

STUDY

Requested by the PETI committee



ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS DURING THE 2014-2019 PARLIAMENTARY TERM AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE



Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the 2014-19 parliamentary term the European Union and notably the European Parliament, through its dedicated Committee on Petitions (PETI), has continued to uphold the right of citizens to petition the EP to raise issues and concerns and to call for redress and action in areas of EU competence, by mobilising institutions and Member States both on issues at the centre of the political debate, and on “orphan” or “dormant” issues.

With the aim of better serving EU citizens, the Committee has developed a Petitions Web Portal to allow an easier submission of petitions, more interaction and information services. It adopted new and updated Guidelines to facilitate the processing of petitions and the Committee’s decision-making process. It also managed to introduce some positive changes in the EP’s Rules of Procedure. Cooperation with other EP committees was strengthened and improved, including through the creation of a Petitions Network. For the first time, PETI created a special Working Group, the Working Group on Child Welfare Issues, which was responsible for investigating a number of petitions on the rights of children and to report back to Committee by proposing recommendations.

PETI maintained its good working relations with the Commission, the Council, Member States and the European Ombudsman. It worked closely together with EP services, notably the EP’s Legal Service, and exponentially increased the use of the research expertise of the Policy Department for Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs for studies and workshops, as well as of EPRS. Furthermore, over the 2014-2019 term, it organised a large number of public hearings. At the same time, the committee managed to keep the overall parliamentary activity substantially stable when comparing the number of reports, opinions, Oral Questions, resolutions and fact-finding visits made during the 2014-2019 and the 2009-2014 parliamentary terms (see Annex 1).

Against this background, PETI continued to examine a high number of petitions raising issues in all areas of EU activity: fundamental rights, migration, the right to petition, citizenship, free movement; discrimination; European Citizens’ Initiative; children’s rights; the environment; animal welfare; disability; social policies and employment; Brexit; better law-making and application of EU law; openness, transparency, access to documents, conflicts of interest; international agreements. PETI also dealt with some very specific

issues, e.g. on mortgage legislation and risky financial instruments. Because of its important role in detecting violations of the rights of persons with disabilities (the so-called “protection role” within the EU Framework established to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at EU and Member States’ level), PETI has dedicated much attention to the subject of disabilities.

The comparison of petitions statistics of 2014 with those of 2018 shows that the number of petitions tabled during the term has more than halved, probably also as a consequence of the introduction of the Webportal. Germany, Spain and Italy remained the first three countries concerned by petitions, and of nationality of petitioners, with stable percentages across the term and surpassing altogether 50% of petitions tabled in the EU. The main subjects of petitions included fundamental rights and justice, environment, and health. Data related to adoption decisions and petitions status remain substantially similar with moderate variations, while the format of the petitions tabled shifted from emails to the use of the Webportal (see Annex II).

Current achievements often become challenges for the future. This is why during the 9th legislature the PETI committee and the EP could further develop and exploit the potential of the Webportal and of the PETI website for communicating with citizens and as an internal instrument for the management of petitions. In case of high numbers of petitions on certain important subjects, working groups could be established again, or own-initiative reports could be launched. Researches could analyse petitions’ trends (also based on the statistical data collected by the EP, to better understand the underlying dynamics and causes), possible innovative ways to promote the right to petition and achieve real change for petitioners, including by mobilising other institutions and Member States.

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INTRODUCTION

The right to petition in the EU

The right to petition allows Union citizens, as well as residents on the EU territory, to submit a petition to the European Parliament, on an issue that falls within the European Union's fields of activity. It is one of the cornerstones of participatory democracy in the EU and is one of the main rights granted by the Treaties to Union citizens, as provided by Articles 20, 24 and 227 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), as well as by Article 44 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU.

This right has a long tradition as it is considered to be one of the first political rights granted to citizens in history. Its original aim was to allow those in power to maintain a relationship with the community they governed and for the latter to address requests and to defend their rights, without fear of reprisals. With the English Petition of Rights (1628) and the Bill of Rights (1689), the right to petition was expressly provided by law. In more recent times, this right was introduced in a number of national constitutions. At European level, the Common Assembly of the ECSC declared its competence to receive complaints and suggestions of citizens of Member States and envisaged its own procedural rules for the submission and examination of petitions. From its establishment in 1958 with the Treaty of Rome until 1979, the European Parliamentary Assembly, renamed European Parliament from 1962 on, received 128 petitions. The number of petitions raised progressively in the following years, in parallel with the European integration process.¹ The right of petition was then formally integrated by the Maastricht Treaty into the EU Treaties, which led the EP to establish a dedicated committee, the Committee on Petitions², to examine them and prepare the EP position on matters raised herewith³.

The European Parliament always attached great importance to petitions, as they create opportunities to connect with citizens and bring them closer to the EU, and to look for solutions to their problems. They also allow EU institutions to detect incorrect, or lack of, transposition or implementation of EU law at Member State level, and to remedy by taking the most appropriate course of action, including by opening a dialogue with the concerned institutions or Member States, by filling in legislative or policy gaps, or by taking any other appropriate initiatives.

PETI plays a very important role in relation to petitions: it mobilises the EP, other institutions and Member States in addressing citizens' concerns and achieving change, both on major issues at the centre of the political debate and on "orphan" or "dormant" issues that fail to get the attention and action of other EP committees or institutions. In this sense, PETI brings light to issues that would otherwise be forgotten or remain unaddressed, and creates a positive dynamic for citizens, for the institutions and for democracy in the EU.

The procedure for dealing with petitions is laid down in Rules 226 to 230 of, and Annex VI (XX) to, Parliament's Rules of Procedure, as modified during the term 2014-19 by introducing some positive changes.⁴ Updated Guidelines to facilitate the processing of

¹ There was just one petition – in 1958 – in the first five years of activity; just a few petitions, fewer than 10, in the 10 years from 1964 to 1974; and, finally, a progressive increase in the four years from 1975 to 1978. See *The citizen's appeal to the European Parliament: petitions 1958-1979*, European Parliament, 2009.

² PETI main webpage: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/peti/home.html>

³ see [The Right to Petition](#), Policy Department on Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, 2015.

⁴ These novelties, which entered into force from January 2017, included: a new and higher threshold to declare the admissibility of petitions: if the committee fails to reach a consensus on the admissibility of the petition, it shall be declared admissible at the request of at least 1/3 of the members of the committee (before it was 1/4); submissions to Parliament that

petitions and the Committee's decision-making process were also adopted during the term⁵.

The Committee on Petitions examines petitions often in the presence of the petitioner, who can illustrate the petition. The committee may decide to draw up, with the agreement of the Conference of Presidents, a short motion for a resolution. The committee can request the views of other committees and of the European Commission, and it may decide to organise fact-finding visits to the Member State or region concerned by the petition in question. The committee may ask the President of the Parliament to forward its opinion or recommendation to the Commission, the Council of the European Union or to the Member State concerned for action or response. More rarely, the committee might decide to draw up an own-initiative report. The petitioner is informed of the decision taken by the committee and of the reasons for that decision. When consideration of an admissible petition has been concluded, it is to be declared closed and the petitioner informed accordingly.

When examining petitions, PETI closely cooperates with the European Commission, which provides additional information at its disposal for the assessment of the case, in particular with regard to the European and national legislation and how it is applied. Where appropriate, the Commission will work towards a solution either through a dialogue with individual Member States, by initiating an EU Pilot⁶ or through infringement proceedings⁷. In cases where there is a legislative measure in process, the Parliament can seek to change the legislation by proposing amendments so to fill in the gap. In other cases, Parliament can also call on the Commission to propose a revision of legislation in force. PETI can also ask the Council and/or the Permanent Representatives as well as national, regional and local authorities for information and assistance in finding solutions for matters raised in petitions.^{8,9}

As petitions received and declared admissible by the Committee on Petitions concern issues that fall also under the competence of other parliamentary committees, cooperation with these is an integral part of the successful functioning of the petitions' process. The establishment of the PETI Network in 2016, convening in a single forum the PETI committee with representatives of other committees (both at the political and administrative level) helped structuring and streamlining this collaboration, the process of obtaining opinions from other competent committees and of ensuring proper follow-up of petitions, including of legislative nature.

This study examines the activities and achievements of the PETI committee during the 2014-19 term and the challenges for the future. After having briefly introduced the right to petition in the EU and the EP working methods and decision-making process in relation to petitions notably through the Committee on Petitions, we will examine the main activities and achievements, such as the development of a tool aimed at modernising and digitalising the way petitions are tabled, processed and followed up. These new ICT tools and their application

are clearly not intended to be a petition shall not be registered as petitions and shall be forwarded to other responsible services; submission of petitions is now possible only on paper by regular post, or electronically through the Petitions portal; when several petitions deal with the same subject, they can be processed jointly; confidential treatment of petitions is abolished; an explicit rule on Fact Finding Visits was introduced.

⁵ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/138889/1145997EN.pdf>

⁶ EU Pilot is an informal dialogue between the Commission and a Member State on issues related to potential non-compliance with EU law, prior to launching a formal infringement procedure.

⁷ If an EU Member State fails to transpose EU law, or does not rectify a suspected violation of EU law, the Commission may launch a formal infringement procedure. Following a number of stages this procedure may culminate in an EU Member State being eventually referred to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU).

⁸ It should be born in mind however that judicial matters are not within the scope of the committee. It is not a judicial body and cannot intervene in national legal proceedings nor revoke the decisions of national bodies.

⁹For more information on the right to petition, see "The right to petition", EP fact-sheets <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/148/the-right-to-petition> , as well as the study [The Right to Petition](#).

to petitions makes the process more transparent, open and accessible to all by allowing an easier submission of petitions, more interaction and information services. We will then examine relations with the other institutions, i.e. the Commission, the Council, Member States and the European Ombudsman, as well as with EP services, notably the EP's Legal Service and the Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs and EPRS. In the subsequent section we will examine the key issues raised by petitions and examined by the Committee and by Parliament and the institutional instruments used to address them. In the concluding section, challenges for the future are explored and some suggestions proposed to further exploit the full potential of petitions, of the PETI committee and of the EP and EU powers to help citizens be heard, get support, redress, or justice.

1. MAIN ACTIVITIES

1.1. The Petitions Web Portal : <http://www.petiport.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/main>

One of the main achievements of the past term has been the launch of a new website for petitions, the Petitions Web Portal. This website, which came into operation on 19 November 2014, represents an important improvement to the work of the committee. The Portal simplifies the exercise of the right to petition. It is interactive and informative, and allows citizens - after registration and creation of a user account - to submit petitions online, upload supporting documents, and check the status of their petition. It also promotes participation in the petition process as it allows other citizens to add their support to or join petitions already deemed admissible without them having to create a new petition. The portal became the main instrument for petitions submission (in addition to submission by regular post).

The portal provides, in all EU languages, the needed information for petitioners on petitions' eligibility criteria and requirements, treatment and follow up, registration and submission¹⁰. It notably explains the "Union's fields of activity", which is the criteria that is applied to decide on whether a petition is admissible or not, hereby helping citizens to table petitions that have a chance to be examined. The Portal also provides information about the work of the Committee on Petitions and about the competent, most appropriate or swifter avenue of redress through other EU or national networks (e.g. SOLVIT, EU Pilot, the European Consumer Centres Network, the European Ombudsman, national ombudsmen and petitions committees of national parliaments)¹¹.

Since the end of 2017 documents such as meeting agendas, minutes and Commission communications related to petitions have been uploaded automatically. Hence, these documents have become publicly available, which has increased transparency of the Committee's work. PETI has repeatedly called for further developments of the Portal in order to increase its visibility and its accessibility to all potential users, in particular persons with disabilities.

1.2. Relations with the European Commission

During the 2014-2019 term, the committee maintained good working and institutional relationships with the European Commission. The Commission is PETI's main partner in processing petitions, as it is the responsible EU institution for ensuring the application of and compliance with EU law. Therefore, good cooperation between the committee and the Commission is essential.

Within the Commission, the central contact point for the PETI committee is the Secretariat-General, which coordinates the transmission of information requests to the respective Commission's services. During the regular committee meetings, the written responses to the committee's requests for information are explained in detail by Commission staff members who participate in the committee's meetings.

The PETI committee has also provided inputs to the interinstitutional dialogue within the framework of the Structured Dialogue on the Commission's work programme. For

¹⁰ see <https://petiport.secure.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/faq>

¹¹ see also Fundamental Rights Agency website Where to turn for help : <https://fra.europa.eu/en/about-fundamental-rights/where-to-turn>

that purpose, the responsible Commissioner (in the last legislature Vice-President Frans Timmermans) was invited regularly to meet with the committee to discuss and evaluate the results of the cooperation. Furthermore, the committee has put questions for oral answer with debate to the Commission in plenary in order to obtain additional information on a specific subject or to enable Parliament to exercise its power of control over the Union's executive authority. To wind up the debate in plenary, the committee often tabled motions for a resolution, which were all approved by Parliament.

In the last term the response time for requests for information from the Commission seems to have slightly reduced, but PETI has underlined at various occasions there is a need for further progress. It has also reiterated that it wants to receive regular updates on developments in infringement proceedings (notably on those petitions upon which the Commission has launched an infringement proceeding, which remain open until the closure of the proceeding) and for timely access to relevant Commission documents on infringements and EU pilot procedures that relate to existing petitions.

Another important matter PETI has consistently highlighted is the need for an EU-level one-stop shop website to guide citizens in seeking solutions if they think that their rights have been violated. This website should clearly explain the distinctions between formal mechanisms (complaints to the Commission, petitions to Parliament, and complaints to the European Ombudsman) and informal mechanisms such as SOLVIT¹², ECC-Net, FIN-Net, etc., and it should be easy to find and use.

The below table summarises the most important exchanges of view that took place during the term with Commission representatives:

Date and Commission representative	Issues discussed and main outcomes
September 2014: Mr Pascal Leardini, Head of Directorate F in the Commission's Secretariat-General	Petitions sent to the Commission for an opinion concerned chiefly four areas: environment, fundamental rights, freedom of movement for citizens and workers, and the economic and social crisis. The main problems affecting the process of cooperation were, according to Mr Leardini, the need to double-check the admissibility of petitions sent to the Commission, the necessary involvement of Member States and national authorities, attendance by Commission officials at preparation meetings and, last but not least, the large number of open petitions, which considerably added to the workload. The Commission proposed some solutions in these problem areas: inter alia, that Member State authorities be invited to attend relevant meetings and that better use be made of the available tools for resolving issues.
1 October 2014: Hearing of designated Commissioner Navracsics	The Committee on Petitions participated in the hearing of the designated Commissioner responsible for education, culture, youth and citizenship.
7 October 2014: Hearing of designated Commissioner Timmermans	PETI heard the designated First Vice-President of the Commission Frans Timmermans, responsible for Inter-Institutional Relations, the Rule of Law, the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Better Regulation. The V-P made a number of undertakings on the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) and agreed to look into the difficulties and restrictions affecting petitions as a result of Article 51 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.
5 April 2015: Annual cycle of the structured dialogue: Vice-President Timmermans	PETI heard the designated First Vice-President of the Commission Frans Timmermans on issues related to petitions, Inter-Institutional Relations, the Rule of Law, the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Better Regulation.

¹² The Commission and the Parliament agree that SOLVIT should be further developed and that it is important that all citizens who need it should be able to access it. To this end, SOLVIT must be allocated the requisite resources. However, this can only be accomplished in collaboration with Member States as national SOLVIT centres are part of national administrations.

19 April 2016: Annual cycle of the structured dialogue: Vice-President Timmermans	Vice-President Timmermans committed to look into ways of assisting the Committee on Petitions when dealing with national authorities of the Member States. The committee insisted that the Commission identifies means to enhance cooperation with Member States authorities.
25 April 2017: Annual cycle of the structured dialogue: Vice-President Timmermans	Vice-President Timmermans confirmed that petitions gave feedback to the Commission on citizens' expectations and on remaining challenges. The committee reiterated its request on the Commission to identify means to enhance cooperation with Member States authorities.
March 2017: Ms Tiina Astola, Director-General of DG Justice	Ms Tiina Astola, Director-General of DG Justice, presented the Commission Citizenship report to the PETI Committee
28 November 2017: Vice-President Timmermans	At a joint meeting of the Committee on Petitions with the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, First Vice-President Timmermans presented the new proposal for a regulation on the Citizen's initiative.
3 May 2018: Annual cycle of the structured dialogue: Vice-President Timmermans	Annual structured dialogue with First Vice-President Timmermans

1.3. Relations with the Council

Over the last term, the Council has occasionally actively participated in PETI meetings, but PETI has expressed disappointment with the fact that this has not resulted in more active engagement by Member States on unlocking petitions for which their cooperation is decisive. At the same time, it applauded the efforts made by certain Member States, such as Italy, Greece and Spain, which have assiduously followed the PETI meetings and have made efforts to actively contribute to the discussion on various petitions at committee meetings. In 2018, PETI acknowledged the contribution of the Austrian Presidency in the joint debate together with the Committee on Constitutional Affairs on the report on the transparency of legislative discussions in the preparatory bodies of the Council of the EU following the Ombudsman's strategic inquiry on the transparency of the Council legislative process.

1.4. Relations with the European Ombudsman

Among PETI's responsibilities under Parliament's Rules of Procedure are relations with the European Ombudsman. The PETI Committee adopts an annual report on the activities of the Ombudsman (see also section 2.2), as well as on the results of the Ombudsman's strategic inquiries. It maintains an excellent working relation with European Ombudsman Emily O'Reilly, who was elected European Ombudsman for the first time in July 2013 and re-elected for a new five-year term in December 2014. During the 2014-2019 period, she has performed her duties in an active manner, both in terms of processing complaints and maintaining a constructive relationship with the other EU institutions and bodies and she has encouraged citizens to exercise their rights vis-à-vis those institutions and bodies.

The Ombudsman often participates in regular PETI meetings, including on the occasion of her yearly presentation of her annual report. At these presentations, she provides statistical information on complaints, her working methods and her office. She also generally highlights some of the most important investigations of her institution in the reporting year and keeps Members informed about her short and longer term priorities. After her annual report is published, PETI drafts a report on the Ombudsman's activities to be presented in plenary.

The Ombudsman is also often invited as speaker in PETI meetings or events such as workshops, public hearings or joint parliamentary meetings. For instance, an important appearance was the Ombudsman's presentation of her recommendation on the European Commission's appointment of a new Secretary-General in an exchange of views that PETI organised on 22 November 2018 jointly with the Committee on Legal Affairs and the Committee on Budgetary Control. Furthermore, she gave keynote speeches at the Interparliamentary Committee meeting on 27 November 2018 on the implementation and application of EU law, as well as at the Workshop on Conflicts of Interests of 2 April 2019.

The PETI Committee is a member of the European Network of Ombudsmen (ENO), which was set up in 1996 and connects the European Ombudsman, national and regional ombudsmen with the aim of ensuring complainants can get help at the appropriate level. The ENO helps to share information about EU law and its impact in EU Member States. It facilitates cooperation between ombudsmen, with a view to safeguarding the rights of EU citizens and individuals under EU law.

Both the PETI Committee and the European Ombudsman are members of the EU framework for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Regular framework meetings are attended by PETI and the Ombudsman's office and contribute to a good working relation on disability issues (see also section 2.8).

1.5. Cooperation with the Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs

During the 2014-2019 legislative term, PETI exponentially increased the use of the research expertise of the Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs for studies and workshops. The number of studies, in depth analysis, briefings and workshops raised from a total of 6 during the 1999-2014 term (5 researches and 1 workshop) to a total of 62 during the current term (56 researches and 6 workshops; see also Annex I). This is due to a series of elements, including a more active approach from the Policy Department and more staff following PETI issues (including former PETI administrators who moved to the Policy Department) and a greater interest from PETI to use expertise as an instrument to examine groups of petitions, both during committee meetings through the presentations of the studies, and in replying to citizens.

PETI and PolDep C have an excellent active and close working relation. PolDep staff attends all PETI and PETI coordinators' meetings as well as the preparatory meetings with PETI secretariat staff and the political advisors of the Groups.

Towards the end of the calendar year PETI and the Policy Department discuss and establish the annual research programme (ARP) for the next year. The ARP, which is adopted by the PETI coordinators, is the result of the input from political groups, PETI staff and PolDep staff based on requests arising from the discussions in PETI during the year and/or the need for specific expertise which would help Members obtain a better insight in questions arising from petitions. The research products resulting from the ARP are published during the year and presented by the authors in the regular meetings of the committee. Further requests for expertise can be added during the year to the programme.

1.6. Cooperation with Parliament's Legal Service

The collaboration with Parliament's Legal Service is very important for the PETI Committee. A Legal Service staff member attends the meetings of the committee as well as the meetings of the PETI coordinators. He or she also offers their opinion when requested by the Chair. The Legal Service represents Parliament in all legal matters and provides legal opinions to all standing committees of the Parliament.

In September 2014, at the start of the new legislature, the Legal Service's Head of Unit attended a PETI meeting to give a brief outline of how the Legal Service cooperates with PETI. He explained legal aspects concerning petitions and made reference to some important judgments of the General Court of the EU concerning petitions and their processing. The cases in question were in two categories:

- the first involved cases in which petitions were considered inadmissible – case T-308/07 (*Ingo-Jens Tegebauer v European Parliament*) being the most prominent. It was stipulated in the ruling in this case that for any decision on admissibility taken by the Committee there needed to be a full and clear justification. The same principle was reiterated in subsequent judgments, such as those in cases T-280/09 (*José Carlos Morte Navarro v European Parliament*) and T-160/10 (*J v European Parliament*);

- the second category comprised cases pertaining to decisions by the Committee to close a petition, the first case on this being T-186/11 (*Peter Schönberger v European Parliament*). The Committee on Petitions informed Schönberger that his petition had been declared admissible in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament, that it would be referred to the Director-General for Personnel and that the petition procedure was therefore closed: the petitioner contested this. The Tribunal found that, although the decision to file a petition as inadmissible affects the right of the persons concerned to submit a petition, the same cannot be said of a decision, taken after a petition has been declared admissible, on how that petition should be dealt with, which constitutes a political assessment which is not amenable to review by the Courts of the European Union. The Court subsequently dismissed Mr Schönberger's appeal (Case C-261/13P). This view was repeated in other cases, such as case T-650/13 (*Zoltán Lomnici v European Parliament*).

In 2015 the Legal Service was also asked for an opinion on access to the e-Petition database for all Members of the European Parliament.

1.7. Fact-finding missions

According to Rule 228 of the Parliament's Rules of Procedure the PETI Committee "when investigating petitions, establishing facts or seeking solutions may organise fact-finding visits to the Member State or region that are concerned by admissible petitions that have been already debated in the committee. As a general rule, fact-finding visits must cover issues raised in several petitions". In 2014-2019 period, PETI organised the following fact-finding missions¹³:

¹³ The committee also sent a delegation to Lima (Peru) on 15 and 16 February 2018 in the framework of democracy support offered by the European Parliament and its Democracy Support and Election Coordination Unit (DEG) in order to exchange good practices in the petition process with the Committee on Constitutional Affairs of the Peruvian Parliament.

Date	Place	Aim
5 and 6 November 2015	London (UK)	To look into matters relating to the protection of children in the UK and in particular to the issue of non-consensual adoption. Some of the petitions received claimed that the responsible authorities had taken discriminatory measures detrimental to parents who were not British nationals. Members of the delegation had the opportunity to better understand the situation by meeting with representatives of the competent institutions in the UK. Members of the delegation drafted a report and recommendations which were put to a Committee vote in 2016.
8 to 10 February 2016	Spain	Inquiry following the reception of several petitions related to the possible infringement of the Water Framework Directive (Directive 2000/60/EC) by the Spanish River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) of the Ebro and Tajo rivers. The mission report, adopted on 13 July 2016, stresses the importance of consistency between each individual Environmental Impact Assessment in different parts of the river with the Strategic Environmental Assessment over the RBMPs for each river.
22 and 23 September 2016	Slovakia	To seek answers to questions related to the European Union's impact on the quality of the lives of persons with disabilities who are institutionalized and thus not integrated in society. The choice of studying the subject matter in the Slovak Republic was that of geographical balance as regards the missions accomplished by PETI in the past. The viewpoint of the mission was a fundamental rights-based approach to the use of the EU Structural and Investment Funds for the maintenance (renovation, extension or building) of long-term residential centres for persons with disabilities in Slovakia. The mission report, adopted on 29 November 2016, urges the Commission to further look into the situation of investments in institutions for persons with disabilities in Slovakia and to support the systematic evaluation of the progress and efficiency of the transition from institutional to community-based care, and encourages the Parliament's Committee on Budgets to further examine the subject matter.
20 and 21 February 2017	Stockholm (Sweden)	Inquiry following the reception of several petitions on the difficulties faced by EU citizens wishing to live in Sweden for more than a few weeks to get a personal identification number. The delegation met representatives of the different ministerial services involved in the decisions contested by the petitioners.
22 and 23 May 2017	Madrid (Spain)	Investigate several petitions on babies allegedly stolen at birth in hospitals in the country during and after the Franco dictatorship.
17 to 19 July 2017	Taranto (Italy),	The delegation visited Europe's largest steelworks, a refinery, and the site of the planned extension of the oil jetty. The purpose of the mission was to provide a follow-up to a series of petitions concerning heavy air-, soil, and water pollution.
20 to 22 September 2017	Larnaca (Cyprus)	The purpose of the visit was to provide a follow-up to a series of petitions by local residents concerning environmental and health concerns due to the creation of an industrial port in Larnaca and consequences of its operation to the broader area.
12 to 14 February 2018	Potsdam and the Lusatia Region (Germany)	The delegation investigated two petitions concerning the impact of lignite mining and coal-fired power stations in the Lusatia region on the Sorb (or Wend) community (a Slavic autochthonous population of the region), as well as the pollution of the river Spree and the adjacent waters resulting from the lignite mining industry.
7 and 8 May 2018	Famagusta (Cyprus)	Reassess and update its information on the situation on-site, in particular the sealed-off section of the city called Varosha, in the context of one petition, 10 years after the Committee's previous fact-finding visit in November 2007.
19 to 21 September 2018	Doñana (Spain)	Examine the deterioration of the Doñana Wetland in the National Park of the same name. Several petitions allege the public authorities of not having done enough or of having actively contributed to the situation of the protected area.

17 and 18 December 2018	Valledora (Italy)	Investigate on waste disposal in landfill sites and numerous quarries causing allegedly serious environmental damage.
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1.8. Visits from other institutions

During the 2014-2019 term, the Committee on Petitions welcomed visiting delegations from national parliaments. For instance, on 1 December 2014, PETI hosted a delegation from the Scottish Parliament's petitions committee and on 5 May 2015, PETI hosted a visit by a delegation of the petitions committee of the German Parliament (Bundestag). On 23 June 2015 a delegation from the National Assembly for Wales visited PETI. Where possible petitions from the visiting Member State are put on the meeting agenda, so the visitors can observe how petitions are dealt with at PETI's meetings. For example, during the visit of the Bundestag delegation a number of German petitions regarding taxation, free movement of goods and persons, agriculture and health were discussed. The Bundestag sent also another delegation in October 2018, and German petitions were considered in their presence so that they could also participate in the discussion.

1.9. Public hearings

According to the Rules of Procedure of the EP, committees are permitted to organise a hearing with experts, where this is considered essential to their work on a particular subject. Hearings can also be held jointly by two or more committees, the subject as well as the experts to be invited to a public hearing are decided by the Members of the committee. During the 2014-2019 term, the Committee on Petitions organised several public hearings, both on its own and jointly with other committees:

Date	Hearing
On 17 February 2014	In association with the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and two other committees: <i>Right2Water</i> ¹⁴ .
10 April 2014	In association with the Committee on Legal Affairs: European citizens' initiative <i>One of Us</i> ¹⁵
26 February 2015	Examination in committee of the (unsuccessful) European citizens' initiative <i>End Ecocide in Europe: a citizens' initiative to give the Earth rights</i>
26 February 2015	Jointly with the Committee on Constitutional Affairs: <i>The European Citizens' Initiative and the application of Regulation 211/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011</i>
11 May 2015	Jointly with the committees on Agriculture, Environment and Industry: <i>The European Citizens' Initiative 'Stop Vivisection'</i>
23 June 2015	With national parliaments: <i>The right to petition</i>
15 October 2015	<i>Protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, from the perspective of petitions received.</i>
23 February 2016	<i>Taking Citizen's concerns seriously: broadening the scope of the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights (Article 51).</i>
15 March 2016	Jointly with the Commission, the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, the Committee on Legal Affairs and the Committee on Constitutional Affairs:

¹⁴ first European citizens' initiative

¹⁵ second successfully launched ECI

	<i>Union Citizenship in practice: Our common values, rights and democratic participation.</i>
21 June 2016	<i>Transparency and freedom of information within the EU institutions</i>
11 October 2016	<i>Obstacles to EU citizen's freedom to move and work in the Internal Market</i>
4 May 2017	<i>Fighting against discrimination of EU citizens in the Member States and protecting minorities</i>
11 May 2017	Jointly with the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs and the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs: <i>the Situation and rights of EU citizens in the UK.</i>
22 June 2017	<i>Restoring citizens` confidence and trust in the European project.</i>
29 June 2017	Jointly with the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs: <i>Statelessness.</i>
20 November 2017	In association with the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety: <i>the European Citizens' Initiative: Ban Glyphosate and Protect People and the Environment from Toxic Pesticides.</i>
22 November 2017	<i>Protection of the rights of workers in temporary or precarious employment, based on petitions received.</i>
1 February 2018	Jointly with the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs and the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs: <i>Citizens' rights after Brexit</i>
21 February 2018	Jointly with the Committee on Constitutional Affairs: <i>European Citizens' Initiative - Revision of Regulation</i>
22 March 2018	Jointly with the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety: <i>Impact of endocrine disruptors on public health</i>
9 October 2018	<i>The rights of persons with disabilities</i>
21 March 2019	Jointly with the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety: <i>Climate Change Denial</i>

2. KEY ISSUES

In this section the main areas of activity of the PETI Committee during the term are explored, as determined directly by its committee members and indirectly by the petitions received. Further to examining these during the committee sessions, PETI has a wide range of instruments to address the problems raised by citizens and try to achieve change: the drafting of parliamentary reports, of opinions for other committees, the adoption of oral questions to Commission and Council and of resolutions for plenary, as well as the organisation of hearings, workshops and fact-finding missions in Member States. In the sections below, for each area of activity, the institutional instruments used are detailed and links to relevant documents are provided.

2.1. Annual reports on the activities of the Committee on Petitions

The EP Rules of Procedure foresee that “the committee (on Petitions) shall report to Parliament annually on the outcome of its deliberations and, where appropriate, on the measures taken by the Council or the Commission on petitions referred to them by Parliament”.¹⁶ Such reports allow the PETI committee and the EP as a whole to make the point on citizens’ complaints as expressed through petitions, examine achievements and future challenges and call on EU institutions and Member States to take action in specific fields of concern.

As highlighted in its annual reports, Parliament has always considered petitions as a key element of participatory democracy, being one of the key rights connected to European citizenship. It has also underlined their importance in revealing instances of incorrect transposition and implementation of EU law by Member States. In fact, a number of petitions have led to legislative or political action, EU pilot cases, and sometimes even preliminary rulings or infringement proceedings.

Annual reports on the deliberations of the Committee on Petitions include information on, and trends in, the number of petitions received, their format, status, outcome, country, language, nationality and subject; the web portal; relations with the Commission, Council and Ombudsman; fact-finding visits, public hearings, studies commissioned and other key issues¹⁷

2.2. European Ombudsman: annual reports on its activities and proposal to amend its statute

PETI, as committee “responsible for relations with the European Ombudsman”¹⁸, “shall examine the report submitted by the Ombudsman at the end of each annual session on the

¹⁶ Rule 227 paragraph 7.

¹⁷ See [European Parliament resolution of 21 January 2016 on the activities of the Committee on Petitions 2014 \(2014/2218\(INI\)\)](#), rapporteur Lidia Joanna GERINGER de OEDENBERG; [European Parliament resolution of 15 December 2016 on the activities of the Committee on Petitions 2015 \(2016/2146\(INI\)\)](#), rapporteur Ángela VALLINA; [European Parliament resolution of 14 December 2017 on the deliberations of the Committee on Petitions during the year 2016 \(2017/2222\(INI\)\)](#), rapporteur Notis MARIAS; [European Parliament resolution of 13 December 2018 on the deliberations of the Committee on Petitions during the year 2017 \(2018/2104\(INI\)\)](#), rapporteur Cecilia WIKSTRÖM; [European Parliament resolution of 13 February 2019 on the outcome of the Committee on Petitions’ deliberations during 2018 \(2018/2280\(INI\)\)](#), rapporteur Cecilia WIKSTRÖM.

¹⁸ EP Rules of Procedure, Annex V (XX), <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+RULES-EP+20190325+RESP-PETI+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN&navigationBar=YES>

outcome of his or her inquiries...(it) may submit a motion for resolution to Parliament if it considers that Parliament needs to take a position in respect of any aspect of that report"¹⁹. In application of these rules, PETI and the EP have adopted annual reports on the activities of the European Ombudsman.

Parliament has continuously and strongly supported the work of the Ombudsman in its annual reports²⁰, when examining the Ombudsman annual report and its own-initiative inquiries on Frontex²¹, on legislative discussions in preparatory bodies of the Council of the EU²² and on the appointment of the Secretary General of the Commission²³.

The Committee on Petitions also drafted an *opinion* (PETI rapporteur for opinion: Margarete AUKEN) for the AFCO committee on the report on the revision of the statute of the Ombudsman, which aimed at strengthening the powers and independence of the Ombudsman, and was included in the resolution of 12 February 2019²⁴.

2.3. Fundamental rights, Citizenship, Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, Discrimination

During the 2014-2019 legislative term, PETI received and examined a considerable number of petitions by citizens alleging violations of their fundamental rights or discriminations they feel subjected to, as citizens often turn to PETI for support and protection.

2.3.1 Fundamental Rights

The Committee held on 23 February 2016 a *hearing* entitled *Taking Citizen's concerns seriously: broadening the scope of the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights (Article 51)*. The hearing provided an insight into the effectiveness of the protection granted to citizens under the current fundamental rights architecture in the EU and in the Member States. While PETI traditionally interpreted the scope of application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in a broader way when examining petitions raising alleged fundamental rights violations carried out by Member States, the Commission took a stricter view in the application of the Charter based on its Article 51.²⁵ At the hearing, a *study* addressing this debate was presented, entitled *The*

¹⁹ Rule 220, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+RULES-EP+20190325+RULE-220+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN&navigationBar=YES>

²⁰ See [European Parliament resolution of 15 January 2015 on the annual report on the activities of the European Ombudsman 2013 \(2014/2159\(INI\)\)](#), Jarosław WAŁĘSA; [European Parliament resolution of 25 February 2016 on the annual report on the activities of the European Ombudsman in 2014 \(2015/2231\(INI\)\)](#), Soledad CABEZÓN RUIZ; [European Parliament resolution of 24 November 2016 on the annual report on the activities of the European Ombudsman in 2015 \(2016/2150\(INI\)\)](#); Notis MARIAS; [European Parliament resolution of 16 November 2017 on the annual report on the activities of the European Ombudsman in 2016 \(2017/2126\(INI\)\)](#), Marlene MIZZLI; [European Parliament resolution of 13 December 2018 on the annual report on the activities of the European Ombudsman in 2017 \(2018/2105\(INI\)\)](#), Eleonora EVI.

²¹ [European Parliament resolution of 2 December 2015 on the Special Report of the European Ombudsman in own-initiative inquiry OI/5/2012/BEH-MHZ concerning Frontex](#).

²² [European Parliament resolution of 17 January 2019 on the Ombudsman's strategic inquiry OI/2/2017 on the transparency of legislative discussions in the preparatory bodies of the Council of the EU](#)

²³ [European Parliament resolution of 13 December 2018 on the annual report on the activities of the European Ombudsman in 2017 \(2018/2105\(INI\)\)](#), Eleonora EVI.

²⁴ [European Parliament resolution of 12 February 2019 on a draft regulation of the European Parliament laying down the regulations and general conditions governing the performance of the Ombudsman's duties \(Statute of the European Ombudsman\) and repealing Decision 94/262/ECSC, EC, Euratom \(2018/2080\(INL\) – 2019/0900\(APP\)\)](#).

²⁵ Parliament repeatedly asked to review or remove Article 51 from the Charter of fundamental rights, see European Parliament resolution of 12 February 2019 on the implementation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union in the EU institutional framework (rapporteur Barbara Spinelli, AFCO); European Parliament resolution of 16 February 2017 on possible evolutions of and adjustments to the current institutional set-up of the European Union (rapporteur Guy Verhofstadt, AFCO); resolution of 25 October 2016 with recommendations to the Commission on the establishment of an EU mechanism on

interpretation of Article 51 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights: the dilemma of stricter or broader application of the Charter to national measures.

PETI has produced opinions for the LIBE committee on its annual reports on the situation of fundamental rights in the EU ([opinion](#) on the situation of fundamental rights in the European Union 2013-2014, adopted on 05-05-2015, Soledad CABEZÓN RUIZ; [opinion](#) on the situation of fundamental rights in the European Union in 2015, 14-10-2016, Jude KIRTON-DARLING). It also adopted an [opinion](#) to the AFCO committee on the implementation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union in the EU institutional framework (21-01-2019, Josep-Maria TERRICABRAS).

2.3.2 Migration

The Committee on Petitions addressed issues related to fundamental rights and migration in its European Parliament [resolution](#) of 2 December 2015 on the Special Report of the European Ombudsman in own-initiative inquiry OI/5/2012/BEH-MHZ concerning Frontex, drafted together with LIBE.

PETI also contributed to a LIBE report with an [opinion](#) on the situation in the Mediterranean and the need for a holistic EU approach to migration, (26-10-2015, rapporteur for opinion Marlene MIZZI).

After examining petitions calling for the revision of the Facilitation Directive allowing Member States to criminalise humanitarian aid and calling on the Commission to review the Directive, PETI requested the [2018 update](#) of the study *Fit for Purpose? The Facilitation Directive and the criminalisation of humanitarian assistance to irregular migrants*. The updated study was presented both in PETI when examining the petitions on the same subject and in LIBE on the occasion of a [hearing](#) on the implementation of the Facilitation Directive and humanitarian assistance that took place on 27-09-2018.

2.3.3 The right to petition, Citizenship, Free movement

On 23 June 2015, PETI held a public [hearing](#) with national parliaments on the Right to Petition, which is one of the rights guaranteed by the Treaties to European citizens and residents, during which a [study](#) on the same subject was presented.

European Union Citizenship rights were addressed by the Committee on Petitions during a [hearing](#) on *Union Citizenship in practice: Our common values, rights and democratic participation* that took place on 15 March 2016, organised jointly with the European Commission, the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, the Committee on Legal Affairs and the Committee on Constitutional Affairs. During the hearing, a [study](#) commissioned by the PETI and LIBE committees was presented, which focused on *Obstacles to the right of free movement and residence for EU citizens and their families*.

Following a further [hearing](#) that took place on 11 October 2016 on *Obstacles to EU citizen's freedom to move and work in the Internal Market*, the European Parliament [resolution](#) of 15 March 2017 on obstacles to EU citizens' freedom to move and work in the internal market was adopted in plenary.

PETI also sent a Fact-finding mission to Stockholm (Sweden) on 20 and 21 February 2017 following the examination of several petitions on the difficulties faced by EU citizens in

democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights (rapporteur In't Veld, LIBE); European Parliament resolution of 8 September 2015 on the situation of fundamental rights in the European Union (2013-2014) (rapporteur Ferrara, LIBE).

Sweden to enjoy free movement and residence rights by getting a personal identification number. The delegation met representatives of the different ministerial services involved in the decisions contested by the petitioners.

On 22 June 2017, PETI organised a [hearing](#) on *Restoring citizens' confidence and trust in the European project*. The purpose of the hearing was to examine citizens' attitudes towards the European Project, in the aftermath of the Brexit referendum and other political changes across the Union witnessed over the last year, with the aim of restoring and increasing civic trust in European integration in the long term.

Parliament adopted on 12 December 2017 a [resolution](#) on the EU Citizenship Report 2017: Strengthening Citizens' Rights in a Union of Democratic Change, drafted by PETI (Rapporteur Beatriz BECERRA BASTERRECHEA) with LIBE as associated committee. PETI also adopted an [opinion](#) on the implementation of the Treaty provisions related to EU citizenship (23-11-2018, Notis MARIAS).

The committee examined the issue of the Disenfranchisement of voting rights in the EU and adopted Oral questions to the [Council](#) and the [Commission](#), which were discussed in plenary by MEPs.

PETI furthermore organised a joint [hearing](#) with the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs on *Statelessness* on 29 June 2017. This was followed up in May 2018 with the publication of three studies on the [Naturalization and Citizenship in Latvia and Estonia; the Democratic transition and linguistic minorities in Estonia and Latvia](#) and the [Political and electoral rights of non-citizen residents in Latvia and Estonia: current situation and perspectives](#).²⁶

Citizens often denounced difficulties in making sure that their rights were respected, protected and guaranteed at national level, as well as finding obstacles or denials in receiving redress. A study on [Effective access to justice by citizens](#) was consequently produced to examine the situation and make suggestions.

2.3.4 Discrimination

Following the examination of a number of petitions reporting alleged violations of the citizens' right to equality and non-discrimination and considerable differences of views with the Commission on whether the EU had competence to take action based on the Charter and of the Treaties, PETI decided to request a study on [Discrimination\(s\) as emerging from petitions received](#). The study was presented during a hearing that took place on 4 May 2017 on *Fighting against discrimination of EU citizens in the Member States and protecting minorities*. At the hearing, aspects of discrimination addressed by Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, such as language, membership of a national minority and sexual orientation were examined in order to find ways to address them. Following these debates and the gathering of expertise, PETI decided to draft a resolution and table it in plenary. The [European Parliament resolution on protection and non-discrimination with regard to minorities in the EU Member States](#) was approved on 7 February 2018.

2.4. European Citizens' initiative

The Committee on Petitions has always supported the European Citizens' Initiative as a tool of participatory democracy at EU level that encourages cross-border debate and cooperation.

²⁶ Published in May 20018.

The EP Rules of Procedure state that when an ECI is published, the committee responsible for the subject matter shall organise a public hearing and “*the committee responsible for petitions shall be automatically associated*” since it has the specific responsibility for “*the organisation of public hearings on citizens’ initiatives*”.

In application of this provision, PETI has co-organised a series of hearings on specific ECIs. On 11 May 2015 it has held, together with the committees on Agriculture, Environment and Industry, a [hearing](#) on *The European Citizens’ Initiative ‘Stop Vivisection’*. On 20 November 2017, in association with the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, a [hearing](#) took place on the *European Citizens’ Initiative: Ban Glyphosate and Protect People and the Environment from Toxic Pesticides*. PETI also decided to examine during its committee meeting of 26 February 2015 an unsuccessful European citizens’ initiative entitled *End Ecocide in Europe: a citizens’ initiative to give the Earth rights* and adopted an [opinion on the follow-up to the European Citizens’ Initiative Right2Water \(13-05-2015 Margrete AUKEN\)](#), which was the first ECI ever tabled.

Parliament repeatedly called on for a better implementation of the ECI Regulation and for its revision to support citizens’ participation in EU policy making. Further to a study by the Policy Department entitled [European Citizens’ Initiative – First lessons of implementation](#), on 26 February 2015 PETI organised jointly with the Committee on Constitutional Affairs a [hearing](#) entitled *The European Citizens’ Initiative and the application of Regulation 211/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011* to examine the application of the ECI Regulation and reflect on possible amendments to improve it.

When the Commission published its report of 31 March 2015 on the European Citizens’ Initiative, Parliament expressed its views through the resolution of 28 October 2015 on the ECI ([2014/2257\(INI\)](#)), which contained an [opinion of 01-07-2015 \(Beatriz BECERRA BASTERRECHEA\)](#) by PETI for the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, calling for a revision of the ECI Regulation based also on the proposals made in July 2015 entitled [Towards a revision of the European Citizens Initiative regulation?](#)

Following the Commission proposal to Parliament and the Council aimed at reforming the European Citizens’ Initiative in order to facilitate its organisation, and after having held a PETI-AFCO [hearing](#) on 21 February 2018 on the subject, Parliament adopted a legislative [resolution](#) on 12 March 2019 to which PETI contributed with an [opinion](#) (18-05-2018, Jarosław WAŁĘSA). After years of work to examine the implementation of the ECI Regulation, analysing the problems raised by different stakeholders and looking for solutions, PETI contributed actively to this change of legislation, being associated committee under Rule 54, exclusively responsible for the provisions on the organisation of the public hearing. The PETI rapporteur was part of the negotiation team with the AFCO rapporteur and shadows to find an agreement on the legislative text with the Council. PETI supported the enhancement of the role of the ECI organisers in the process and giving more prominence to ECIs in the EP and managed to have an impact on the final text as approved.

2.5. Children rights

A number of petitions related to children rights have been examined by PETI during the 2014-2019 term, notably in relation to alleged abuse of “adoption without consent” practices by child protection authorities in the UK and in other Member States, as well as alleged discriminations based on nationality by the Jugendamt in Germany.

In order to address the issue of adoption without parental consent in the EU, PETI requested a [study](#) (Adoption without consent²⁷) and held a fact-finding mission to London (UK) on 5 and 6 November 2015 to look into matters relating to the protection of children by meeting with representatives of the competent institutions in the UK. A [Workshop](#) on cross-border Adoptions with the Committee on Legal Affairs on 1 December 2015 was also held, during which briefings were presented.

Having regard of the seriousness and relevance of the matter, in July 2015 PETI decided to set up an informal Working Group on Child Welfare Issues. The mandate of this Working Group was based on four main topics: i) international parental child abduction; ii) Jugendamt services in Germany; iii) adoptions without parental consent in the UK; iv) missing/stolen babies in Spain. A fifth item - social services in the Nordic countries - was added later.

Keeping in mind that the EU's legal competences in the field of child care and protection are limited, the Working Group sought to identify possible systemic flaws in child care in different Member States and tried to find practical and political solutions to the issues raised in petitions. To do this, external experts were invited to the meetings of the WG to share their knowledge and experience in the various issues. The WG's [final report](#), which included a number of recommendations, was adopted at the PETI meeting of 3 May 2017.

With the aim of influencing the Commission review of the Brussels IIa Regulation and allowing the EP to make its views known, JURI and PETI decided to table joint Oral Questions to the [Council](#) and the [Commission](#) on protecting the best interest of the child (across borders) in Europe. The plenary discussion was followed by the adoption of the European Parliament [resolution](#) of 28 April 2016 on safeguarding the best interests of the child across the EU on the basis of petitions addressed to the European Parliament ([2016/2575\(RSP\)](#)). PETI also adopted an [opinion](#) on cross-border aspects of adoptions (21-04-2016, Notis MARIAS).

Once the Commission issued its proposal for a review of the Brussels II Regulation, PETI adopted its [opinion](#) to the JURI committee on the proposal for a Council regulation on jurisdiction, the recognition and enforcement of decisions in matrimonial matters and the matters of parental responsibility, and on international child abduction (recast) (15-05-2017, Soledad CABEZÓN RUIZ).

A delegation to Madrid (Spain) was sent by PETI few days later, on 22 and 23 May 2017, to investigate several petitions on babies allegedly stolen at birth in hospitals in the country during and after the Franco dictatorship.

Oral questions on the role of the German Youth Welfare Office (Jugendamt) in cross-border family disputes were tabled in plenary by PETI to the [Council](#) and the [Commission](#), leading to the adoption of the European Parliament [resolution](#) of 29 November 2018 on the role of the German Youth Welfare Office (Jugendamt) in cross-border family disputes ([2018/2856\(RSP\)](#)).

2.6. The environment

Environmental issues are one of the main areas of concern for petitioners. This led the PETI committee to examine a very wide range of aspects related to it. For instance, in 2014 PETI examined petitions on exploratory drilling for oil off Fuerteventura and Lanzarote (Canary Islands), and in 2015 petitions on night flights at European airports and their serious consequences for those living nearby – in the areas of the Cologne-Bonn, Frankfurt, Siena,

²⁷ Adoption without consent - update 2016

Brussels, Charles de Gaulle-Roissy, Madrid Barajas, Bergamo and Ciampino (Rome) airports - and on the conservation of the wolf in Saxony (Germany), Asturias (Spain), and Sweden. Other sub-areas of concern are illustrated below.

2.6.1 Water management

From 8 to 10 February 2016, PETI carried out a fact-finding visit to Spain to meet with citizens who had submitted petitions on the management of river basins in Spain, in particular the river basins of the Ebro and the Tajo. The PETI delegation met also with national and regional authorities to obtain a better insight into various aspects of alleged breaches of EU law, especially of the Water Framework Directive (Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy). PETI subsequently drafted a [mission report](#) on its findings and made a number of recommendations stressing *i.a.* the importance of consistency between each individual Environmental Impact Assessment in different parts of the river with the Strategic Environmental Assessment over the RBMPs for each river. A study on the subject, entitled [River basins and flood management](#) was published by the Policy Department in July 2016.

2.6.2 Energy

Following the receipt over several years of a significant number of petitions on the changing legal framework for solar energy in some Member States, PETI decided to request a study on the issue. In June 2016 a [study](#) on *Solar energy policy in the EU and the Member States, from the perspective of the petitions received* was published and presented during a PETI meeting together with the related petitions. The study assessed the petitions received in relation to solar energy policies in Member States and the compatibility of these policies with EU law and policies. It concluded that policies to support renewable energy should be stable and avoid frequent or retro-active changes. Also, the regulated extension of self-consumption should be accompanied by measures to ensure that “prosumers” contribute to financing grid costs and other costs and the policies for renewables should be stable and predictable. On 3 October 2017, PETI also adopted an [opinion](#) 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) (03-10-2017, Eleonora EVI) for the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy.

During the 2014-2019 term, PETI considered also a number of petitions concerning nuclear energy. These petitions raised serious concerns with respect to the safety of, in particular, nuclear power plants and expressed fears of transboundary impacts. The petitions also pointed at substantial differences between liability schemes in the Member States and therefore pleaded for a European approach. For its examination of the petitions, PETI used the February 2019 [study](#) entitled *Cross-border nuclear cooperation and safety in the European Union*.

2.6.3 Pollution

Petitions on pollution are almost a fixed item on PETI Committee meeting agendas. For instance, in 2017 petitions on environmental issues were discussed in many committee meetings, very often in the presence of the petitioner. Some of the main issues concerned the

impact of mining activities on the environment, waste management, and air and water pollution.

In the course of the examination of pollution-related petitions from Italy, PETI sent a delegation on a fact-finding visit to Taranto, Italy, from 17 to 19 July 2017. Members visited Europe's largest steelworks, ILVA, a refinery and the site of the planned extension of the oil jetty. The purpose of the mission was to provide a follow-up to a series of petitions concerning long-standing heavy air, soil, and water pollution. Background information for the visit was published in the form of briefings by the Policy Department on Environmental topics in Taranto: ILVA plant and ENI refinery, [one](#) of October 2016 and [another](#) of July 2017.

Other fact-finding visits of the PETI Committee which concerned pollution are listed in the table below. The reports of all fact-finding visits made by PETI during the 2014-2019 term can be [found here](#).

20 to 22 September 2017	Larnaca (Cyprus)	The purpose of the visit was to provide a follow-up to a series of petitions by local residents concerning environmental and health concerns due to the creation of an industrial port in Larnaca and consequences of its operation to the broader area.
12 to 14 February 2018	Potsdam and the Lusatia Region (Germany).	The PETI delegation investigated two petitions concerning the impact of lignite mining and coal-fired power stations in the Lusatia region on the Sorb (or Wend) community (a Slavic autochthonous population of the region), as well as the pollution of the river Spree and the adjacent waters resulting from the lignite mining industry.
19 to 21 September 2018	Doñana (Spain)	This visit was intended to examine the deterioration of the Doñana Wetland in the National Park of the same name. Several petitions allege the public authorities of not having done enough or of having actively contributed to the situation of the protected area.
17 and 18 December 2018	Valledora (Italy)	In this visit, the PETI delegation investigated waste disposal in landfill sites and numerous quarries. In petitions it had been alleged that this way of waste disposal had caused serious environmental damage.

2.6.4 Dangerous substances

In 2016, PETI requested a study on Lindane, an insecticide. Lindane was extensively produced in the EU until the 1990s and used as a broad-spectrum insecticide until 2008. The use and production of Lindane is now banned in most countries around the world. However, its persistence, bio-accumulative and toxic properties, spillages from former production sites and the illegal dumping of HCH-waste, have given rise to serious concerns as understanding grows about the ability of HCH-polluted-spots to widely disperse HCH pollution into surface and groundwater. The [study Lindane in the EU](#) was published in November 2016 and presented at the same time of the discussion of petitions on the matter.

On 20 November 2017, PETI in association with the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development and the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, organised a [hearing](#) which focussed on the European Citizens' Initiative on (yet another dangerous substance): Ban Glyphosate and Protect People and the Environment from Toxic Pesticides. This ECI called on the European Commission to propose to Member States i) a ban on glyphosate exposure, which has been linked to cancer in humans and has led to degradation of ecosystems; ii) a reform of the pesticide approval procedure; and iii) EU-wide mandatory reduction targets for the use of pesticides. Although the European Commission has taken action on this ECI, the discussion on the use of glyphosate in the EU is far from over.

On 22 March 2018 PETI organised jointly with the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety a [hearing](#) on the *Impact of endocrine disruptors on public health*. The public hearing addressed the question of whether the EU approach to regulating endocrine disruptors is appropriate and whether changes are needed in the future. It also assessed the state of scientific knowledge on the effects of endocrine disruptors on the environment and human health. Connected with this hearing the Policy Department published the [study](#) *Endocrine disruptors: from Scientific Evidence to Human Health Protection*.

2.6.5 Nature protection and environmental impact assessment

Apart from fact-finding visits to protected nature areas in the EU (see list of fact-finding visits) PETI Chair Cecilia Wikström, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions, and ENVI Chair Adina-loana Vălean, on behalf of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, tabled the Oral Questions to the [Commission](#) and to the [Council](#) on Concerns about Natura 2000 protected areas based on petitions received.

In November 2018 at an Interparliamentary Committee Meeting in cooperation with the European Network of Ombudsmen and organised by the PETI and JURI Committees, the subject of the transposition and implementation of Directive 2014/52/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (the EIA Directive) was discussed. Members of the EP and national parliaments exchanged views on this subject after a presentation of a [briefing](#) entitled: *Transposition and implementation of the 2014 Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment*.

2.6.6 Waste management

Waste management is a recurring theme in PETI meetings and many petitions on waste management issues in various EU Member States have been received. Waste management was also among the subjects of a number of the above-mentioned PETI fact-finding visits. On 21 March 2019 PETI adopted a short motion for a [resolution](#) on waste management, which was adopted in plenary on 4 April 2019. In March 2018, the Policy Department had published a *study* on Waste management in Europe: main problems identified in EU Petitions and best practices (updated version).

2.6.7 Air quality

Triggered by a number of petitions on air quality and traffic problems in urban areas in the EU, PETI decided to commission a study on these issues. In September 2018, the Policy Department published a [study](#): *Air quality and urban traffic in EU: best practices and possible solutions*. This study was presented at PETI's October 2018 meeting. It aims to provide deeper insights into air quality problems of cities and regions, which are often caused by traffic. Five cities and regions are analysed in more detail. Best practice examples and policy options for transport, domestic heating and construction work, as well as integrated approaches are provided.

2.6.8 Other environmental issues

In June 2016, at the PETI Committee's request, the Policy Department published a [briefing](#) entitled *The EU and the Aarhus Convention: Access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters*. In this briefing the 1998 Aarhus Convention, its background and context was described, as well as some of its shortcomings and areas of concern from the perspective of the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee. The briefing was presented on the occasion of the 21 June 2016 [hearing](#) on *Transparency and freedom of information within the EU institutions*.

On 21 March 2019, the PETI and ENVI Committees held a joint [Public Hearing on "Climate Change Denial"](#). The aim of the hearing was to explore the topic of climate change denial from different perspectives and to examine the communication techniques used in politics or by private companies and other actors in society to mislead the public on the negative impact of certain industrial activities or policies on the climate.

2.7. Animal welfare

Discussions on petitions underlining the fact that the systematic docking of piglets' tails is contrary to EU law led to the decision to ask the Policy Department to conduct a *study* on the situation in EU Member States, which was presented in November 2014. Parliament called the Commission to ensure that the relevant Directive is properly applied in Member States. Further discussions took place in January 2018.

On 23 March 2017, the [study](#) *Animal welfare in the European Union* was presented in committee, followed by a series of petitions related to animal welfare. The committee called on the Commission to review its Animal framework strategy to ensure that gaps are filled in and high standards on animal welfare are guaranteed.

Petitions related to ritual slaughter of animals were also discussed during the term, as well as on stray dogs, cats and wolves. A [study](#) on *Large carnivore management plans of protection: Best practices in EU Member States* was published in February 2018. In the same year, PETI adopted an [opinion](#) on the implementation report as regards Regulation 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport within and outside the EU (23-10-2018, Ángela VALLINA).

2.8. Disability

The Committee on Petitions plays a "protection role" to ensure EU compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities within the policymaking and legislative actions at EU-level. Within this responsibility, the committee dealt during the 2014-2019 term with a number of petitions on disability issues that reveal the difficulties encountered by persons with disabilities and the fact that they do not enjoy the fundamental freedoms and rights laid out in the UN Convention, such as access to public transport and to the built environment, use of sign languages, financing or access to education and discrimination, in particular in employment.

Once a year PETI organises a workshop or a hearing on the protection role of the Committee on Petitions in the context of the implementation of the UNCRPD, in which the Ombudsman, FRA, the Commission, European Disability Forum, NGOs and experts actively

participate. These events are organised to take stock of the past year and discuss issues with regard to the implementation of the UNCRPD.

Following the 2014 decision of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs to give the Committee on Petitions a role in its framework meetings on Parliament's participation in the UN Convention, PETI representatives (Ms Rosa ESTARÀS and Ms Soledad CABEZÓN RUIZ) were appointed in January 2015 in the structures of the UN Convention implementing the rights of people with disabilities²⁸.

On 15 October 2015, the [hearing](#) on *protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, from the perspective of petitions received* took place, with the presentation of the *study The protection role of the Committee on Petitions in the context of the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

In 2016 the European Parliament adopted a [resolution](#) of 3 February 2016 on the ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty, based on petitions received, notably Petition 924/2011 ([2016/2542\(RSP\)](#)) calling on the Council and the Member States to accelerate the ratification process. The Committee on Petitions welcomed that an agreement on the Commission's legislative proposal on the implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty was found by Parliament and Council.

PETI adopted its [opinion](#) on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities with special regard to the Concluding Observations of the UN CRPD Committee (27-04-2016, Rosa ESTARÀS FERRAGUT). It then commissioned to the Policy Department a [study](#) on *European Structural and Investment Funds and People with Disabilities: Focus on the Situation in Slovakia*, in preparation of the fact-finding mission to Slovakia that took place on 22 and 23 September 2016²⁹, and a [study](#) on *The European Structural and Investment Funds and People with Disabilities in the European Union*. An update of the [study](#) on *The protection role of the Committee on Petitions in the context of the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - 2016 Update* and a [study](#) on *The Marrakesh Treaty* were also commissioned and presented on 9 November 2016 during a [workshop](#) on *The Rights of Persons with disabilities as illustrated in petitions*, organised by the Policy Department.

PETI drafted opinions to important pieces of legislation in 2017, one on accessibility³⁰ and two on copyright and the Marrakesh Treaty.³¹ In the autumn, the [opinion](#) on the implementation of the European Disability Strategy (11-09-2017, Cecilia WIKSTRÖM) was adopted, while on 12 October 2017 PETI held a [Workshop](#) on *The Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, during which the studies on *Inclusive education for learners with disabilities* and the 2017 [update](#) of the study on *The protection role of the Committee on Petitions in the context of the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* were presented.

²⁸ They also attended the consideration of the initial EU report by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Geneva, Switzerland on 27-28 August 2015.

²⁹ See further information on the visit in the table in the section on Fact finding visits.

³⁰ [Opinion on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States as regards the accessibility requirements for products and services \(06-02-2017, Kostadinka KUNEVA\)](#). See also the in-depth analysis [The European Accessibility Act](#).

³¹ opinions [on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the cross-border exchange between the Union and third countries of accessible format copies of certain works and other subject-matter protected by copyright and related rights for the benefit of persons who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled \(27-01-2017, Margrete AUKEN\)](#) and [on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on certain permitted uses of works and other subject-matter protected by copyright and related rights for the benefit of persons who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled and amending Directive 2001/29/EC on the harmonisation of certain aspects of copyright and related rights in the information society \(27-01-2017, Rosa ESTARÀS FERRAGUT\)](#).

In 2018 PETI tabled an Oral Question to the [Commission](#) in plenary on the Participation of persons with disabilities in the European elections, which led to a [debate](#) on 5 July 2018 and on 9 October 2018, the committee held its [hearing](#) on *The rights of persons with disabilities*. The [2018 update](#) of the study on the protection role of the Committee on Petitions in the context of the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was presented and two panels discussed the topics of legal capacity of persons with disabilities and their right to vote, and women and disabilities.

2.9. Mortgage legislation and risky financial instruments

In April 2015 a number of petitions by citizens who had lost all or part of their savings through preferred shares and by civil society organisations protesting against evictions, unfair terms in mortgage contracts and lack of consumer protection were discussed in the Committee on Petitions. MEPs decided to table an [oral question](#) on mortgage legislation and risky financial instruments in Spain to bring this debate to the European Parliament plenary to discuss it with the Commission. Following the debate, the European Parliament [resolution](#) of 8 October 2015 on mortgage legislation and risky financial instruments in Spain (based on petitions received) ([2015/2740\(RSP\)](#)) was adopted.

2.10. Social policies and employment

In order to examine the level of protection of the rights of workers in temporary or precarious employment conditions and gather information on a series of petitions signalling concerns on this matter, on 22 November 2017 the Committee on Petitions organised a [hearing](#) aimed at clarifying the situation of different employment types and categories of workers. At the hearing, the [study](#) *Temporary contracts, precarious employment, employees' fundamental rights and EU employment law* was presented to participants. Members subsequently decided to adopt an [oral question](#) for plenary, which led to the adoption of the European Parliament [resolution](#) of 31 May 2018 on Responding to petitions on tackling precariousness and the abusive use of fixed-term contracts ([2018/2600\(RSP\)](#)).

PETI also adopted an [opinion](#) to EMPL on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems and Regulation (EC) No 987/2009 laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 (30-04-2018, Soledad CABEZÓN RUIZ).

2.11. Brexit

In 2016 the Committee on Petitions received a large number of petitions concerning Brexit (147 petitions between January 2016 and June 2017, 120 petitions in 2016) tabled by EU citizens in the UK, UK citizens in the EU and UK citizens in their country, expressing concerns related to the impact of Brexit on the implementation of EU citizenship rights. The Committee on Petitions supported on the occasion of the examination of the petitions the commitment of the Commission to fully guarantee the rights of the concerned EU citizens during the Brexit negotiations and after the end of the European Union membership of the United Kingdom.

The Committee on Petitions discussed the impact of Brexit on Citizens' Rights at several occasions in 2017. The Committee participated in the joint public [hearing](#) on 11 May 2017, with the Committees on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs and on Employment and Social Affairs on *The Situation and rights of EU citizens in the UK*. The hearing focused on EU citizenship rights, and notably the right to free movement and access to the labour market, after UK's withdrawal from the European Union.

In the PETI meeting of 21 June 2017, a [study](#) on *The impact of Brexit in relation to the right to petition and on the competences, responsibilities and activities of the Committee on Petitions* was presented together with a [study](#) on the *First phase priorities for the Brexit negotiations: Citizens' rights*, and petitions discussed. PETI also contributed to various EP resolutions on Brexit.

The Committee on Petitions, together with the Committees on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs and on Employment and Social Affairs, held a further [hearing](#) on 1 February 2018 on *Citizens' rights after Brexit*, aimed at taking stock of the situation and of the impact on citizens' rights after the announcement by the European Council in December 2017 that sufficient progress had been achieved in the negotiations for the withdrawal agreement.

2.12. Better law-making and application of EU law

Better law-making and improving the application of the EU law are closely followed by the PETI committee to ensure that issues raised in petitions in relation to the application of EU law are addressed and resolved, also on the basis of good cooperation between institutions to enhance the quality of EU legislation.

PETI routinely adopted opinions addressed to the JURI committee in relation to the Commission reports on the application of EU law³² and on the interpretation and implementation of the inter-institutional agreement on Better Law-Making ([opinion](#) of 25-01-2017, Notis MARIAS)

A [study](#) on *Monitoring the implementation of EU law: tools and challenges* was also published in November 2017, examining the instruments at EU disposal to ensure better implementation. The Briefings of November 2018, [one](#) on The role of ombudsmen and petitions committees in detecting breaches of EU law and the [other](#) on Empowering Parliaments and enforcing citizens' rights in the implementation and application, were presented at the Interparliamentary Committee Meeting held on 27 November 2018 organised by the Committees on Legal Affairs and on Petitions.

2.13. Openness, transparency, access to documents, conflicts of interest

Openness, transparency and access to documents are important instruments to allow citizens to understand how decisions are taken. They are a pillar of democracy, as they allow citizens to control, exert pressure and judge those in power and determine responsibilities, including on the occasion of elections. The EP has routinely called for a the revision of Regulation 1049/2001 on access to documents so to grant wider rights of access to information for

³² [OPINION on the 30th and 31st Annual Reports on monitoring the application of EU Law \(2012 - 2013\), 21-05-2015 Rosa ESTARÁS FERRAGUT; OPINION on monitoring the application of Union Law: 2014 Annual Report, 22-04-2016, Cecilia WIKSTRÖM; OPINION on monitoring the application of Union law: 2015 Annual Report, 23-03-2017, Cecilia WIKSTRÖM; OPINION on monitoring the application of EU law 2016, 23-03-2018, Cecilia WIKSTRÖM.](#)

citizens, a revision currently blocked. PETI also repeatedly called on the Commission to provide to Members more information on “pilots”, the pre-infringement phase where the Commission and a Member State exchange information on a suspected violation of EU law.

In order to explore these challenges and push for progress, on 21 June 2016 a [hearing](#) on *Transparency and freedom of information within the EU institutions* took place. During the hearing, the [study](#) *Openness, transparency and the right of access to documents in the EU* was presented. It examines the general framework and recent jurisprudential advancements, as well as access to documents and information related to pilots. The issue of access to environmental information was also addressed through the presentation of the [Briefing](#) on *The EU and the Aarhus Convention: access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters* (see section 2.6.8).

The PETI and AFCO committees jointly examined the results of the Ombudsman’s strategic inquiry OI/2/2017 on the transparency of legislative discussions in the preparatory bodies of the Council of the EU and fully supported the Ombudsman in calling on the Council to improve access to its documents through the EP plenary [resolution](#) of 17 January 2019.

On 2 April 2019, the Committee on Petitions hosted a [workshop](#) on *Conflicts of interest in the EU institutions*, organized by the Policy Department on Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs. A [briefing](#) was made available, examining the achievements reached during this parliamentary term in relation to the conflicts of interests in the EU institutions and agencies, as well integrity, accountability, transparency, code of conducts and revolving doors, while also discussing challenges for the future. Preliminary findings on a study on *Conflict of Interest and EU agencies* were presented, while the study will be published in the autumn of 2019.

2.14. International agreements

A considerable number of petitions were tabled by citizens on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which was negotiated between the EU and the US between 2013 and 2016 without success. PETI was involved in determining the position of the EP on the matter through its [opinion](#) on the Recommendations to the European Commission on the negotiations (30-04-2015, Jarosław WAŁĘSA) destined to the Committee on International Trade. Petitions were also tabled on CETA (Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement).

The US Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) was examined by PETI - including on the basis of a [study](#) of May 2018 on *FATCA legislation and its application at international and EU level* - and was raised in plenary through oral questions to the [Commission](#) and to the [Council](#). On this basis, Parliament adopted a [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\(RSP\)](#)).

2.15. Other issues

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety consulted PETI on the EU options for improving access to medicines, which led to the adoption of an [opinion \(15-11-2016 Eleonora EVI\)](#). PETI had also held a [workshop](#) on the impact of the economic crisis on access to health and medicines on 28 January 2016.

To support PETI in its analysis of petitions raising issues with the compatibility of the Italian regime of beach concessions with Directive 2006/123/EC in a comparative perspective, a [study](#) on the matter was published in November 2017.

The issue of Improving language learning and the mutual recognition of language competences in the EU was examined by PETI and brought to plenary through oral questions to the [Commission](#) and to the [Council](#) in 2018.

PETI contributed with an [opinion](#) to the JURI report 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 (21-02-2019, Cecilia WIKSTRÖM).

Consumers' rights and protection were addressed by PETI during the term by examining petitions on the quality differences in consumer products in the EU, including through the [study](#) published in December 2018 on *Food labelling for consumers: EU law, regulation and policy options*.

CONCLUSIONS: CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

The above overview of the activities of the PETI committee and the comparison across different parliamentary terms highlights the major achievements of the 2014-2019 parliamentary term. Such achievements need to be further developed during the current legislature. The webportal could be further improved to ease the feeding work by the PETI Secretariat. The same could be done with e.petitions, the internal database of petitions, which might need to be modernised. The creation of Working Groups could further help the committee's work in areas where a high number of petitions is received, as well as the wider use of own-initiative reports. The positive relationship and collaboration with the Policy Department and EPRS could be further strengthened, so to assist MEPs in basing their decisions on in-depth and independent expertise, data and information. The protection role of the PETI committee on the rights of persons with disabilities is an important institutional responsibility given to the committee in the EU framework: PETI could further implement suggestions made in the studies on this matter (see the [study](#) *The protection role of the Committee on Petitions in the context of the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* and its annual updates).

Some issues could be further explored, including through dedicated researches that could be provided by the Policy Department, for instance on the trends in relation to petitions, including on the basis of the statistical data collected by the EP, so to explore the underlying trends and dynamics. The issue of how to promote the right of petitioning the European Parliament and how to raise citizens' awareness on such right, as well as to support them in knocking at the right door to get redress, remains extremely relevant. Also, it might be useful to explore (institutional, legal, political, administrative, etc) ways for PETI and the EP to maximise the impact of petitions so to achieve real change in citizens' lives. The current and most important impact of PETI is that of mobilising the EP, other institutions and Member States to address citizens' concerns and to achieve change, on "orphan" or "dormant" issues. The challenge is that of obtaining more commitment and action from the Commission, the Council, the Member States, the Ombudsman, as well as from other EP committees and services, through the most appropriate means (which include pressure, but also teaming up). It will be also important during the new term to screen the impact of petitions, notably when they effectively achieve the intended results, so to make it possible to identify effective strategies and PETI achievements.

The main challenge of PETI for the five years to come is – like in previous years - always the same one: how to achieve its original, existential and continuing mandate of democratic instrument creating a bridge between EU citizens and EU institutions, for their mutual benefit and to bring real change in citizens' lives and in that of the EU. Not an easy task, but surely inspiring.

ANNEX I

	2014-19	2009-14
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1. EP 2014-2019 parliamentary term

1. 1. Reports drafted by PETI and adopted in plenary (13):

European Parliament resolution of 15 January 2015 on the annual report on the activities of the European Ombudsman 2013 (2014/2159(INI))	REPORT on the annual report on the activities of the European Ombudsman 2013 09-12-2014, A8-0058/2014 PE 539.677v05-00, Jarosław WAŁĘSA
European Parliament resolution of 2 December 2015 on the Special Report of the European Ombudsman in own-initiative inquiry OI/5/2012/BEH-MHZ concerning Frontex (2014/2215(INI))	REPORT on the Special Report of the European Ombudsman in own-initiative inquiry OI/5/2012/BEH-MHZ concerning Frontex 26-11-2015, A8-0343/2015 PE 569.466v02-00, with LIBE: Ska KELLER, Roberta METSOLA
European Parliament resolution of 21 January 2016 on the activities of the Committee on Petitions 2014 (2014/2218(INI))	REPORT on the activities of the Committee on Petitions 2014 10-12-2015, A8-0361/2015, PE 544.272v03-00 Lidia Joanna GERINGER de OEDENBERG
European Parliament resolution of 25 February 2016 on the annual report on the activities of the European Ombudsman in 2014 (2015/2231(INI))	REPORT on the annual report on the activities of the European Ombudsman in 2014 02-02-2016, A8-0020/2016 PE 567.774v03-00 Soledad CABEZÓN RUIZ
European Parliament resolution of 24 November 2016 on the annual report on the activities of the European Ombudsman in 2015 (2016/2150(INI))	REPORT on the annual report on the activities of the European Ombudsman in 2015 15.11.2016, A8-0331/2016 PE 587.504v02-00 Notis MARIAS
European Parliament resolution of 15 December 2016 on the activities of the Committee on Petitions 2015 (2016/2146(INI))	REPORT on the activities of the Committee on Petitions 2015 02-12-2016, A8-0366/2016, PE 585.817v04-00 Ángela VALLINA
European Parliament resolution of 16 November 2017 on the annual report on the activities of the European Ombudsman in 2016 (2017/2126(INI))	REPORT on the annual report on the activities of the European Ombudsman in 2016 23-10-2017, A8-0328/2017 PE 604.708v03-00 Marlene MIZZI
European Parliament resolution of 14 December 2017 on the deliberations of the Committee on Petitions during the year 2016 (2017/2222(INI))	REPORT under Rule 216 (7) on the deliberations of the Committee on Petitions during the year 2016 30-11-2017, A8-0387/2017, PE 610.643v03-00 Notis MARIAS
European Parliament resolution of 12 December 2017 on the EU Citizenship Report 2017: Strengthening Citizens' Rights in a Union of Democratic Change (2017/2069(INI))	REPORT on the EU Citizenship Report 2017: Strengthening Citizens' Rights in a Union of Democratic Change 30-11-2017, A8-0385/2017, PE 606.039v03-00

	Beatriz BECERRA BASTERRECHEA
European Parliament resolution of 13 December 2018 on the deliberations of the Committee on Petitions during the year 2017 (2018/2104(INI))	REPORT on the deliberations of the Committee on Petitions during the year 2017 27-11-2018, A8-0404/2018, PE 623.694v02-00 Cecilia WIKSTRÖM
European Parliament resolution of 13 December 2018 on the annual report on the activities of the European Ombudsman in 2017 (2018/2105(INI))	REPORT on the annual report on the activities of the European Ombudsman in 2017 28-11-2018 A8-0411/2018 PE 625.381v02-00 Eleonora EVI
European Parliament resolution of 17 January 2019 on the Ombudsman's strategic inquiry OI/2/2017 on the transparency of legislative discussions in the preparatory bodies of the Council of the EU (2018/2096(INI))	REPORT on the Ombudsman's strategic inquiry OI/2/2017 on the transparency of legislative discussions in the preparatory bodies of the Council of the EU 04-12-2018, A8-0420/2018, PE 623.956v04-00 with AFCO: Jo LEINEN, Yana TOOM
European Parliament resolution of 13 February 2019 on the outcome of the Committee on Petitions' deliberations during 2018 (2018/2280(INI))	REPORT on the outcome of the Committee on Petitions' deliberations during 2018 24-01-2019 A8-0024/2019 PE 630.552v03-00 Cecilia WIKSTRÖM

1.2. Opinions (28)

OPINION 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, 21-02-2019, Cecilia WIKSTRÖM
OPINION on the implementation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union in the EU institutional framework 21-01-2019, Josep-Maria TERRICABRAS
OPINION on the proposal for amending Parliament's Decision 94/262/ECSC, EC, Euratom of 9 March 1994 on the regulations and general conditions governing the performance of the Ombudsman's duties 27-11-2018 Margrete AUKEN
OPINION on implementation of the Treaty provisions related to EU citizenship 23-11-2018, Notis MARIAS
OPINION on the implementation report as regards Regulation 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport within and outside the EU 23-10-2018, Ángela VALLINA
OPINION on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European citizens' initiative 18-05-2018, Jarosław WAŁĘSA
OPINION on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems and Regulation (EC) No 987/2009 laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 30-04-2018, Soledad CABEZÓN RUIZ
OPINION on monitoring the application of EU law 2016 23-03-2018, Cecilia WIKSTRÖM
OPINION 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) 03-10-2017, Eleonora EVI
OPINION on the revision of Regulation (EU) 211/2011 on the citizens' initiative 21-09-2017, Jarosław WAŁĘSA
OPINION on implementation of the European Disability Strategy 11-09-2017, Cecilia WIKSTRÖM
OPINION on the proposal for a Council regulation on jurisdiction, the recognition and enforcement of decisions in matrimonial matters and the matters of parental responsibility, and on international child abduction (recast) 15-05-2017, Soledad CABEZÓN RUIZ

OPINION on monitoring the application of Union law: 2015 Annual Report 23-03-2017, Cecilia WIKSTRÖM
OPINION on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States as regards the accessibility requirements for products and services 06-02-2017, Kostadinka KUNEVA
OPINION on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the cross-border exchange between the Union and third countries of accessible format copies of certain works and other subject-matter protected by copyright and related rights for the benefit of persons who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled 27-01-2017, Margrete AUKEN
OPINION on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on certain permitted uses of works and other subject-matter protected by copyright and related rights for the benefit of persons who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled and amending Directive 2001/29/EC on the harmonisation of certain aspects of copyright and related rights in the information society 27-01-2017, Rosa ESTARÀS FERRAGUT
OPINION on the interpretation and implementation of the interinstitutional agreement on Better Law-Making 25-01-2017, Notis MARIAS
OPINION on the EU options for improving access to medicines 15-11-2016 Eleonora EVI
OPINION on the situation of fundamental rights in the European Union in 2015 14-10-2016, Jude KIRTON-DARLING
OPINION on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities with special regard to the Concluding Observations of the UN CRPD Committee 27-04-2016, Rosa ESTARÀS FERRAGUT
OPINION on monitoring the application of Union Law: 2014 Annual Report 22-04-2016, Cecilia WIKSTRÖM
OPINION on cross-border aspects of adoptions 21-04-2016, Notis MARIAS
OPINION on the situation in the Mediterranean and the need for a holistic EU approach to migration 26-10-2015, Marlene MIZZI
OPINION on the European Citizens' Initiative 01-07-2015, Beatriz BECERRA BASTERRECHEA
OPINION on the 30th and 31st Annual Reports on monitoring the application of EU Law (2012 - 2013) 21-05-2015 Rosa ESTARÀS FERRAGUT
OPINION on the follow-up to the European Citizens' Initiative Right2Water 13-05-2015 Margrete AUKEN
OPINION on the situation of fundamental rights in the European Union (2013-2014) 05-05-2015, Soledad CABEZÓN RUIZ
OPINION on Recommendations to the European Commission on the negotiations for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) 30-04-2015, Jarosław WAŁĘSA

1.3. Questions for Oral Answer (Rule 128 RoP) and resolutions adopted on this basis (15; 9)

Topic	Question for Oral Answer	Follow up resolution
Mortgage legislation and risky financial instruments in the EU: the case of Spain	16-07-2015, O-000088/2015, to the Commission, Cecilia Wikström, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions	European Parliament resolution of 8 October 2015 on mortgage legislation and risky financial instruments in Spain (based on petitions received) (2015/2740(RSP))
Protecting the best interest of the child (across borders) in Europe	15-02-2016, O-000027/2016, to the Council, Pavel Svoboda, on behalf	European Parliament resolution of 28 April 2016

	of the Committee on Legal Affairs; Cecilia Wikström, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions	on safeguarding the best interests of the child across the EU on the basis of petitions addressed to the European Parliament (2016/2575(RSP))
Protecting the best interest of the child (across borders) in Europe	15-02-2016, O-000028/2016, to the Commission Pavel Svoboda, on behalf of the Committee on Legal Affairs; Cecilia Wikström, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions	
	Rule 216(2)	European Parliament resolution of 15 March 2017 on obstacles to EU citizens' freedom to move and work in the internal market (2016/3042(RSP))
	Rule 216(2)	European Parliament resolution of 3 February 2016 on the ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty, based on petitions received, notably Petition 924/2011 (2016/2542(RSP)).
	Rule 216(2)	European Parliament resolution of 7 February 2018 on protection and non-discrimination with regard to minorities in the EU Member States (2017/2937(RSP))
Participation of persons with disabilities in the European elections	21-03-2018, O-000033/2018, to the Commission Cecilia Wikström, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions	
The adverse effects of FATCA on EU citizens and in particular 'accidental Americans'	17-05-2018, O-000052/2018, to the Council Cecilia Wikström, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions	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'
The adverse effects of FATCA on EU citizens and in particular 'accidental Americans'	17-05-2018, O-000053/2018, to the Commission Cecilia Wikström, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions	European Parliament resolution of 31 May 2018 on Responding to petitions on tackling precariousness and the abusive use of fixed-term contracts (2018/2646(RSP))
Responding to petitions on tackling precariousness and the abusive use of fixed-term contracts	17-05-2018, O-000054/2018, to the Commission Cecilia Wikström, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions	
Improving language learning and the mutual recognition of language competences in the EU	17-05-2018, O-000055/2018, to the Council Cecilia Wikström, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions	
Improving language learning and the mutual recognition of language competences in the EU	17-05-2018, O-000056/2018, to the Commission Cecilia Wikström, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions	
Disenfranchisement of voting rights in the EU	21-06-2018, O-000069/2018, to the Council	

	Cecilia Wikström, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions	
Disenfranchisement of voting rights in the EU	21-06-2018, O-000070/2018, to the Commission Cecilia Wikström, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions	
Role of the German Youth Welfare Office (Jugendamt) in cross-border family disputes	27-09-2018, O-000105/2018, to the Council Cecilia Wikström, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions	European Parliament resolution of 29 November 2018 on the role of the German Youth Welfare Office (Jugendamt) in cross-border family disputes (2018/2856(RSP))
Role of the German Youth Welfare Office (Jugendamt) in cross-border family disputes	27-09-2018, O-000106/2018, to the Commission Cecilia Wikström, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions	
Concerns about Natura 2000 protected areas based on petitions received	27-11-2018, O-000130/2018, to the Council Cecilia Wikström, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions; Adina-loana Vălean, on behalf of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	
Concerns about Natura 2000 protected areas based on petitions received	27-11-2018, O-000131/2018, to the Commission Cecilia Wikström, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions; Adina-loana Vălean, on behalf of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	
	Rule 216(2)	European Parliament resolution of 4 April 2019 on waste management (2019/2557(RSP))

1.4. Delegations / FFVs (12 + 1 = 13)

Fact Finding visits

Date	Place	Aim
5 and 6 November 2015	London (UK)	To look into matters relating to the protection of children in the UK and in particular to the issue of non-consensual adoption. Some of the petitions received claimed that the responsible authorities had taken discriminatory measures detrimental to parents who were not British nationals. Members of the delegation had the opportunity to better understand the situation by meeting with representatives of the competent institutions in the UK. Members of the delegation drafted a report and recommendations which were put to a Committee vote in 2016.
8 to 10 February 2016	Spain	Inquiry following the reception of several petitions related to the possible infringement of the Water Framework Directive (Directive 2000/60/EC) by the Spanish River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) of the Ebro and Tajo rivers. The mission report, adopted on 13 July 2016, stresses the importance of consistency between each individual Environmental Impact Assessment in different parts of the river with the Strategic Environmental Assessment over the RBMPs for each river.

22 and 23 September 2016	Slovakia	To seek answers to questions related to the European Union's impact on the quality of the lives of persons with disabilities who are institutionalized and thus not integrated in society. The choice of studying the subject matter in the Slovak Republic was that of geographical balance as regards the missions accomplished by PETI in the past. The viewpoint of the mission was a fundamental rights-based approach to the use of the EU Structural and Investment Funds for the maintenance (renovation, extension or building) of long-term residential centres for persons with disabilities in Slovakia. The mission report, adopted on 29 November 2016, urges the Commission to further look into the situation of investments in institutions for persons with disabilities in Slovakia and to support the systematic evaluation of the progress and efficiency of the transition from institutional to community-based care, and encourages the Parliament's Committee on Budgets to further examine the subject matter.
20 and 21 February 2017	Stockholm (Sweden)	Inquiry following the reception of several petitions on the difficulties faced by EU citizens wishing to live in Sweden for more than a few weeks to get a personal identification number. The delegation met representatives of the different ministerial services involved in the decisions contested by the petitioners.
22 and 23 May 2017	Madrid (Spain)	Investigate several petitions on babies allegedly stolen at birth in hospitals in the country during and after the Franco dictatorship.
17 to 19 July 2017	Taranto (Italy),	Originally planned in 2016 but cancelled, took place. The delegation visited Europe's largest steelworks, a refinery, and the site of the planned extension of the oil jetty. The purpose of the mission was to provide a follow-up to a series of petitions concerning heavy air-, soil, and water pollution. Among the petitions treated at the fact-finding visit very old petitions, dating back to the years 2007 and 2012.
20 to 22 September 2017	Larnaca (Cyprus)	The purpose of the visit was to provide a follow-up to a series of petitions by local residents concerning environmental and health concerns due to the creation of an industrial port in Larnaca and consequences of its operation to the broader area.
12 to 14 February 2018	Potsdam and the Lusatia Region (Germany)	The delegation investigated two petitions concerning the impact of lignite mining and coal-fired power stations in the Lusatia region on the Sorb (or Wend) community (a Slavic autochthonous population of the region), as well as the pollution of the river Spree and the adjacent waters resulting from the lignite mining industry.
7 and 8 May 2018	Famagusta (Cyprus)	Reassess and update its information on the situation on-site, in particular the sealed-off section of the city called Varosha, in the context of one petition, 10 years after the Committee's previous fact-finding visit in November 2007.
19 to 21 September 2018	Doñana (Spain)	Examine the deterioration of the Doñana Wetland in the National Park of the same name. Several petitions allege the public authorities of not having done enough or of having actively contributed to the situation of the protected area.
17 and 18 December 2018	Valledora (Italy)	Investigate on waste disposal in landfill sites and numerous quarries causing allegedly serious environmental damage.

Delegation

15 and 16 February 2018	Lima (Peru)	delegation to Lima (Peru) in the framework of democracy support offered by the European Parliament and its Democracy Support and Election Coordination Unit (DEG) in order to exchange good practices in the petition process with the Committee on Constitutional Affairs of the Peruvian Parliament.
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1.5. Public hearings (23)

Date	Hearing
17 February 2014	In association with the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and two other committees: <i>Right2Water</i> ³³ .
10 April 2014	In association with the Committee on Legal Affairs: European citizens' initiative <i>One of Us</i> ³⁴
26 February 2015	Examination in PETI committee of the (unsuccessful) European citizens' initiative <i>End Ecocide in Europe: a citizens' initiative to give the Earth rights</i>
26 February 2015	Jointly with the Committee on Constitutional Affairs: <i>The European Citizens' Initiative and the application of Regulation 211/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011</i>
11 May 2015	Jointly with the committees on Agriculture, Environment and Industry: <i>The European Citizens' Initiative 'Stop Vivisection'</i>
23 June 2015	With national parliaments: <i>The right to petition</i>
15 October 2015	<i>Protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, from the perspective of petitions received.</i>
23 February 2016	<i>Taking Citizen's concerns seriously: broadening the scope of the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights (Article 51).</i>
15 March 2016	Jointly with the Commission, the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, the Committee on Legal Affairs and the Committee on Constitutional Affairs: <i>Union Citizenship in practice: Our common values, rights and democratic participation.</i>
21 June 2016	<i>Transparency and freedom of information within the EU institutions</i>
11 October 2016	<i>Obstacles to EU citizen's freedom to move and work in the Internal Market</i>
4 May 2017	<i>Fighting against discrimination of EU citizens in the Member States and protecting minorities</i>
11 May 2017	Jointly with the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs and the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs: <i>the Situation and rights of EU citizens in the UK.</i>
22 June 2017	<i>Restoring citizens' confidence and trust in the European project.</i>
29 June 2017	Jointly with the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs: <i>Statelessness.</i>
20 November 2017	In association with the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety: <i>the European Citizens' Initiative: Ban Glyphosate and Protect People and the Environment from Toxic Pesticides.</i>
22 November 2017	<i>Protection of the rights of workers in temporary or precarious employment, based on petitions received.</i>
1 February 2018	Jointly with the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs and the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs: <i>Citizens' rights after Brexit</i>
21 February 2018	Jointly with the Committee on Constitutional Affairs: <i>European Citizens' Initiative - Revision of Regulation</i>
22 March 2018	Jointly with the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety: <i>Impact of endocrine disruptors on public health</i>
9 October 2018	<i>The rights of persons with disabilities</i>
27 November 2018	The Committees on Legal Affairs and on Petitions Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on the empowerment of parliaments and the enforcement of citizens' rights in the implementation and application of EU law
21 March 2019	Jointly with the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety: <i>Climate Change Denial</i>

³³ first European citizens' initiative

³⁴ second successfully launched ECI

1.6. Researches and workshops carried out by the Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs (56 + 6)

2014		
Commitments Made at the Hearing of Frans Timmermans - Commissioner-Designate	Briefing	24-10-2014
Commitments Made at the Hearings of the Commissioners-Designate, Juncker Commission (November 2014 - October 2019)	Briefing	14-11-2014
Routine Tail-Docking of Pigs	Study	25-11-2014
2015		
Right to Petition	Study	June 2015
Adoption without consent	Study	July 2015
Towards a revision of the European Citizens Initiative regulation?	Study	July 2015
The protection role of the Committee on Petitions in the context of the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Study	October 2015
Workshop on cross-border Adoptions, with the Committee on Legal Affairs	Briefings	1 December 2015
Workshop on cross-border adoptions	Workshop	December 2015
2016		
The impact of the economic crisis on access to health and medicines	Workshop	January 2016
The interpretation of Article 51 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights: the dilemma of stricter or broader application of the Charter to national measures	In-depth analysis	February 2016
Adoption without consent - update 2016	Study	May 2016
Solar energy policy in the EU and the Member States, from the perspective of the petitions received	Study	June 2016
Openness, transparency and the right of access to documents in the EU	In-depth analysis	June 2016
The EU and the Aarhus Convention: Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters	Briefing	June 2016
River basins and flood management	Study	July 2016
The European Accessibility Act	In-depth analysis	August 2016
European Structural and Investment Funds and people with disabilities, focusing on the situation in Slovakia	Briefing and In-depth analysis	September 2016
Obstacles to the right of free movement and residence for EU citizens and their families	Study and 8 country reports	September 2016
Environmental topics in Taranto: ILVA plant and ENI refinery	Briefing	October 2016
The protection role of the Committee on Petitions in the context of the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - 2016 Update	In-depth analysis	October 2016
Lindane in the EU	Study	November 2016
The Marrakesh Treaty to facilitate access to published works for persons who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled	In-depth analysis	November 2016
Workshop on the rights of persons with disabilities	Workshop	November 2016
2017	2017	2017
Animal welfare	Study	January 2017
Discrimination(s) as emerging from petitions received	Study	April 2017

The impact of Brexit in relation to the right to protection and on competences, responsibilities and activities of the committee on Petitions	In-depth analysis	June 2017
Environmental topics in Taranto: ILVA plant and ENI refinery (for PETI missions)	Briefing	July 2017
Inclusive education for persons with disabilities: EU and international policies and best practices	Study	September 2017
Workshop on the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Workshop	October 2017
Monitoring the implementation of EU law: tools and challenges	Study	November 2017
The protection role of the Committee on Petitions in the context of the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities UNCRPD	Briefing	November 2017
Italian state beach concessions and Directive 2006/123/EC, in the European context	Study	November 2017
Effective access to justice by citizens	Study	November 2017
Temporary contracts, precarious employment, employees' fundamental rights and EU employment law	Study	November 2017
2018		
Large carnivore management plans of protection: Best practices in EU Member States	Study	February 2018
Fact-finding visit to Lusatia, Germany (February 2018)	Briefing	February 2018
Waste management in Europe: main problems identified in EU Petitions and best practices (updated version)	Study	March 2018
Brexit – update of “The impact of Brexit in relation to the right to petition and on the competences, responsibilities and activities of the Committee on Petitions”	Study	April 2018
24-04-2018 - Workshop ‘Political and electoral rights of non-citizen residents in Latvia-Estonia’	Workshop	April 2018
FATCA legislation and its application at international and EU level	Study	May 2018
Naturalization and Citizenship in Latvia and Estonia	In-depth analysis	May 2018
Democratic transition and linguistic minorities in Estonia and Latvia	In-depth analysis	May 2018
Political and electoral rights of non-citizen residents in Latvia and Estonia: current situation and perspectives	Briefing	May 2018
PETI Fact-finding visit to Cyprus	Briefing	May 2018
PETI fact-finding visit to Spain	Briefing	September 2018
Air quality and urban traffic in EU: best practices and possible solutions	Study	September 2018
2018 Update of the Study on the protection role of the Committee on Petitions in the context of the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Briefing	October 2018
Empowering Parliaments and enforcing citizens' rights in the implementation and application Case analysis: the transposition and implementation of Regulation 261/2004 on air passenger rights	Briefing	November 2018
Transposition and implementation of the 2014 Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment	Briefing	November 2018
The role of ombudsmen and petitions committees in detecting breaches of EU law	Briefing	November 2018
Quality differences in consumer products in the EU legislation	Study	December 2018
PETI Fact-finding mission in Italy (Valledora)	Briefing	December 2018
Fit for Purpose? The Facilitation Directive and the criminalisation of humanitarian assistance to irregular migrants: 2018 update	Study	December 2018
2019		

Cross-border nuclear cooperation and safety in the European Union	Study	February 2019
Food Labelling for Consumers - EU Law, Regulation and Policy Options	Study	March 2019
Endocrine disruptors: from Scientific Evidence to Human Health Protection	Study	March 2019
Conflict of interest in the EU institutions	Workshop	02 April 2019
<i>Conflicts of interest and EU agencies</i>	Study	To be published in 2019
<i>Transparency, integrity and accountability in the EU institutions</i>	Briefing	March 2019

2. EP 2009-2014 Parliamentary term

2.1. Reports drafted by PETI and adopted in plenary (15)

European Parliament resolution of 12 November 2009 on the annual report on the European Ombudsman's activities in 2008 ([2009/2088\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 6 July 2010 on the deliberations of the Committee on Petitions during the year 2009 ([2009/2139\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 25 November 2010 on the annual report on the European Ombudsman's activities in 2009 ([2010/2059\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 25 November 2010 on the Special Report by the European Ombudsman following his draft recommendation to the European Commission in complaint 676/2008RT ([2010/2086\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 14 September 2011 on the activities of the Committee on Petitions in 2010 ([2010/2295\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 27 October 2011 on the Annual Report on the European Ombudsman's activities in 2010 ([2011/2106\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 2 February 2012 on the issues raised by petitioners in relation to the application of the Waste Management Directive, and related directives, in the Member States of the European Union ([2011/2038\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 29 March 2012 on the EU Citizenship Report 2010: Dismantling the obstacles to EU citizens' rights ([2011/2182\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 26 October 2012 on the annual report on the activities of the European Ombudsman 2011 ([2012/2049\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 21 November 2012 on the activities of the Committee on Petitions 2011 ([2011/2317\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 12 March 2013 on the Special Report of the European Ombudsman concerning his inquiry into complaint 2591/2010/GG against the European Commission (Vienna Airport) ([2012/2264\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 12 September 2013 on the annual report on the activities of the European Ombudsman 2012 ([2013/2051\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 10 October 2013 on the activities of the Committee on Petitions 2012 ([2013/2013\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 11 March 2014 on the activities of the Committee on Petitions 2013 ([2014/2008\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 12 March 2014 on the EU Citizenship Report 2013. EU citizens: your rights, your future ([2013/2186\(INI\)](#))

2.2. Opinions to: (24)

European Parliament resolution of 22 October 2009 on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2010, Section I - European Parliament, Section II – Council, Section IV – Court of Justice, Section V – Court of Auditors, Section VI – European Economic and Social Committee, Section VII – Committee of the Regions, Section VIII –European Ombudsman and Section IX – European Data Protection Supervisor (C7-0128/2009 – [2009/2002B\(BUD\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 9 March 2010 on SOLVIT ([2009/2138\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 21 September 2010 on the implementation of EU legislation aiming at the conservation of biodiversity ([2009/2108\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 20 October 2010 on Council's position on draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2011 – all sections (12699/2010 – C7-0202/2010 – [2010/2001\(BUD\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 25 November 2010 on the 26th Annual Report on Monitoring the Application of European Union Law (2008) ([2010/2076\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament legislative resolution of 15 December 2010 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the citizens' initiative ([COM\(2010\)0119](#) – C7-0089/2010 – [2010/0074\(COD\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 6 April 2011 on a Single Market for Europeans ([2010/2278\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 14 September 2011 on the twenty-seventh annual report on monitoring the application of European Union law (2009) ([2011/2027\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 25 October 2011 on mobility and inclusion of people with disabilities and the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 ([2010/2272\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 26 October 2011 on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2012 as modified by the Council – all sections (13110/2011 – C7-0247/2011 – [2011/2020\(BUD\)](#)) and letters of amendment Nos 1/2012 ([COM\(2011\)0372](#)) and 2/2012 ([COM\(2011\)0576](#)) to the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2012

European Parliament legislative resolution of 15 December 2011 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents (recast) ([COM\(2008\)0229](#) – C6-0184/2008 – [2008/0090\(COD\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 3 July 2012 on the implementation of EU water legislation, ahead of a necessary overall approach to European water challenges ([2011/2297\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 4 July 2012 on the European Union Strategy for the Protection and Welfare of Animals 2012–2015 ([2012/2043\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 23 October 2012 on the Council position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013 - all sections (12749/2012 – C7-0233/2012 – [2012/2092\(BUD\)](#))

European Parliament legislative resolution of 23 October 2012 on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Year of Citizens (2013) ([COM\(2011\)0489](#) – C7-0217/2011 – [2011/0217\(COD\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 25 October 2012 on the 20 main concerns of European citizens and business with the functioning of the Single Market ([2012/2044\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 21 November 2012 on the 28th annual report on monitoring the application of EU law (2010) ([2011/2275\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 12 December 2012 on the situation of fundamental rights in the European Union (2010 - 2011) ([2011/2069\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 15 January 2013 with recommendations to the Commission on a Law of Administrative Procedure of the European Union (2012/2024(INL))

European Parliament resolution of 12 March 2013 on improving the delivery of benefits from EU environment measures: building confidence through better knowledge and responsiveness ([2012/2104\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament resolution of 20 November 2013 on the location of the seats of the European Union's Institutions ([2012/2308\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament legislative resolution of 10 December 2013 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing for the period 2014 to 2020 the Rights and Citizenship Programme ([COM\(2011\)0758](#) – C7-0438/2011 – [2011/0344\(COD\)](#)) (Ordinary legislative procedure: first reading)

European Parliament resolution of 4 February 2014 on the 29th annual report on monitoring the application of EU law (2011) ([2013/2119\(INI\)](#))

European Parliament legislative resolution of 12 March 2014 on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2011/92/EU of the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment ([COM\(2012\)0628](#) – C7-0367/2012 – [2012/0297\(COD\)](#)) (Ordinary legislative procedure: first reading)

2.3. Questions for Oral Answer PETI (Rule 128 RoP) and resolutions adopted on this basis (15; 5)

Topic	Question for Oral Answer	Follow up resolution
Risky financial instruments in Spain - preferential shares	Question for oral answer to the Commission Rule 115 Erminia Mazzoni, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions 18-10-2013 O-000121/2013	
Animal rights	Question for oral answer to the Commission Rule 115 Erminia Mazzoni, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions 17-10-2013 O-000119/2013	
Spanish mortgage legislation and practices	Question for oral answer to the Commission Rule 115 Erminia Mazzoni, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions 17-10-2013 O-000118/2013	
Toxic waste fires in Campania	Question for oral answer to the Commission Rule 115	

	Erminia Mazzoni, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions 16-10-2013 O-000114/2013	
World Intellectual Property Organisation treaty on copyright exceptions for the visually impaired	Question for oral answer to the Council Rule 115 Erminia Mazzoni, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions 08-05-2013 O-000056/2013	
World Intellectual Property Organisation treaty on copyright exceptions for the visually impaired	Question for oral answer to the Commission Rule 115 Erminia Mazzoni, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions 07-05-2013 O-000055/2013	
		European Parliament resolution of 13 December 2012 on a new sustainable and competitive steel industry, based on a petition received (2012/2905 (RSP)) tabled by Erminia Mazzoni on behalf of the Committee on Petitions
		European Parliament resolution of 4 July 2012 on the establishment of an EU legal framework for the protection of pets and stray animals (2012/2670(RSP))
Freedom of non-association (Petition 0901/2008)	Question for oral answer to the Commission Rule 115 Erminia Mazzoni, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions 08-03-2012 O-000062/2012	
Blind persons' access to books	Question for oral answer to the Commission Rule 115 Erminia Mazzoni, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions 13-01-2012 O-000006/2012	European Parliament resolution of 16 February 2012 on Petition 0924/2011 by Dan Pescod (British), on behalf of the European Blind Union (EBU)/Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), on access by blind people to books and other printed products (2011/2894(RSP))
Blind persons' access to books	Question for oral answer to the Council Rule 115 Erminia Mazzoni, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions 13-01-2012 O-000005/2012	
Freedom of non-association (Petition 0901/2008)	Question for oral answer to the Commission	

	<p>Rule 115 Erminia Mazzoni, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions 26-10-2011 O-000285/2011</p>	
<p>Freedom of non-association (Petition 0901/2008)</p>	<p>Question for oral answer to the Commission Rule 115 Erminia Mazzoni, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions 27-05-2011 O-000136/2011</p>	
<p>Misleading business directories (Petitions 0045/2006, 1475/2006 and others)</p>	<p>Question for oral answer to the Commission Rule 115 Erminia Mazzoni, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions Malcolm Harbour, on behalf of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection 06-04-2011 O-000087/2011</p>	<p>European Parliament resolution of 9 June 2011 on misleading business directories (Petitions 0045/2006, 1476/2006, 0079/2003, 0819/2003, 1010/2005, 0052/2007, 0306/2007, 0444/2007, 0562/2007 and others)</p>
<p>Application of the EIA Directive in Austria (Petition 0672/2007)</p>	<p>Question for oral answer to the Commission Rule 115 Erminia Mazzoni, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions 31-03-2011 O-000084/2011</p>	
<p>Petition 1565/2009 by José Maria Pozancos (Spanish) on EU tomato imports from Morocco</p>	<p>Question for oral answer to the Commission Rule 115 Erminia Mazzoni, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions 21-02-2011 O-000040/2011</p>	
<p>Petition 0473/2008 concerning the failure of the Commission to take action regarding a competition case and the harmful impact of this on the company concerned</p>	<p>Question for oral answer to the Commission Rule 115 Erminia Mazzoni, on behalf of the Committee on Petitions 10-11-2010</p>	<p>European Parliament resolution of 19 January 2011 on Petition 0473/2008 by Christoph Klein (German), concerning the failure of the Commission to take action regarding a competition case and the harmful impact of this on the company concerned.</p>

2.4. Delegations and FFVs (14)

Date	Place
2010 February 16-18	FFV Spain: Sevilla-Huelva
2010 April 27-30	FFV Italy: Campania
2010 June 3-6	Cyprus: Famaugusta
2010 September 29-October 1	FFV Austria: Vorarlberg
2011 November 23-24	FFV Germany: Berlin
2011 June 29 - July 2	FFV Bulgaria
2011 November 23-26	FFV Romania
2011 February 7-8	Visit to Scotland, Edinburgh
2012 October 29-31	FFV Italy, on waste
2013 May 29-31	FFV Poland
2013 June 20-21	FFV Denmark Copenhagen
2013 September 17-20	FFV Greece
2013 February 11-13	FFV Spain Galicia
2013 March 21-22	FFV Spain Madrid

2.5. Hearings (3)

6-10-2011: Seminar on the Application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights
Handling of Citizens' Petitions & Complaints on Fundamental Rights
Organised by PETI and the Commission

19-2-2013: Hearing on EU Citizenship, Making the most of EU citizenship
Co-organised by JURI, LIBE and PETI

24-09-2013: **The impact of the crisis on Europe's citizens and the reinforcement of democratic involvement in the governance of the Union (based on petitions received)**

2.6. Studies and workshops (5 + 1 = 6)

Title	Type	Date
E-public, e-participation and e-voting in Europe - prospects and challenges (Study and Options Brief)	Study	15-09-2011
Waste Management in Europe : Main Problems and Best Practices	Study	15-09-2011
Impacts of Shale Gas Extraction on the Environment and on Human Health – 2012 Update	In-Depth Analysis	15-10-2012
Proceedings of the Workshop on "Shale Gas in the EU : Its Impact on the Environment and the Energy Policy, from the Perspective of Petitions Received"	Study	15-10-2012
09-10-2012 - Workshop on Shale gas from the perspective of petitions received	Workshop	18-10-2012
European Citizens' Initiative – First Lessons of Implementation	Study	15-05-2014

ANNEX II : STATISTICAL DATA

In this annex the data related to the year 2014 is compared to that of year 2018.

Number of petitions

	2014	2018
Nr	2714	1220

The comparison shows that the number of petitions more than halved between the years 2014 and 2018.

Main subjects of petitions

	2014	2018
Environment	284 = 7.8% (2nd main subject)	199 = 16.3% (1st main subject)
Fundamental Rights	208 = 5.7% (4th main subject)	186 = 15.2% (2nd main subject)
Personal issues		178 = 14.6% (3rd main subject)
Justice	300 = 8.3% (1st main subject)	129 = 10.6% (4th main subject)
Health	173 = 4.8% (5th main subject)	104 = 8.5 % (5th main subject)
Employment		89 = 7.3% (6th main subject)
Internal market	266 = 7.3% (3rd main subject)	

The comparison shows that between 2014 and 2018 environment rose from being the 2nd to being the 1st main subject of petitions; fundamental rights rose from being the 4th main subject to being second; justice went down from being the 1st main subject in 2014 to being the 4th main subject in 2018; health remained stable at the 5th position; internal market went down from being the 3rd main subject, leaving the place in 2018 to personal issues (3rd main subject) and employment (6th main subject).

Concerned country

- **2014:** EU 908 (29%), Spain 449 (14%), Germany 271 (9%), Italy 248 (8%), *Romania* 199 (6%).

- **2018:** EU 472 (30%), Spain 206 (13%), Germany 172 (11%), Italy 147 (9%), *Greece* 69 (4%).

The comparison shows that notwithstanding the fact that the number of petitions per State halved between 2014 and 2018, the percentage related to the concerned country remained more or less the same. Consequently, also the 4 first concerned countries remained the same, reaching altogether more than 60% of petitions, except for Romania that left the 5th place to Greece (most probably due to the economic crisis and the financial assistance programme).

Nationality of First petitioner

- **2018:** Germany 274 (22%), Spain 212 (17%), Italy 177 (15%), Poland 73 (6%), Greece 71 (6%)

- **2014:** Germany 551 (20%), Spain 468 (17%), Italy 425 (16%), Romania 196 (7%), UK 143 (5%)

While the first three countries remained the same with similar percentages between 2014 and 2018 and surpassing altogether 50% of petitions tabled in the EU, Romania and the UK left the 4th and 5th place to Poland and Greece (probably due to the economic crisis and the financial assistance programme).

Adoption decisions

	2014	2018
Admissible	1,630 = 60.1 %	788 = 64.6%
Inadmissible	1,083 = 39.9 %	409 = 33.5 %

Data suggest that the percentage of admissible petitions rose slightly, probably as more information was provided on the websites to guide petitioners in tabling admissible petitions.

Petition sent to EC for opinion	772 = 51.6%	502 = 41.1%
Sent for opinion to other bodies	84 = 3.1%	27 = 2.2%
Sent for info to other bodies	390 = 14.4%	989 = 81.1%

The nr of petitions sent to EC for opinion fell, while the number of petitions sent to other bodies grew exponentially in the period 2014-2018.

Petition status

	2014	2018
Open	763 = 28.1%	430 = 35.2%
Closed	1925 = 70.9 %	790 = 64.8%

Between 2014 and 2018, the number of open petitions raised slightly and the number of closed petitions diminished slightly.

Format

	2014	2018
Email	2174 = 80.1%	27 = 2.2%
Letter	541 = 19.9%	330 = 27%
Webportal		863 = 70.8%

While in 2014 petitions were mainly tabled by email in 80% of the cases and in the remaining 20% by letter, in 2018 the webportal was the main method of tabling of petitions (71%), followed by letter (27%) and by email in only 2% of the cases.

ANNEX III : EXAMPLES OF PETI IMPACT

The Irish fisherman (petition 1938/2012)

One petition with a positive - albeit belated - outcome concerned the difficulties experienced by an Irish fisherman's family due to alleged inconsistencies in the application by the Irish Government of the "Lost at Sea Scheme". This scheme was introduced to enable qualifying applicants who had accidentally lost a vessel to continue a family tradition of sea fishing. The petitioner's father and brother died in 1981 in an incident at sea and the family's vessel was lost. The Irish authorities rejected the application for replacement tonnage asserting that it had been received after the official closing date of the scheme. The petitioner made a complaint to the Irish Ombudsman, who considered that the scheme had been maladministered and that the family should have a right at least to a suitable "ex gratia" payment. The Irish authorities dismissed the Ombudsman's recommendations. The family then submitted a petition to the EP to complain about the implementation of the scheme, the discrimination suffered and a breach of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

In its reply to PETI's request for information, the European Commission did "not consider the initiation of infringement proceedings against Ireland to be appropriate". In 2014 and again in 2016, the PETI Committee requested clarifications from the Irish authorities on "the reasons why the family was not treated with more equity and fairness". Replying in 2017, following a debate in PETI, the Irish Minister stated that he was "considering the significant issues involved and the complexities relating to this matter" and that his considerations would take into account the specific issues raised by the PETI Committee. In April 2018 the Minister stated that he had decided to "exercise his discretion" in the matter by making an ex-gratia payment to the widow of the petitioner's father.

"Stolen babies" in Spain (petition 1772/2012)

PETI received a number of petitions by citizens arguing that children were allegedly illegally given up for adoption without their parent's knowledge under the Franco regime. The fact that such acts and decisions relate to areas of civil law which are not governed by provisions of EU law, and that adoption is excluded from the scope of EU family law dealing with matters of parental responsibility as it currently stands (notably Regulation (EC) No 2201/2003 ('the Brussels IIa Regulation'), did not preclude PETI to examine the matter. While the European Commission concluded that they cannot pursue this case any further and suggested the petitioners to lodge a complaint with the Council of Europe's European Court of Human Rights, the PETI committee sent a FFV in 2017 to Spain to meet the General Prosecutor of the State, the Minister of Justice and Justice Committee in the Congress. The pressure of the work of all members of the PETI delegation has contributed to push forward a new "draft law on babies stolen during the Franco regime". This "Proposición de Ley" was approved by the Spanish Congress unanimously, with the support of all political groups.

Valencia metro accident (petition 0135/2014)

On 3 July 2006, a very serious accident took place in the metro of the city of Valencia, which claimed the lives of 43 people and injured another 47. The president of the victims' association tabled a petition calling for the identification of those responsible for the accident and for the improvement of passengers' safety on the metro. Notwithstanding the fact that EU competence on the matter is

rather limited due to the fact that the current EU rail safety legislation does not apply to metro systems, the pressure of the PETI Committee in relation to this petition (contacts with the Permanent Representation, Valencian authorities, TRAN committee) contributed to the decision by the Valencian parliament to set up in 2015 a special committee of enquiry. The victims association expressed appreciation for the work of the EP on matters raised by the petition.

Safety of high-speed rail services in Spain (petition 1215/2015 and 1216/2015)

On 24 July 2013, a train derailed near Santiago de Compostela (Spain) on the high-speed Ourense-Santiago rail link, claiming 82 lives and injuring over 140 persons. A petition was tabled on the matter by a representative of the association of victims. Following the meeting of the Committee on Petitions of 23-24 January 2017, and after a letter of the Chair of the PETI Committee Ms Wikström and of Commissioner Bulc, the Commission services sent a letter to the Spanish investigating body CIAF inviting it to reopen the investigation and carry it out in full independence. In addition, the EP and the European Commission requested the European Union Agency for Railways to draft a report on the current state of implementation and application of EU legislation on railway safety and interoperability in Spain. The pressure of the PETI committee and of EU institutions, among others, contributed to the decision of September 2017 by the Spanish Congress to set up a special committee of enquiry on the matter.

During the 2014-19 parliamentary term the European Union and notably the European Parliament, through its dedicated Committee on Petitions (PETI), has continued to uphold the right of citizens to petition the EP to raise issues and concerns and to call for redress and action in areas of EU competence, by mobilising institutions and Member States both on issues at the centre of the political debate, and on “orphan” or “dormant” issues. With the aim of better serving EU citizens, the Committee on Petitions has developed a Petitions Web Portal, adopted new and updated Guidelines, created a Petitions Network and a special Working Group on Child Welfare Issues. PETI continued to examine a high number of petitions raising issues in all areas of EU activity. In the 9th legislature, PETI could strengthen its achievements by exploring innovative ways to achieve effective solutions for the petitioners.

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