

Newsletter June 2017



Cecilia Wikström
Chair of Committee on Petitions

A Welcome from the PETI Chair

With this inaugural edition of the 2017 PETI Newsletter, I welcome the opportunity to reflect on the first half of the year of PETI activity and how, throughout this eighth legislative term, this Committee has advanced the interests of EU citizens through an ever-larger number of petitions, fact-finding missions, public hearings and policy reports. The work of the Committee continues to touch upon an increasingly diverse set of EU policy areas and legislative competences. The welcome results of this increased activity are tangible outcomes for the citizens concerned and a better appreciation of the everyday realities of

the enforcement and implementation of EU law across the Member States. Through this newsletter and its future monthly editions, I trust that you will learn more about the important work PETI undertakes so as to fulfil its essential role of providing a direct link between EU citizens and the European Parliament. I look forward to a growing readership and a more visible Petitions Committee, accessible to all.

Best wishes,
Cecilia Wikström

June 2017 PETI activities:

- Joint hearing on statelessness PETI/LIBE
- Public hearing on restoring citizens' trust in the EU
- Brexit petitions

July 2017 PETI activities:

- Fact-finding mission to Taranto, Italy

Consideration of Brexit Petitions

At its meeting of 21 June 2017, PETI invited a number of petitioners from across the Union to hear their views as to how a future Brexit deal could affect their rights as EU citizens. The EU's chief Brexit negotiator, Mr. Michel Barnier, addressed the petitioners through a video message, and the AFCE Chair, Ms. Danuta Hübner, who is a member of Parliament's Brexit Steering Committee, delivered a keynote speech. The first petitioner to take the floor was Ms. Ann Clwyd, former MEP (1979-1984). Ms. Clwyd shared her story of being part of the first group of UK citizens to bring a petition to the European Parliament, in 1975 - by bus - to petition for equal rights for women. Initially elected on an "anti-EU ticket" in the 1970s, Ms. Clwyd's statement that "it can be a good thing, to change your mind", received applause from across the audience. Ms. Clwyd urged PETI to invite the British Prime Minister to address the European Parliament on the issue of protecting European citizens working in the United Kingdom and British citizens working in the European Union, as well as allowing British citizens to vote on any Brexit deal once negotiations have concluded. A recording of the entire meeting can be accessed [here](#).



Presentation of the Study *“The impact of Brexit in relation to the right to petition and on the competences, responsibilities and activities of the Committee on Petitions”* by Professor Eleanor Spaventa, Durham European Law Institute

Both prior to and following the Brexit referendum, PETI received a large number of petitions from UK and non-UK citizens pertaining to the future of UK-EU relations and the impact on EU citizenship rights. In light of this interest and concern from citizens, PETI commissioned a study detailing the impact of Brexit on the future work of the Committee in safeguarding the rights of all EU citizens. The study is available [here](#).



Public Hearing - Restoring Citizens' Confidence and Trust in the European Project

At its meeting of Thursday 22 June 2017, PETI held a public hearing on the necessity of restoring public trust in the EU. The Committee welcomed the European Ombudsman Ms. Emily O'Reilly, whose keynote speech highlighted the importance of well-informed civic decision-making by EU citizens in light of the Brexit referendum, which in her view turned on “a blizzard of sound-bites and competing information, facts, and propaganda”. PETI Members also heard from the European Commission, the Centre for European Policy Studies, the European Citizen Action Service, the ECI Campaign, Transparency International, the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, the European Youth Forum, and the European Broadcasting Union. Key messages from the expert panels included: increasing the accountability of EU institutions and in

particular the European Commission, expanding the scope for participatory democracy in EU decision-making, especially targeting younger Europeans, improving the functioning of the European Citizens' Initiative, and taking full advantage of the potential of technology in fostering transnational civic dialogue through online platforms and e-democracy initiatives. A recording of the event is available [here](#).

Next PETI meetings:

10-11 July 2017

See [agenda](#), [documents](#) and [live broadcast](#)

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