



Fundamental rights, social issues and the environment top EU citizens' petitions

Committees Committee on Petitions [17-09-2013 - 17:53]

Protecting citizens against discrimination, defending their rights to property and free movement and safeguarding the environment are key concerns for the EP Petitions Committee, says its 2012 activity report, approved on Tuesday. The EP received 1,985 petitions in 2012, mostly from German, Spanish, Italian, Romanian and British citizens.

The 2012 report provides an overview of the Petitions Committee's work. Last year fundamental rights, the environment and the economic and social crisis were the topics most often raised by petitioners, MEPs say, highlighting the committee's role in identifying non-judicial remedies for citizens.

Basic rights, social issues and the environment

Protecting EU citizens' fundamental rights continues to be a key concern for Parliament. The rights of children and persons with disabilities, freedom of expression and privacy, the right to property, access to justice and free movement (i.e. fair access to the labour market and social security schemes in other EU countries) accounted for a large share of the committee's work last year.

The economic crisis also prompted a number of petitions about social problems, such as housing, unemployment and how banks treat savers.

Many of the complaints received by Parliament from citizens in 2012 were about environmental issues (e.g. a national authority failing to protect special conservation areas). Problems to do with failure to enforce EU directives on waste management, birds, habitats and environmental impact assessment came up frequently, which proves that "public authorities repeatedly fail to ensure the preservation of biodiversity and ecosystems", the report says.

Background

Any European Union citizen or resident may, individually or in association with others, submit a petition to the European Parliament on a subject which comes within the European Union's fields of activity and which affects them directly.

The EP received 1,985 petitions in 2012, up from 1,414 in 2011. 1,408 petitions were declared admissible (thus falling within the EU's sphere of competence) and, of those, 854 were forwarded to the European Commission for further investigation.

The largest number of petitions focused on the EU as a whole, with Spain in second place followed by Germany, Italy and Romania. Germans remained the most active petitioners by nationality, followed by Spaniards, Italians, Romanians and the British.

In the chair: Erminia Mazzoni (EPP, IT)

Press release

Rapporteur: Edward McMillan-Scott (ALDE, UK)

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Contact

Natalia DASILVA

BXL: (+32) 2 28 44301

STR: (+33) 3 881 73661

PORT: (+32) 498 98 39 85

EMAIL: peti-press@europarl.europa.eu