EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004 *2009*

Committee on Legal Affairs

2008/2234(INI)

21.1.2009

OPINION

of the Committee on Legal Affairs

for the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

on problems and prospects concerning European citizenship
(2008/2234(INI))

Rapporteur: Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Legal Affairs calls on the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Is of the opinion that an effective approach to information and communication is necessary in order to raise awareness among European citizens of their rights and to help them play an active role in the decision-making process of the European Union, thus permitting a genuine exercise of participatory democracy;

2. Stresses that participation in the elections to the European Parliament is the highest expression of participatory democracy at European level; points out that the turnout in the European elections of 2004 was the lowest in the history of the European Parliament; therefore calls on the Commission to encourage European citizens, especially those from the new EU Member States, who live in any Member State other than their own, to take part in the European elections, both as voters and as candidates; welcomes the Commission's initiatives aimed at reducing the electoral burdens on potential candidates and Member States;

3. Fully supports the strategy adopted by the Commission with a view to resolving the problems relating to access to European citizenship and endorses all the efforts it has made in promoting integration; hopes, however, that this strategy will show tangible results on a larger scale as soon as possible;

4. Recommends that the European area of justice be completed in order to ensure that the cross-border aspects of citizenship relating to personal and family life can be effectively protected by common rules in the field of private international law; to that end, urges the Commission to develop a coherent approach and to put forward the necessary legislative proposals;

5. Considers that the existing disparities between the provisions governing access to nationality in the Member States, on which the acquisition of European citizenship depends, may constitute a source of discrimination between residents who are third-country nationals or stateless, depending on their Member State of residence; without prejudice to their competence in this area, trusts that the Member States will remove all potential sources of discrimination and urges the Commission to use the Community instruments at its disposal so as to ensure that EC anti-discrimination legislation is duly implemented;

6. Recalls that the legal core of European citizens' rights also includes the right to move and reside within the European Union and that that right can be fully exercised only if, among other measures, an effective system of recognition of professional qualifications is established; therefore urges the Commission and the Member States, within their respective remits, further to enable European citizens who have obtained a professional qualification in one Member State to gain access to the same profession in another Member State and to practise it under the same conditions as nationals of that country.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	20.1.2009
Result of final vote	+: 20 –: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Carlo Casini, Bert Doorn, Monica Frassoni, Giuseppe Gargani, Neena Gill, Klaus-Heiner Lehne, Katalin Lévai, Antonio López-Istúriz White, Manuel Medina Ortega, Hartmut Nassauer, Aloyzas Sakalas, Eva-Riitta Siitonen, Francesco Enrico Speroni, Diana Wallis, Rainer Wieland, Jaroslav Zvěřina, Tadeusz Zwiefka
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Eva Lichtenberger, József Szájer, Jacques Toubon