



2017/2069(INI)

16.11.2017

OPINION

of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs

for the Committee on Petitions

on EU Citizenship Report 2017: Strengthening Citizens' Rights in a Union of
Democratic Change
(2017/2069(INI))

Rapporteur: Cristian Dan Preda

PA_NonLeg

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Constitutional Affairs calls on the Committee on Petitions, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the Commission's continuous efforts to ensure that EU citizenship rights are upheld, and encourages their further protection through implementation of the provisions of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (CFR) and the relevant provisions of the EU Treaties; recalls that under Article 9 TEU and Article 20 TFEU a person having the nationality of a Member State shall be a citizen of the EU; is convinced that EU citizens will only be able to fully exercise their rights if they are aware of them and if the Member States and the EU institutions make a firm commitment to protecting them; calls on the Commission to promote policies and carry out campaigns and activities aimed at raising awareness of citizens' rights and the tools available to exercise them;
2. Is committed to enhancing the democratic dimension of the European elections by reforming current European electoral law with a view to increasing citizens' participation and confidence in the EU democratic system; believes that increased transparency, awareness, effective and non-discriminatory access to information, as well as the renewal of democratic practices, new voting systems, including e-democracy tools, and a decreased digital divide between Member States in terms of digital infrastructure will foster the development of a genuine European public space; is convinced that better and more focused information on European politics and the impact of EU legislation on citizens' daily lives would improve the turnout in European elections; recalls the need to promote participation in European elections by increasing the visibility of political parties on the European level and that strengthening the European character of the elections to the European Parliament is a shared responsibility between the EU and its Member States;
3. Warns against possible legal uncertainty over the rights of EU citizens living in the UK and those of UK citizens living in the EU arising as a result of the UK's withdrawal from the EU; believes that all indivisible rights should be safeguarded as a priority in the UK's withdrawal agreement and in the agreement on the future relationship between the EU and the UK, and that an agreement on these rights and others such as access to healthcare should be reached promptly; stresses that any agreement should be based on the principle of reciprocity and non-discrimination; recalls in this regard its resolution of 5 April 2017 on negotiations with the United Kingdom following its notification that it intends to withdraw from the European Union;¹
4. Recalls that in the period 1 January 2013 to 30 June 2016 the majority of complaints received by the European Ombudsman concerned an alleged lack of transparency, as highlighted by the Commission in its report of 24 January 2017 entitled 'On progress towards effective EU citizenship 2013-2016'²; is convinced that full transparency and integrity on the part of the EU institutions is an essential condition for building trust and confidence vis-à-vis EU citizens and allowing them to fully enjoy and exercise their citizenship rights; calls on all EU institutions and bodies to address the continuing shortcomings in line with the provisions of, inter alia, Articles 9 and 10(3) TEU, 15 TFEU

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0102.

² COM(2017) 0032.

and 41 and 42 CFR;

5. Takes note of the Commission's proposal to revise the regulation on the European Citizens' Initiative with a view to improving its functioning; calls on the Commission, in this regard and besides the necessary technical modifications, to include provisions aimed at revising the conditions of legal admissibility and the requirements for registration of an ECI as well as the procedures for its examination, taking as a starting-point the judgments of the General Court in the cases 'Minority SafePack' (T-646/13) and 'Stop TTIP' (T-754/14); strongly supports this regulation as being an important tool for participatory democracy which, if used to its full potential, could increase citizens' trust in the EU institutions and contribute to the construction of a more inclusive European Union;
6. Considers that, given the increasing impact of the online universe and of social media on the lives of citizens, the European institutions should continue to develop new mechanisms and public policies that are designed to protect the fundamental rights of individuals in the digital environment, focusing on their freedom of expression, their right to privacy and the protection of their good name, personal data and personal image, particularly in the case of minors;
7. Considers that the security of EU citizens and the fight against terrorism should constitute a top priority for the EU; welcomes the steps taken by the EU to reinforce the Security Union; calls for the speedy implementation of the interoperability of EU information systems in the areas of security, migration and border management, which should all comply with EU data protection principles; recalls the need to find an appropriate balance between security and the protection of fundamental rights; emphasises that the coordination of internal and external EU action in the field of security is essential for the efficient protection of EU citizens and their confidence in the EU's ability to be a security provider; recalls that consular protection is key to ensuring such protection abroad, and believes that, in line with the Commission's recommendations, further steps should be taken towards the harmonisation and modernisation of the rules on emergency travel documents;
8. Reiterates its call on the Commission to relaunch the accession process of the EU to the European Convention on Human Rights in line with the obligations deriving from Article 6 TEU, by exploring solutions to address the objections expressed in the opinion of the European Court of Justice of 18 December 2014; believes that EU accession to the Convention would be a significant improvement for the protection of EU citizens' fundamental rights and would help achieve a coherent system for the protection of human rights in Europe.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	28.9.2017						
Result of final vote	<table><tr><td>+: </td><td>14</td></tr><tr><td>–: </td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>0: </td><td>0</td></tr></table>	+:	14	–:	5	0:	0
+:	14						
–:	5						
0:	0						
Members present for the final vote	Michał Boni, Mercedes Bresso, Elmar Brok, Pascal Durand, Danuta Maria Hübner, Diane James, Ramón Jáuregui Atondo, Alain Lamassoure, Morten Messerschmidt, Maite Pagazaurtundúa Ruiz, Markus Pieper, György Schöpflin, Pedro Silva Pereira, Barbara Spinelli, Claudia Țapardel						
Substitutes present for the final vote	Gerolf Annemans, Pervenche Berès, Jérôme Lavrilleux, Cristian Dan Preda, Jasenko Selimovic, Rainer Wieland						

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

14	+
ALDE	Maite Pagazaurtundúa Ruiz, Jasenko Selimovic
PPE	Michał Boni, Elmar Brok, Danuta Maria Hübner, Alain Lamassoure, Jérôme Lavrilleux, Markus Pieper, Cristian Dan Preda, György Schöpflin
S&D	Mercedes Bresso, Ramón Jáuregui Atondo, Pedro Silva Pereira, Claudia Țapardel

5	-
ECR	Morten Messerschmidt
ENF	Gerolf Annemans
GUE/NGL	Barbara Spinelli
NI	Diane James
VERTS/ALE	Pascal Durand

0	0

Note: Pervenche Berès (S&D) announced that she also voted in favour of the draft opinion

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention