – C8-0500/2016 – 2016/0382(COD)), available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0009_EN.pdf?redirect

⁶¹ Opinion document reference D305178, dated 28/03/2018.

⁶² Opinion document reference D 303685, 6 March 2019.

⁶³ Petition No 0924 /2018 by Paul Villain (French), on behalf of Association des Brûlés de France, on accidents caused by lack of market surveillance in the EU, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0924%252F2018/html/Petition-No-0924%252F2018-by-Paul-Villain-%2528French%2529%252C-on-behalf-of-Association-des-Br%25C3%25BB%25C3%25A9s-de-France%252C-on-accidents-caused-by-lack-of-market-surveillance-in-the-EU>.

⁶⁴ European Parliament legislative resolution of 17 April 2019 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down rules and procedures for compliance with and enforcement of Union harmonisation legislation on products, available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2019-0397_EN.html

The committee may refer the PETI Committee to an own-initiative report underway at the EP. One of the notable examples is petition 0578/2017⁶⁵ on an alleged breach of EU environmental legislation by Denmark in order to expand aquaculture. The petitioners expressed concern about Danish legislation allowing expansion of fish farms and pollution of Baltic Sea areas already heavily burdened from many sources and countries. The PETI Committee has initially decided to send this petition for information to the ENVI Committee. Following examination of the petition at its meeting of 22 November 2017 the PETI Committee decided to send this petition for an opinion to ENVI, PECH and AGRI. The AGRI Committee informed that it declines its competence with respect to this petition and decided not to issue an opinion⁶⁶. In their reply both the PECH Committee and the ENVI Committee made a reference to the reply of the Commission concerning the petition, in which the Commission stated that on the basis of available information it considered that the measures taken by Denmark in relation to compensatory measures for marine protection from aquaculture activities did not indicate a breach of EU legislation⁶⁷. The PECH Committee indicated that it fully agrees with the position of the European Commission⁶⁸. The ENVI Committee also noted that on 21 March 2018 ENVI adopted an opinion to the PECH Committee's own-initiative report 'Towards a sustainable and competitive European aquaculture sector: current status and future challenges' (adopted on 12 June 2018⁶⁹). The ENVI opinion underlined the importance of making aquaculture a more efficient, economically valuable, socially responsible and environmentally friendly sector. It also stressed that the European aquaculture must not lead to further overfishing and that proper safeguards are necessary. It recalled the importance of cooperation between the researchers, the aquaculture industry, feed producers, environmental administrators and organisations and expressed its concerns on possible risks to ecosystems and human health due to non-proper use of chemicals and antibiotics in aquaculture in line with the concerns expressed by the petitioner.

The committee may refer the PETI Committee to the position of the EP on the issues raised by the petitioner presenting particular concern from the committee perspective. Petition 0720/2017 on the situation of women detained against their will in the Sahrawi camps in Tinduf in Algeria⁷⁰ was forwarded for opinion to the FEMM Committee. FEMM indicated⁷¹ that the petition presents areas of concern from a women's rights perspective, such as forced marriage and child marriage. The FEMM Committee referred to the European Parliament's resolution of 12 May 2016 on implementation of Directive 2011/36/EU⁷² and resolution of 4 October 2017 on ending child marriage⁷³ where the EP emphasized "that child marriage is a violation of the rights of the child and a form of violence against

⁶⁵ Petition No 0578/2017 by Mads Nikolajsen (Danish) on Denmark's breach of EU environmental legislation to enable expansion of aquaculture, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0578%252F2017/html/Petition-No-0578%252F2017-by-Mads-Nikolajsen-%2528Danish%2529-on-Denmark%2527s-breach-of-EU-environmental-legislation-to-enable-expansion-of-aquaculture>.

⁶⁶ Document reference D302909, 21 February 2018.

⁶⁷ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/PETI-CM-613283_EN.pdf.

⁶⁸ Opinion document reference D200263, 7 February 2018.

⁶⁹ European Parliament resolution of 12 June 2018 on towards a sustainable and competitive European aquaculture sector: current status and future challenges (2017/2118(INI)), available at : https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0248_EN.html

⁷⁰ Petition No 0720/2017, by Maria Elisa Pavón Mulero (Spanish) on behalf of the 'Freedom is their right' campaign on the situation of women detained against their will in the Sahrawi camps in Tinduf in Algeria, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0720%252F2017/html/Petition-No-0720%252F2017%252C-by-Maria-Elisa-Pav%25C3%25B3n-Mulero-%2528Spanish%2529-on-behalf-of-the-%25E2%2580%2598Freedom-is-their-right%25E2%2580%2599-campaign-on-the-situation-of-women-detained-against-their-will-in-the-Sahrawi-camps-in-Tinduf-in-Algeria>

⁷¹ Opinion document reference D305834, 10 April 2018.

⁷² European Parliament resolution of 12 May 2016 on implementation of the Directive 2011/36/EU of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims from a gender perspective (2015/2118(INI)), available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2016-0227_EN.html

⁷³ European Parliament resolution of 4 October 2017 on ending child marriage (2017/2663(RSP)), available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2017-0379_EN.html

women and girls". The Committee stressed that reality behind the practice of forced marriages must also be framed in the context of gender stereotypes. The EP resolution of 14 March 2017 on equality between women and men in the European Union in 2014-2015⁷⁴ called for "efforts at national and EU level to combat the persistence of stereotypes and gender-based discrimination [...] through awareness-raising campaigns which focus on the non-stereotypical portrayal of women and girls and men and boys and are targeted at all levels of society". Gender stereotypes are the source of discrimination that feeds, among other forms of violence against women, forced marriages and are clearly behind the situation that the women represented by the petitioner are suffering. The call to combat gender stereotypes has been renewed in the EP resolution of 12 September 2017⁷⁵. The FEMM Committee noted that in the context of the current petition it is also important that the above-mentioned resolution "stresses that the Istanbul Convention lays down that culture, custom, religion, tradition or so-called 'honour' cannot be a justification of any acts of violence against women". The opinion of the FEMM Committee concluded that the position of the Sahrawi authorities justifying the situation of the women retained against their will is completely unacceptable. The FEMM Committee opinion served as a meeting document for examination of petition at the PETI Committee meeting on 18 June 2018.

3.3. Public hearings

Committees may follow-up on a petition by referring to a public hearing held by one or several committees. Hearings provide an opportunity for the PETI Committee to collaborate with other committees and to receive important external expertise on issues raised by petitions. This can occur when the subject of the PETI Committee hearing coincides with the competence or interest of another committee. Given that the PETI Committee organises hearings on subjects brought up by petitioners, organisation of joint hearings on the issues raised therein impacts on the work of other committees.

Joint public hearings have been a regular source of cooperation between the Committees. Thirteen public hearings were held by the PETI Committee from 2017 to 2019 and eight of them were organised jointly with other parliamentary committees: four with the ENVI Committee, one with the LIBE Committee, two with the LIBE and EMPL Committees and one with the AFCE Committee (on the revision of Regulation on European Citizens' Initiative).⁷⁶

The PETI and ENVI Committees successfully cooperated on petition 0900/2016⁷⁷ on taking action against a multinational oil company for climate change denial. The opinion from the ENVI Committee to the PETI Committee outlines that the petition was discussed during a meeting of ENVI Committee

⁷⁴ European Parliament resolution of 14 March 2017 on equality between women and men in the European Union in 2014-2015 (2016/2249(INI)), available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2017-0073_EN.html.

⁷⁵ European Parliament resolution of 12 September 2017 on the proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion, by the European Union, of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (COM(2016)0109 – 2016/0062(NLE)), available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2017-0329_EN.html.

⁷⁶ About public hearings organised by the PETI Committee see Heezen, J. and Marzocchi, O., 'Achievements of the Committee on Petitions during the 2014-2019 parliamentary term and challenges for the future', European Parliament study, 2019, available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2019/621917/IPOL_STU\(2019\)621917_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2019/621917/IPOL_STU(2019)621917_EN.pdf).

⁷⁷ Petition No 0900/2016 by Frida Kieninger (Austrian) on behalf of Food & Water Europe, bearing 732 signatures, on taking action against a multinational oil company for climate change denial, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0900%252F2016/html/Petition-No-0900%252F2016-by-Frida-Kieninger-%2528Austrian%2529-on-behalf-of-Food-%2526-Water-Europe%252C-bearing-732%252C2%25A0signatures%252C-on-taking-action-against-a-multinational-oil-company-for-climate-change-denial>.

coordinators in January 2019 and that a joint public hearing was organised in cooperation with the PETI Committee on 21 March 2019⁷⁸.

Petition 0154/2018⁷⁹ on European regulation on labels indicating the origin of foodstuffs concerned the content of the Implementing Regulation of Regulation 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers. The petitioners alleged that the Implementing Regulation being drafted at the time of submission fell short of consumers' expectations⁸⁰. After consideration in the PETI Committee the petition was sent for opinion to ENVI. The ENVI Committee opinion highlighted⁸¹ that ENVI attaches great importance to the topic of the labelling of food origin and, in particular, the ENVI Committee, jointly with the Committee on Agriculture and Rural development, organised a public hearing on 4 June 2018 entitled: 'Labelling of Origin for Agricultural and Food Products'⁸². The petitioner was invited and spoke at the hearing. The implementation of Regulation 1169/2011 was also discussed in the ENVI Committee during an exchange of views with the Commission on 21 November 2017.

On 22 November 2017 the PETI Committee organised a hearing on 'Protection of the rights of workers in temporary or precarious employment, based on petitions received'⁸³. These petitions were 0178/2017⁸⁴ on the working conditions of contract workers in the European institutions and petitions 0988/2016⁸⁵ and 1011/2016⁸⁶ on fixed-term contracts in the public sector. Petitioners requested that the quality of fixed-term work be improved by ensuring the application of the principle of non-discrimination and establishment of a framework to prevent abuse arising from the use of successive fixed-term employment contracts by EU institutions and the public authorities. This hearing involved the cooperation of several committees and Mr Neoklis Sylikiotis, MEP and rapporteur of the report on 'Working conditions and precarious employment' from the EMPL Committee, was invited to give a presentation. The resolution on Working conditions and precarious employment was adopted on 4

⁷⁸ Opinion document reference D200619, 26 March 2019.

⁷⁹ Petition No 0154/2018 by Roberto Moncalvo (Italian), on behalf of the national confederation 'Coldiretti' and the 'Campagna Amica' foundation, bearing 120 000 signatures, regarding the European regulation on labels indicating the origin of foodstuffs, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0154%252F2018/html/Petition-No-0154%252F2018-by-Roberto-Moncalvo-%2528Italian%2529%252C-on-behalf-of-the-national-confederation-%25E2%2580%2598Coldiretti%25E2%2580%2599-and-the-%25E2%2580%2598Campagna-Amica%25E2%2580%2599-foundation%252C-bearing-120-000-signatures%252C-regarding-the-European-regulation-on-labels-indicating-the-origin-of-foodstuffs>.

⁸⁰ Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2018/775 of 28 May 2018 laying down rules for the application of Article 26(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the provision of food information to consumers, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32011R1169>

⁸¹ Opinion document reference D318980, 29 November 2018.

⁸² European Parliament, 'Draft Programme, Public hearing on 'Labelling of Origin for Agricultural and Food Products', 2018, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/148100/AGRI_ENVI_public_hearing_final_programme_en.pdf

⁸³ European Parliament, Public Hearing 'Protection of the rights of workers in temporary or precarious employment', available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/product-details/20171107CHE02721>;

'Programme, Protection of the rights of workers in temporary or precarious employment, based on petitions received', <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/132641/Program%20of%20the%20Hearing%20on%20fixed%20term%20contracts%2022%20November%202017.pdf>

⁸⁴ Petition No 0178/2017 by Michael Ashbrook (German) on behalf of Non-permanent Staff Forum, bearing 108 signatures, on the implementation of non-discriminatory employment conditions and career prospects for the non-permanent employees and contractual agents at the European institutions, available at:

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0178%252F2017/html/Petition-No-0178%252F2017-by-Michael-Ashbrook-%2528German%2529-on-behalf-of-Non-permanent-Staff-Forum%252C-bearing-108-signatures%252C-on-the-implementation-of-non-discriminatory-employment-conditions-and-career-prospects-for-the-non-permanent-employees-and-contractual-agents-at-the-European-institutions>.

⁸⁵ Petition No 0988/2016 by Gabriele Modeo (Italian) on the abuse of fixed-term contracts in the Italian health sector, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0988%252F2016/html/Petition-No-0988%252F2016-by-Gabriele-Modeo-%2528Italian%2529-on-the-abuse-of-fixed-term-contracts-in-the-Italian-health-sector>.

⁸⁶ Petition No 1011/2016 by Giovanna Portulano (Italian) on discriminatory treatment in the public health sector, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/1011%252F2016/html/Petition-No-1011%252F2016-by-Giovanna-Portulano-%2528Italian%2529-on-discriminatory-treatment-in-the-public-health-sector>.

July 2017⁸⁷. The EP called on the Commission and the Member States to increase job quality in non-standard jobs by providing, at least, a set of minimum standards on social protection, minimum wage levels, access to training and development, and protection for vulnerable workers in precarious employment.

Five studies were commissioned by the ECON Committee as a result of the steady stream of petitions on mis-selling of financial products to retail customers received over the years by the committee⁸⁸. They cover four different themes and include one case study: Subordinated debt and self-placement⁸⁹; Consumer credit⁹⁰; Marketing, distribution and sale of financial products⁹¹; Mortgage credit⁹²; and a Belgium case study on compensation of investors subjects to mis-selling⁹³. The ECON Committee organised a public hearing entitled 'Mis-selling of financial products' on 19 June 2018⁹⁴. This hearing is an important example of the impact of petitions on the work of the parliamentary committees as it was organised on the subjects raised by the petitioners independently of the PETI Committee.

The CULT Committee has organised hearings partly inspired by petitions it has received. In November 2016 it organised the hearing "Crisis in print media, looking at the future of the press in Europe"⁹⁵ and in November 2017 the hearing "Scientific and academic culture to counter radicalism and fake news"⁹⁶.

3.4. Additional examination by the Committee on Petitions

A committee may also provide information and context on the subject of the petition and then ask the PETI Committee to examine the issue further. A case in point is the LIBE Committee concerning petition 1088/2016⁹⁷ about the US Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) transferred to LIBE for an opinion. The LIBE opinion letter sets out the legal background to the question raised by the petitioner about the compatibility of FATCA with various fundamental principles of EU law. In particular, it highlights the main debate points regarding the need for a common EU approach on the issue, such

⁸⁷ European Parliament resolution of 4 July 2017 on working conditions and precarious employment, available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2017-0290_EN.html

⁸⁸ Petitions Network Members meeting, Minutes, 20 June 2018.

⁸⁹ Conac 2018, 'Mis-selling of Financial Products: Subordinated Debt and Self-placement', study for the European Parliament, available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/618994/IPOL_STU\(2018\)618994_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/618994/IPOL_STU(2018)618994_EN.pdf)

⁹⁰ Cherednychenko and Meindertma 2018, 'Mis-selling of Financial Products: Consumer Credit', study for the European Parliament, available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/618997/IPOL_STU\(2018\)618997_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/618997/IPOL_STU(2018)618997_EN.pdf)

⁹¹ Alexander, L. 2018, 'Mis-selling of financial products: Marketing, sale and distribution', study for the European Parliament, available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/618996/IPOL_STU\(2018\)618996_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/618996/IPOL_STU(2018)618996_EN.pdf)

⁹² Zunzunegui 2018, 'Mis-selling of Financial Products: Mortgage Credit', study for the European Parliament, available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/618995/IPOL_STU\(2018\)618995_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/618995/IPOL_STU(2018)618995_EN.pdf)

⁹³ Colaert and Incalza 2018, 'Mis-selling of Financial Products: Compensation of Investors in Belgium', study for the European Parliament, available at [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/618998/IPOL_STU\(2018\)618998_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/618998/IPOL_STU(2018)618998_EN.pdf)

⁹⁴ European Parliament, 2018, 'Public hearing 'Mis-selling of financial products'', <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/product-details/20180606CHE04223>; 'Draft Programme, Public hearing 'Mis-selling of financial products'', <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/148820/Hearing%20Mis-selling%20-%20draft%20programme.pdf>

⁹⁵ European Parliament, 'Public hearing, Crisis in the print media', 2016, available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/archives/8/cult/events/events-hearings_programme https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/111131/PH_Crisis%20in%20print%20media_28-11-16_programme_new%20layout.pdf

⁹⁶ European Parliament, 'Public hearing, Scientific and academic culture to counter radicalism and fake news', 2017, available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/archives/8/cult/events/events-hearings_programme https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/133541/0.%20PH%20Radicalism%20&%20Fake%20News_Draft%20Programme_15-11-2017.pdf

⁹⁷ Petition No 1088/2016 by Mr J.R. (French) on the US' Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act's (FATCA) alleged infringement of EU rights and the extraterritorial effects of US laws in the EU, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/1088%252F2016/html/Petition-No-1088%252F2016-by-Mr-J.R.-%2528French%2529-on-the-US%252E2%2580%2599-Foreign-Account-Tax-Compliance-Act%252E2%2580%2599s-%2528FATCA%2529-alleged-infringement-of-EU-rights-and-the-extraterritorial-effects-of-US-laws-in-the-EU>

as extraterritorial effects, non-discrimination of EU citizens and residents, privacy and data protection. LIBE suggested to put the petition on the agenda of the PETI Committee to discuss the issues raised in the opinion⁹⁸.

Petition 1088/2016 was also transferred for an opinion to the ECON Committee. An opinion letter given by the ECON Committee expressed the intention to bring up the subject of the petition with the Commission. In its letter ECON states that it agrees with the issues raised by the petitioner regarding the extraterritorial effects and absence of reciprocity of FATCA. It also provides information about a potential breach of the Payments Accounts Directive by FATCA, saying that it will closely follow the Commission's assessment⁹⁹. That petition was further mentioned in a meeting of the Petitions Network on Members level where the member of the ECON Committee expressed intention to bring up the issue of FATCA with US counterparts during a planned mission to Washington DC¹⁰⁰. Meeting notes from a mission of the European Parliament to Washington DC in 2018 show that meetings regarding FATCA were held during the visit¹⁰¹.

The PETI Committee followed-up with placing petition on the 10 July 2017 meeting agenda and sending it to the Commission for further information taking into account LIBE and ECON concerns. The PETI Committee also followed-up with other actions, such as, *inter alia*, Question for oral answer to the Commission¹⁰², Motion for a resolution further to Questions for Oral Answer B8-0033/2018 and B8-0032/2018¹⁰³, the organisation of a hearing on 12 November 2019 on 'FATCA and its extraterritorial impact on EU citizens'.¹⁰⁴ The hearing aimed to facilitate an exchange of views between the various stakeholders and listen to the issues faced by EU citizens affected by FATCA focusing on financial services and the exchange of tax information with the US and on potential conflicts between European data protection rules and FATCA.

Petition 0513/2016 by Eleni Maravelia (Greek) on the non-recognition of LGBT families in the European Union¹⁰⁵ sent to the LIBE Committee for an opinion was discussed by LIBE Coordinators in February 2019. The LIBE opinion¹⁰⁶ emphasised the importance for this petition to be further debated at the PETI Committee meeting as it raises several important fundamental rights questions deserving careful consideration. The absence of mutual recognition of parental status for same-sex partners within the European Union may pose restrictions to the exercise of the right to free movement by LGBTI persons and their children in contravention with the provisions of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. The petition also raises questions relating to discrimination based on sexual orientation as well as respect for children's rights. The LIBE opinion¹⁰⁷ on petition 1081/2015 on alleged homophobia by the Polish

⁹⁸ Opinion document reference D310794, 30 June 2017.

⁹⁹ Opinion document reference D309950, 20 June 2017.

¹⁰⁰ Petitions Network Members meeting, Minutes, 20 June 2018.

¹⁰¹ European Parliament, 2019, 'Overview of activities during the mandate of the TAX3 Committee. March 2018 - February 2019. PART II of the report on Financial Crimes, Tax Evasion and Tax Avoidance', available at https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/161563/PART%20II%20of%20the%20TAX3%20report_Overview.pdf

¹⁰² 17 May 2018, Question for oral answer O-000053/2018, available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/O-8-2018-000053_EN.html.

¹⁰³ Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/B-8-2018-0306_EN.html?redirect. European Parliament resolution of 5 July 2018 on the adverse effects of the US Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) on EU citizens and in particular 'accidental Americans' (2018/2646(RSP)), available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0316_EN.html.

¹⁰⁴ Available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/public-hearing-on-fatca-and-its-extrater/product-details/20191104CHE06441>

¹⁰⁵ Petition No 0513/2016 by Eleni Maravelia (Greek) on the non-recognition of LGBT families in the European Union, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0513%252F2016/html/Petition-No-0513%252F2016-by-Eleni-Maravelia-%2528Greek%2529-on-the-non-recognition-of-LGBT-families-in-the-European-Union>

¹⁰⁶ Opinion document reference D 303917, 8 March 2019.

¹⁰⁷ Opinion document reference D (2019) 8823.

authorities in refusing visa-free access to the civil partner of a Polish citizen¹⁰⁸ provided a legal background on the subject of the petition. The LIBE Committee stressed that a national of a Member State who, as the petitioner, has exercised in his capacity as a Union citizen his freedom to move and reside within a Member State other than his Member State of origin may rely on the rights pertaining to Union citizenship also against his Member State of origin. LIBE proposed to put this petition on the agenda of a forthcoming PETI meeting. Both petitions were subsequently debated at the PETI Committee meeting of 2 April 2019 where the opinions of the LIBE Committee served as meeting documents.

3.5. Transfer of petitions to another body

Committees can also send the petition to another internal or external body for additional examination of the issue. The LIBE Committee informed the Committee on Petitions in December 2018 that the Coordinators decided to send two letters to the Commission. The first letter concerning petition 0075/2018¹⁰⁹ on the difficult situation of migrant workers in Foggia (Italy) was sent to the Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship asking the Commission to take the petition into account as part of the ongoing Legal Migration Fitness Check and propose actions to tackle the exploitation of undocumented migrant workers in Europe. The second letter concerning petition 0084/2018¹¹⁰ on controversial changes to the legislation governing the judiciary in Romania was sent to the First Vice President of the Commission requesting to continue to closely monitor and assess any developments that may undermine independence of judiciary and that could impair the capacity of the criminal justice system to deal with serious forms of crime, including corruption related offences. Both petitions were transmitted to the LIBE Committee for information on 10 July 2018 but LIBE has issued an opinion letter.¹¹¹ The LIBE Committee sent a copy of both letters to the Commission to the PETI Committee which in turn forwarded them to the petitioners.

The ENVI Committee informed¹¹² the Committee on Petitions that at its meeting of 12 January 2017 the Coordinators examined petition 0432/2016¹¹³ transferred to ENVI for an opinion. The European Food and Safety Authority (EFSA) was informally asked for an input in relation to the issues raised by the petitioner. The ENVI Committee decided not to do any follow-up on this petition and suggested that EFSA could contact directly the petitioner in order to clarify his concerns.

¹⁰⁸ Petition No 1081/2015 by L.H. (Polish) on alleged homophobia by the Polish authorities in refusing visa-free access to the civil partner of a Polish citizen

¹⁰⁹ Petition No 0075/2018 by Georgios Mavrikos (Greek), on behalf of the association 'The World Federation of Trade Unions', on the difficult situation of migrant workers in Foggia, Italia, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0075%252F2018/html/Petition-No-0075%252F2018-by-Georgios-Mavrikos-%2528Greek%2529%252C-on-behalf-of-the-association-%25E2%2580%2598The-World-Federation-of-Trade-Unions%25E2%2580%2599%252C-on-the-difficult-situation-of-migrant-workers-in-Foggia%252C-Italia>.

¹¹⁰ Petition No 0084/2018 by Marian Tănase (Romanian) on controversial changes to the legislation governing the judiciary in Romania, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0084%252F2018/html/Petition-No-0084%252F2018-by-Marian-T%25C4%2583nase-%2528Romanian%2529-on-controversial-changes-to-the-legislation-governing-the-judiciary-in-Romania>.

¹¹¹ Opinion document reference D 319216, 3 December 2018.

¹¹² Opinion document reference D303589, 7 March 2017.

¹¹³ Petition No 0432/2016 by Zoltán Tóth (Hungarian) on stopping the commercial sale of honey products manipulated by macro-reticulated synthetic resin, which endanger the health of European consumers, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0432%252F2016/html/Petition-No-0432%252F2016-by-Zolt%25C3%25A1n-T%25C3%25B3th-%2528Hungarian%2529-on-stopping-the-commercial-sale-of-honey-products-manipulated-by-macro-reticulated-synthetic-resin%252C-which-endanger-the-health-of-European-consumers-->.

In the INTA Committee petitions have had an impact on the work of internal INTA monitoring groups¹¹⁴. Following receipt of petitions relating to particular regions INTA Committee's coordinators asked the INTA Monitoring Groups to investigate the issue further.

Petition 0280/2019¹¹⁵ on unfair competition from imported South African citrus fruit in the Valencian orange-growing sector was submitted to INTA for opinion. The INTA Committee decided to take the petition into account in the ongoing work of the Committee, notably in the South African Development Community (SADC) Monitoring Group that scrutinizes the implementation of the EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement and in the ongoing committee work relating to trade and agriculture.

The Sub-Committee on Human Rights (DROI) informed the PETI Committee that the key issue of petition 0166/2016¹¹⁶ on stopping the transfer of looted funds to Nigeria sent to DROI for opinion on 4 November 2016 had not been discussed between DROI Members before the DROI mission to Nigeria, which only took place in April 2018. The DROI Committee also informed that it contacted the European External Action Service for further information on this petition. DROI referred to this informal request for information in its reply to the PETI Committee on 28 September 2018.¹¹⁷ In this case the DROI opinion was essential for the treatment of the petition as the European Commission was not requested to provide information.

¹¹⁴ INTA Monitoring Groups on specific countries or regions monitor trade and investment negotiations and the implementation of existing agreements in these countries or regions.

¹¹⁵ Petition No 0280/2019 by J.B. (Spanish) on the situation of Valencian orange growers, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0280%252F2019/html/Petition-No-0280%252F2019-by-J.B.-%2528Spanish%2529-on-the-situation-of-Valencian-orange-growers>.

¹¹⁶ Petition No 0166/2016 by A. C. H. (Spanish) on behalf of Peoples Community Development Initiatives, on stopping the transfer of looted funds to Nigeria, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0166%252F2016/html/Petition-No-0166%252F2016-by-A.-C.-H.-%2528Spanish%2529-on-behalf-of-Peoples-Community-Development-Initiatives%252C-on-stopping-the-transfer-of-looted-funds-to-Nigeria>.

¹¹⁷ Letter from DROI Sub-Committee to the PETI Committee of 28 September 2018, number D 315465.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The procedure for the treatment of petitions received from the PETI Committee in the parliamentary Committees and their cooperation with the Committee on Petitions have evolved and become more efficient over time. The Petitions Network has been a catalyst for more effective communication between the PETI Committee and other EP committees raising awareness of issues submitted to the European Parliament by the citizens. The Petitions Network has provided space to improve procedural issues on petitions treatment in the parliamentary committees, discuss difficulties and share best practices at both staff and MEPs level.

Having designated MEPs and staff to deal with petitions in all parliamentary committees increases the potential impact of petitions on other committees' work. The treatment of petitions is more efficient as a specific staff member in each parliamentary committee takes responsibility for ensuring that petitions receive a timely follow-up. It also provides a staff contact point in each committee and facilitates efficient resolution of any queries related to petitions. In some committees petitions are transferred to MEP members of the Petitions Network before being sent to coordinators, which offers petitions additional political exposure.

Procedures to process petitions received from the PETI Committee for opinion and information vary between different committees. Therefore, exchanging on best practice in the different steps of the procedure in the Petitions Network is very valuable.

The PETI Committee is accurately involving other committees on petitions that are topical in the context of their work and the work of the EP more broadly. Diverse follow-up actions implemented by the committees allow the European Parliament to properly address citizens' concerns raised in petitions and cooperate successfully with the PETI Committee.

While the committees are generally satisfied with their cooperation with the PETI Committee, some suggestions for improvement can be offered.

1. Updated guidelines.

The procedure to process petitions is generally regulated by rules 226-227 of the EP Rules of Procedure, as well as the 1998 Guidelines on the treatment of petitions by the standing committees and the PETI Committee Guidelines of December 2015 (updated in 2018). The Petitions Network is a useful forum for sharing best practice in dealing with petitions and should continue to aid communication between the PETI Committee and other committees. However, this alone might not be enough to ensure an effective system.

The existing guidelines adopted in 1998 require the PETI Committee to limit its requests for opinion to the bare minimum to take into account the workload of other committees and allow them due time for deliberation. When asked for its opinion a committee will weigh the importance of the right to petition and its legislative workload before deciding whether or not to give an opinion. It then informs the PETI Committee as soon as possible. This rule pre-dates the Lisbon Treaty and reflects an old perception of the importance of petitions in parliamentary work. An update of the 1998 Guidelines could be considered to provide the PETI Committee and other committees with the necessary authority to carry out their work effectively. The rules on cooperation with other committees could also be included in the future revision of the European Parliament Rules of Procedure.

2. Awareness raising.

It would be important to provide regular awareness-raising exercise for the Petitions Network members on the functionalities of the Petitions Web Portal. This resource is not fully used by other committees, which could be rectified through training on the effective use of the Petitions Web Portal, including where to find responses from the Commission and other relevant information. In addition a presentation or training on PETI Committee's internal procedure for petitions examination in the Petitions Network would help to foster Petitions Network members' understanding of petitions treatment processes.

3. Meeting invitations.

The committees highlighted the need of being informed about PETI meeting agendas including discussions on petitions for which they have provided an opinion. It is important to ensure full follow-up of requests for opinions by contacting each relevant committee through the focal point and sending them the agenda for meetings where the petition is to be discussed. The Petitions Network members of the committees contacted to provide an opinion on a petition should be systematically invited to attend PETI Committee meetings when those petitions are being discussed. A follow-up message from the PETI Committee to the committees contacted for information or opinion could be sent together with an invitation to the PETI Committee meeting, accompanied by the agenda.

4. Effective filtering system to aggregate data.

Inclusion of an effective filtering system to aggregate data to obtain an overview of trends in petitions and cooperation between standing committees has to be considered. The current architecture of the ePetition database does not allow extraction of aggregated data to get an overview of petitions sent to other committees or track their replies. An improved data analysis function in the ePetition database could improve the quality of data on petitions sent to other committees by automatizing this process and facilitate collection and retrieval from ePetition of previous petitions on the same (or relevant) subject when sending a new petition. Information could include: numbers of petitions sent for information or opinion by receiving committee; response rate of other committees to requests for opinion; average time taken per procedural step; other actions taken by other committees on the issue of a petition and/or triggered by it.

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<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0720%252F2017/html/Petition-No-0720%252F2017%252C-by-Maria-Elisa-Pav%25C3%25B3n-Mulero-%2528Spanish%2529-on>

[behalf-of-the-%25E2%2580%2598Freedom-is-their-right%25E2%2580%2599-campaign-on-the-situation-of-women-detained-against-their-will-in-the-Sahrawi-camps-in-Tinduf-in-Algeria](#)

- Petition No 0845/2017 by R.C. (Italian), on behalf of the Italian Culture and Sports Association, Viterbo Provincial Committee, bearing 70 signatures, on the revision of Directive 2009/28/EC on the promotion of renewable energy, available at:
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0845%252F2017/html/Petition-No-0845%252F2017-by-R.C.-%2528Italian%2529%252C-on-behalf-of-the-Italian-Culture-and-Sports-Association%252C-Viterbo-Provincial-Committee%252C-bearing-70-signatures%252C-on-the-revision-of-Directive-2009%252F28%252FEC-on-the-promotion-of-renewable-energy>
- Petition No 0947/2017 by Julia Baines (British), on behalf of PETA, bearing 109802 signatures, on the REACH refit and the ban of animal testing for REACH, available at:
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0947%252F2017/html/Petition-No-0947%252F2017-by-Julia-Baines-%2528British%2529%252C-on-behalf-of-PETA%252C-bearing-109802%252C%25A0signatures%252C-on-the-REACH-refit-and-the-ban-of-animal-testing-for-REACH>
- Petition No 0075/2018 by Georgios Mavrikos (Greek), on behalf of the association 'The World Federation of Trade Unions', on the difficult situation of migrant workers in Foggia, Italia, available at:
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0075%252F2018/html/Petition-No-0075%252F2018-by-Georgios-Mavrikos-%2528Greek%2529%252C-on-behalf-of-the-association-%25E2%2580%2598The-World-Federation-of-Trade-Unions%25E2%2580%2599%252C-on-the-difficult-situation-of-migrant-workers-in-Foggia%252C-Italia>
- Petition No 0077/2018 by Ismail Cuellar de la Torre (Spanish) on border crossings between Spain and Morocco, available at:
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0077%252F2018/html/Petition-No-0077%252F2018-by-Ismail-Cuellar-de-la-Torre-%2528Spanish%2529-on-border-crossings-between-Spain-and-Morocco>
- Petition No 0084/2018 by Marian Tănase (Romanian) on controversial changes to the legislation governing the judiciary in Romania, available at:
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0084%252F2018/html/Petition-No-0084%252F2018-by-Marian-T%25C4%2583nase-%2528Romanian%2529-on-controversial-changes-to-the-legislation-governing-the-judiciary-in-Romania>
- Petition No 0154/2018 by Roberto Moncalvo (Italian), on behalf of the national confederation 'Coldiretti' and the 'Campagna Amica' foundation, bearing 120 000 signatures, regarding the European regulation on labels indicating the origin of foodstuffs, available at:
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0154%252F2018/html/Petition-No-0154%252F2018-by-Roberto-Moncalvo-%2528Italian%2529%252C-on-behalf-of-the-national-confederation-%25E2%2580%2598Coldiretti%25E2%2580%2599-and-the-%25E2%2580%2598Campagna-Amica%25E2%2580%2599-foundation%252C-bearing-120-000-signatures%252C-regarding-the-European-regulation-on-labels-indicating-the-origin-of-foodstuffs>

- Petition No 0160/2018 by Jonas Vilionis (Lithuanian), on behalf of Lithuanian Agriculture and Food Council, bearing 52 359 signatures, on inequality in payments under the EU Common Agricultural Policy in Lithuania, available at:
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0160%252F2018/html/Petition-No-0160%252F2018-by-Jonas-Vilionis-%2528Lithuanian%2529%252C-on-behalf-of-Lithuanian-Agriculture-and-Food-Council-%252C-bearing-52-359%252C%25A0signatures%252C-on--inequality-in-payments-under-the-EU-Common-Agricultural-Policy-in-Lithuania->
- Petition No 0247/2018 by Marco Bava (Italian) on the ban on using bitcoin in financial and economic transactions within the EU, available at:
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0247%252F2018/html/Petition-No-0247%252F2018-by-Marco-Bava-%2528Italian%2529-on-the-ban-on-using-bitcoin-in-financial-and-economic-transactions-within-the-EU>
- Petition No 0663/2018 by Francoise Côte (French) on mammary prosthetics and effects on the health of women, available at:
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0663%252F2018/html/Petition-No-0663%252F2018-by-Francoise-C%25C3%25B4te-%2528French%2529-on-mammary-prosthetics-and-effects-on-the-health-of-women>
- Petition No 0844/2018 by J.S. (British), on behalf of PIP Action Campaign, on PIP breast implants, available at:
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0844%252F2018/html/Petition-No-0844%252F2018-by-J.S.-%2528British%2529%252C-on-behalf-of-PIP-Action-Campaign%252C-on-PIP-breast-implants>
- Petition No 1104/2018 by Marisol Vargas (Spanish) on breast implants by the company PIP and their effects on women's health, available at:
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/1104%252F2018/html/Petition-No%25C2%25A01104%252F2018-by-Marisol-Vargas-%2528Spanish%2529-on-breast-implants-by-the-company-PIP-and-their-effects-on-women%25E2%2580%2599s-health>
- Petition No 0867/2018 by Max Huhn (German) on verification of fair production standards for textile industry in non-EU countries, available at:
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0867%252F2018/html/Petition-No-0867%252F2018-by-Max-Huhn-%2528German%2529-on-verification-of-fair-production-standards-for-textile-industry-in-non-EU-countries->
- Petition No 0924 /2018 by Paul Villain (French), on behalf of Association des Brûlés de France, on accidents caused by lack of market surveillance in the EU, available at:
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0924%252F2018/html/Petition-No-0924%252F2018-by-Paul-Villain-%2528French%2529%252C-on-behalf-of-Association-des-Br%25C3%25BBI%25C3%25A9s-de-France%252C-on-accidents-caused-by-lack-of-market-surveillance-in-the-EU>
- Petition No 0280/2019 by J.B. (Spanish) on the situation of Valencian orange growers, available at:
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/petition/content/0280%252F2019/html/Petition-No-0280%252F2019-by-J.B.-%2528Spanish%2529-on-the-situation-of-Valencian-orange-growers>

ANNEXES

Annex I - Questionnaire

Questionnaire on the processing of petitions in committees of the European Parliament as sent to each committee of the European Parliament in November 2019.

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE PROCESSING OF PETITIONS IN EP COMMITTEES **(research period: January 2017 -December 2019)**

A. Petitions received from the Committee on Petitions

1. Have you received petitions from the Committee on Petitions in the period between January 2017 and December 2019?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2. If yes, what were the subjects raised in petitions and did they correspond to the fields of competence of your Committee?

B. Processing of petitions

3. Does the Committee place petitions on the agenda of the coordinators' meetings for a decision and follow-up?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please describe the procedure followed at the coordinators' meetings:

4. Does the Committee place issues raised in petitions (not just petitions themselves) on the agenda of the Committee meetings?

☐ Regularly ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

If yes, please describe the procedure on dealing with issues raised in petitions at the Committee meeting.

5. If petitions are placed on the agenda of Committee meetings, please describe the procedure followed by the Committee and how decisions concerning the selection of these petitions are taken.

6. Does the full Committee examine the petitions received from the Committee on Petitions for opinion or for information? If yes, please indicate any differences in procedures for the petitions received for information and the petitions received for opinion.

☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Does the Committee issue opinions on petitions received from the Committee on Petitions for information? If yes, please provide examples.

☐ Yes

☐ No

8. How much time on average does it take for your Committee to provide an answer to the request for opinion regarding a petition? What influences the timing to issue an opinion? Please provide examples.

C. Follow-up of petitions

The PETI Committee would like to better understand the follow-up of petitions after they have been received by a Committee, and any influence petitions may have had on future activity of a Committee, for example in reports, amendments, missions or public hearings.

9. Does your Committee send a letter to the Committee on Petitions to provide follow-up on petitions received?

☐ Yes

☐ No

10. Has your Secretariat established a system to follow up on petitions received from the Committee on Petitions (noting petitions numbers, subjects of petitions, follow-up on petitions received, timing for providing a reply, etc.)?

11. Please indicate if your Committee has received reminders from the Committee on Petitions to provide a reply on a petition sent to your Committee? If yes, please provide examples and reasons for delay to provide a reply.

12. Has the Committee sent letters to other EU institutions or bodies regarding petitions?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please provide examples:

13. Has the Committee ever drafted reports or resolutions on issues raised by petitions, or referenced petitions in reports or resolutions?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please provide examples of the reports and/or resolutions:

14. Has information provided by citizens through petitions been used when drafting legislative action, reports or amendments?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please provide examples:

15. Have issues raised by the petitioners been discussed at public hearings or other events?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please provide examples:

16. Has the petition led to an adopted EU act (legislative or non-legislative) in line with the petitioners' requested action?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please provide examples:

17. Does the Committee on Petitions forward to your Committee petitions outside the competence of your Committee? If possible, please provide the number of such requests by the Committee on Petitions, procedures to deal with such requests and some examples.

18. Please share any other types of follow-up action taken regarding petitions received (for example, Committee missions):

D. Suggestions on better cooperation with the Committee on Petitions

19. Do you have suggestions on how citizens' concerns and information provided through petitions could be better dealt with?

20. Do you have suggestions for how cooperation between the Committee on Petitions and your Committee could be improved?

21. Any other comments or observations:

Annex II – Data on petitions

Data tables for numbers of petitions sent between 2017 and 2019 to other Committees for information, for opinion, and combined table for both.

Petitions sent for information, by Committee, 2017-2019

Year	AFCO	AFET	AGRI	BUDG	CONT	CULT	DEVE	DROI	ECON	EMPL	ENVI	FEMM	IMCO	INTA	ITRE	JURI	LIBE	PECH	PEST	REGI	SEDE	TERR	TRAN	Total
2017	58	12	30	1	3	11	3	18	21	54	134	13	70	10	25	25	98	1	0	3	0	4	36	630
2018	36	21	37	1	10	31	3	9	35	101	242	19	85	9	52	34	110	10	3	13	3	1	76	941
2019	50	7	10	1	3	11	0	4	20	34	98	6	49	3	21	26	79	3	0	7	1	0	46	479
2017-2019	144	40	77	3	16	53	6	31	76	189	474	38	204	22	98	85	287	14	3	23	4	5	158	2050

Petitions sent for opinion, by Committee, 2017-2019

Year	AFCO	AFET	AGRI	BUDG	CONT	CULT	DEVE	DROI	ECON	EMPL	ENVI	FEMM	IMCO	INTA	ITRE	JURI	LIBE	PECH	PEST	REGI	SEDE	TERR	TRAN	Total
2017	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	4	6	1	1	0	0	2	3	1	0	2	0	0	1	28
2018	0	2	2	0	0	2	0	1	0	3	5	2	6	0	7	2	4	0	6	0	0	0	0	42
2019	2	0	4	0	0	6	0	0	17	2	9	2	17	3	1	5	7	1	0	0	0	0	7	83
2017-2019	4	3	7	0	0	9	0	1	19	9	20	5	24	3	8	9	14	2	6	2	0	0	8	153

All petitions sent to other Committees for information or for opinion, by Committee, 2017-2019

Year	AFCO	AFET	AGRI	BUDG	CONT	CULT	DEVE	DROI	ECON	EMPL	ENVI	FEMM	IMCO	INTA	ITRE	JURI	LIBE	PECH	PEST	REGI	SEDE	TERR	TRAN	Total
2017	60	13	31	1	3	12	3	18	23	58	140	14	71	10	25	27	101	2	0	5	0	4	37	658
2018	36	23	39	1	10	33	3	10	35	104	247	21	91	9	59	36	114	10	9	13	3	1	76	983
2019	52	7	14	1	3	17	0	4	37	36	107	8	66	6	22	31	86	4	0	7	1	0	53	562
2017-2019	148	43	84	3	16	62	6	32	95	198	494	43	228	25	106	94	301	16	9	25	4	5	166	2203

This study was requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Petitions. It was written and published by the Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs. The paper describes the methods and procedures of cooperation between the Committee on Petitions and other parliamentary committees on petitions sent for opinion and information and examines improvements brought by the establishment of the Petitions Network. The study analyses impact of petitions on the activities of the parliamentary committees and describes follow-up actions to integrate EU citizens concerns in the parliamentary work. It raises areas for improvement and proposes recommendations to strengthen cooperation between committees.
