

## Newsletter May 2020

### Extraordinary meeting of the Committee on Petitions

On 19 May 2020 the Committee on Petitions held a second extraordinary meeting focused on the COVID-19 outbreak. The meeting took place in the European Parliament premises, with the remote participation of petitioners, the representatives of the European Commission and most Members.

At this meeting the Members discussed three petitions dealing with the impact of the pandemic on citizens' rights but also tackling ways to manage its negative consequences. The next meeting of the Committee on Petitions is scheduled for 16 June 2020.



### Petition on the management of cancelled flights and trips by airline carriers and travel agencies during the COVID-19 outbreak

At its extraordinary meeting of 19 May 2020, the Committee on Petitions examined a petition on the management of cancelled flights and trips during the COVID-19 outbreak. The petitioner complains that, in exchange for cancelled trips, airline carriers and travel agencies offer vouchers with expiry deadlines that customers are not allowed to extend or change should they be unable to travel by those dates. At the same time, the petitioner argues, these companies have increased their rates so that customers would pay more in order to take the same trip. The petitioner denounces the legal vacuum in which these companies operate and asks the EU institutions to intervene in order to safeguard consumer rights.



The Members decided to keep this petition open, ask for further clarification from the European Commission on their interpretative guidelines on how certain provisions of the EU passenger rights legislation should be applied in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak and thereby ensure clarity and legal certainty in the application of passenger rights and forward the petition to the TRAN Committee for information.

**Next PETI meeting:** 16 June 2020  
See: [agenda](#), [documents](#) and [live broadcast](#)



## Petition on the exemption of VAT for goods and services donated in the fight against and management of COVID-19

On 19 May 2020, the Members debated a petition seeking VAT exemption for goods and services donated or supplied by EU-resident VAT contributors to Member States, regional and local authorities and other public and private bodies for the management and fight against the epidemiological emergency caused by COVID-19.

The Members decided to keep the petition open, ask the EC to keep the Committee updated on the developments in the negotiations on the 2018 EC proposal related to VAT rates, send the petition for information to the ECON Committee and send a letter to the Croatian Presidency of the Council informing them about this petition.

## Petition on the rights of people with intellectual disabilities and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic

At the meeting of 19 May 2020, the Committee heard a petition signalling the difficulties faced by people with intellectual disabilities and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in what concerns access to health services, personal assistance and contacts with families and carers.

The petition argues that the COVID-19 lockdown and associated measures have highlighted the ongoing segregation and discrimination of people with intellectual disabilities and asks for financial support and disability-related services to be treated as a priority in the “lockdown exit.”

The Committee decided to keep the petition open, ask the European Commission for a written update and bring the petition before the PETI Coordinators in view of a decision on a potential resolution on the matter.



### PETI Secretariat

[peti-secretariat@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:peti-secretariat@europarl.europa.eu)  
[Petitions Portal](#)

### Follow PETI

[www.europarl.europa.eu/peti/](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/peti/)  
[Webstream](#)

Disclaimer: The items contained herein are drafted by the Secretariat of the Petitions Committee and are provided for general information purposes only. The opinions expressed in this document are the sole responsibility of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position of the European Parliament. The PETI Newsletter may contain links to websites that are created and maintained by other organisations. The PETI Secretariat does not necessarily endorse the view expressed on these websites. Photos used under the licence of [www.shutterstock.com](http://www.shutterstock.com).