EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004 *2009*

Committee on Constitutional Affairs

2008/2234(INI)

22.1.2009

OPINION

of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs

for the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

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

Rapporteur: Panayiotis Demetriou

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Constitutional 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. Notes with regret that the Fifth Report on Citizenship of the Union contains no concrete proposals concerning the exercise by citizens of their rights and the duty of the Member States to safeguard those rights in practice; asks that the Sixth Report be more proactive in this respect;

2. Expresses its disappointment at the Commission's failure to consult with civil society in the preparation of the Fifth Report, and expects that such consultations will take place in the preparation of the Sixth Report, as pledged by the Commission;

3. In the light of Flash Eurobarometer 213 (2007 Eurobarometer survey), according to which only 31% of the participants regard themselves as well informed about their rights as European citizens, points out that there is an urgent need to launch better and more effective information campaigns (e.g. setting up a "citizenship programme" in schools and universities, with a view to preparing the younger generation for active citizenship);

4. Considering, among other things, the low number of EU citizens resident in Member States other than their own who take advantage of the opportunity to vote or stand in either European or municipal elections in their place of residence, as well as the practical obstacles that potential voters are too often confronted with in the exercise of their rights, takes the view that the 2009 European elections should be seen as an opportunity for the preparation and application of a pan-European action plan designed to develop the European identity of European citizens and to familiarise them with their rights; regrets, therefore, the absence of any relevant reference to this in the Fifth Report;

5. Stresses the need for initiatives that promote European citizenship rights for young people; underlines therefore the great importance of programmes such as the Youth in Action programme for the period from 2007 to 2013, which was established in order to facilitate structured dialogue with young people at regional, national and European level;

6. Welcomes the recently adopted political declaration entitled "Communicating Europe in Partnership", and considers that an information campaign on citizenship of the Union and the specific rights deriving therefrom should become a basic priority;

7. Calls on the Commission to draw up plans for the implementation of the "citizens' initiative" provided for by the Lisbon Treaty, regardless of the fact that that Treaty is still going through the process of ratification;

8. Calls for the necessary reforms of the European election procedures in all Member States, with a view to making those procedures more similar and finding ways to promote active European citizenship (e.g. by means of transnational lists), and calls for appropriate information campaigns to be conducted once the above reforms are completed.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	22.1.2009
Result of final vote	+: 20 –: 3 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Enrique Barón Crespo, Richard Corbett, Jean-Luc Dehaene, Andrew Duff, Anneli Jäätteenmäki, Aurelio Juri, Sylvia-Yvonne Kaufmann, Timothy Kirkhope, Jo Leinen, Íñigo Méndez de Vigo, Ashley Mote, Adrian Severin, József Szájer, Riccardo Ventre, Andrzej Wielowieyski
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Costas Botopoulos, Carlos Carnero González, Panayiotis Demetriou, Roger Helmer, Klaus-Heiner Lehne, Gérard Onesta, Sirpa Pietikäinen, Kathy Sinnott, Mauro Zani