OPINION

of the Committee on Culture and Education

for the Committee on Petitions

on the EU Citizenship Report 2013. EU citizens: your rights, your future (2013/2186(INI))

Rapporteur: Morten Løkkegaard
SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Culture and Education calls on the Committee on Petitions, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the Commission’s initiatives aimed at improving citizens’ awareness of their rights through Europe Direct and Your Europe; notes at the same time that more needs to be done to inform citizens about their rights, notably through social media platforms; highlights the important contribution that Member States and national politicians can make to raising awareness;

2. Stresses that cross-border regions are the places where the advantages and disadvantages of European integration are most evident;

3. Stresses the need to foster citizens’ participation in the democratic life of the EU and to facilitate and support various expressions of, and efforts to mobilise, active citizenship;

4. Strongly urges the Member States to step up their efforts to spread knowledge of the SOLVIT network among citizens and companies;

5. Recalls that Directive 2011/24/EU on the application of patients’ rights in cross-border healthcare entered into application in October 2013; urges the Commission, in this connection, to monitor the proper implementation of that directive and to ensure that patients are comprehensively informed of their new cross-border healthcare rights;

6. Encourages the Commission to address the problems faced by graduates when applying for traineeships or jobs in another Member State, by developing a quality framework to protect trainees’ rights and guarantee them fair pay; urges the Commission also to explore new means of improving the exchange of information about traineeships and job opportunities in other Member States, notably through the EURES network;

7. Feels that the limitations and shortcomings of Directive 96/71/EC on the posting of workers are leading to numerous abuses that harm employees covered by this directive, and that the lack of clear information, checks and cooperation between administrations is preventing posted workers from fully asserting their rights; calls on the Council to unblock the ongoing reform of this directive in order to improve protection for posted workers and to combat abuses and social dumping;

8. Underlines the importance of supporting pan-European networks composed of local and national media in the fields of radio, television and the internet; finds it highly worrying, therefore, that the Commission has unexpectedly, and without consulting Parliament, decided to cancel a call for proposals relating to pan-European networks in the field of the internet;

9. Highlights the need to create a structured framework for European civil dialogue which would give practical substance to participatory citizenship and enhance cooperation with local, national and European authorities and other stakeholders;

10. Welcomes the Commission’s intention of supporting from 2013, via its town twinning
scheme, exchanges of best practice between municipalities and projects aimed at enhancing knowledge of citizens’ rights, but considers it highly regrettable that under the next multiannual financial framework the financial envelope for the Europe for Citizens programme, from which such projects can be funded, has been drastically cut;

11. Underlines the importance of organised civil society in strengthening active European citizenship, e.g. by involving its members in debates on EU issues of direct concern to them or in charity and volunteering activities abroad; considers it crucial, therefore, further to facilitate the cross-border work of these organisations in reducing bureaucratic burdens and providing adequate funding;

12. Raises citizens’ most pressing concerns at the European level with regard to minimum income, social care, political and economic transparency, involvement in cultural life and the need to combat inequalities through gender mainstreaming; stresses that all citizens should be involved in the life of their community, including the most disadvantaged groups in society;

13. Urges the Member States to give more space in their school curricula to political education on EU affairs; considers that teachers play a vital role in bringing EU affairs into schools and encourages the Member States, therefore, to equip them with the know-how and resources they need to fulfil this role;

14. Shares the Commission’s view as to the need to enhance EU citizens’ awareness of their EU citizenship rights, and in particular their electoral rights, and specifically to inform them that they are entitled to vote in municipal and European elections even if they live outside their home country, but urges the Commission not to wait until May 2014 to launch its handbook presenting those EU rights ‘in clear and simple language’;

15. Urges the Commission to ensure that the right of every EU citizen to address the EU institutions in any official EU language is fully respected and applied in such a way that the Commission’s public consultations are available in all official EU languages, so as to ensure that all consultations are treated equally and that no discrimination occurs on the basis of language;

16. Points to Parliament’s activities on social media platforms as an excellent way of creating interaction and dialogue with citizens.
**RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE**

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<th>21.1.2014</th>
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| Result of final vote | +: 27  
  --: 0  
  0: 1 |
| Members present for the final vote | Zoltán Bagó, Malika Benarab-Attou, Piotr Borys, Jean-Marie Cavada, Silvia Costa, Lorenzo Fontana, Mary Honeyball, Cătălin Sorin Ivan, Petra Kammerervert, Morten Løkkegaard, Emma McClarkin, Emilio Menéndez del Valle, Martina Michels, Marek Henryk Migalski, Katarina Nevedaľová, Doris Pack, Chrysoula Paliadeli, Monika Panayotova, Marietje Schaake, Marco Scurria, László Tőkés, Helga Trüpel, Gianni Vattimo, Marie-Christine Vergiat, Sabine Verheyen |
| Substitute(s) present for the final vote | Ivo Belet, Nadja Hirsch, Seán Kelly, Georgios Papanikolaou, Joanna Katarzyna Skrzydlewska |