

The newsletter of the Committee on Petitions of the European Parliament



## RAPPORTEUR'S INTRODUCTION



Plenary Rapporteur on the Application of the Waste Management Directive based on petitions received: Mr. Carlos Iturgaiz Angulo MEP

On the morning of February 2nd, the plenary session of the European Parliament, meeting in Brussels, held a full hour-long debate before voting to approve by an overwhelming majority the report of Mr. Carlos **Iturgaiz Angulo MEP**, on behalf of the Petitions Committee, which deals with the hundreds of petitions received on serious problems felt by people throughout Europe on waste management, including landfills, incinerator plants and the need to respect the waste cycle. Here is the direct [link](http://bbc.in/yYvdQI) to BBC's thorough reporting featuring the video-feed of the debate (<http://bbc.in/yYvdQI>) and to the actual Iturgaiz **Report** itself ([bit.ly/yx0DHO](http://bit.ly/yx0DHO)). Given the importance of the issue the Committee Chairman, Ms. Erminia **Mazzoni MEP**, has handed over her front page keynote piece to Mr. **Iturgaiz Angulo MEP** in order to give our Rapporteur the opportunity to respond to our questions and provide more insight for citizens into how the report came together and what its adoption should now mean for citizens in Europe. When **PETI Journal** enters the Member's office in one of the coldest mornings of the February Strasbourg session, the genuine warmth and very good disposition of Mr. Iturgaiz allow us to break the ice complimenting him over his latest book -- *Vivir frente al Terror* -- which has had excellent reviews, before leaping into what we consider a compelling interview disclosing the many hidden facets of our featured Rapporteur.

**PJ:** *Congratulations on the adoption of your report. How did you conduct your investigations and how easy was it to ensure such a broad consensus on such a difficult and controversial topic?*

**Iturgaiz Angulo MEP:** Good morning and thanks to the Chair for this sensi-

tive decision to expand on the work behind the Report. It is really appreciated. When the Committee on Petitions realized that a trend was emerging about cases dealing with lack of implementation of EU law, Members realized it was time for a full-fledged Report. We may have had a few petitions raising more clamor than others but it was decided to pursue a truly trans-cultural, pan-European state of play and as the European Commission itself seemed often to be at a loss we took it on ourselves to address comprehensively the issue, based on the fair and representative amount of petitions received. The nature of the debate, complex and bearing political implications, required a bit of subtlety and finesse in building consensus capable of establishing it as a credible piece of work that can stand the test of time while providing useful insights into the issues to be resolved. My utmost commitment was therefore to work alongside all the political parties, the shadow rapporteurs and the experts that provided us with a much-needed independent study on the sector. The secretariat of the Committee and my staff and advisers worked tirelessly and only this incredible amount of work could allow the success that this Report has enjoyed. So, to get back to your question, it was not easy to ensure broad-consensus but with hard-work, fairness and commitment we successfully managed to take on board all points of view and sensibilities and we have tried, successfully to some degree it is hoped, to get the best practices and approaches off of each EU Member-state.

**“the single most important duty of our Committee is to listen to people ... to relate with them”**

**PJ:** *Perhaps you could briefly outline what are the most important proposals, and what are the main obstacles to getting member states to really do what they are supposed to do to protect the health of their citizens and preserve the environment?*

**Iturgaiz Angulo MEP:** Let me start with an example. I do not know which color-code there is for glass recycling in Italy but I do know after this Report that each Member-state has its own. As the point of view that the Committee engenders must be pan-European, the Report strived to indicate how to implement solutions that should be applicable and pursued by every Member-state in order to further the compliance and the results to EU law. This was just one example, you understand, but it gives a clear idea of the sphere of action we wanted to be in. We appeal for more awareness and compliance by the citizens, as it is clear that nothing can be achieved without their active support and commitment to the recycling effort. Secondly, Member-states should finally start enforcing the legislative provisions and fine the perpetrators of illegal

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## RAPPORTEUR's INTRODUCTION

dumping of waste, in an exemplary way in order to dissuade such behavior. Thirdly, the European Commission should send formal notes to oblige Member-states to take into consideration the findings of our Report and act accordingly in pursuit of better EU law compliance.

**PJ:** *Which countries are the worst offenders, or should we say, where do most of the petitions come from on this issue?*

**Iturgaiz Angulo MEP:** Well, it is no secret that most of the bulk came from Italy, France Spain, UK, Ireland and Greece. A lot of people just think that waste-related problems came from the south of Europe but it is not necessarily so. As for Eastern Europe, albeit cases have been raised -- notably the one warranting a FFV to Bulgaria -- the Committee seems to have less worries. I think though, and many other Members would share my opinion, that it has to do with the fact that the right to petition, this very fundamental right at the heart of European history, has not been communicated effectively yet in those countries, therefore limiting the number of petitions received. I also think, by the way, that this is another task we should take on ourselves and communicate more effectively in those countries, and throughout the EU, the depth of the right to petition and, more in general, the objective of our work.

**PJ:** *Thank you Mr. Iturgaiz for touching upon the very next topic I wanted to talk about. The Committee on Petitions, often defined "sui generis" and for a reason is, for several reasons, one of the front-offices of*

*the EU institutions and, as one EU Commission's high-ranking representative once defined us, the **Directive-Detective**. How do you think its role could be enhanced?*

**Iturgaiz Angulo MEP:** I think that there is the general feeling that the Committee and its current Members want to have more weight, so to speak, and engage the plenary more often and in a meaningful way. However, what remains the single most important duty of our Committee is to listen to the people, to have the chance to welcome them in on our meetings and have a chance to relate with them. We are, I think, the most political Committee, although non-legislative, and we need to engage with our citizens, the one we represent and that have directly elected us. In Spain, for example, and to talk about something I know intimately, there is no Petitions Committee [*like the one we have at the EP*] and the citizens resent this. On the other hand they can come here and many, many times we spark a reaction which ultimately provide citizens with some "resonance" and a solution, or at the very least an opinionated answer. You must know that any given Member-state might not fully understand what is going on but one thing I know for sure, they do not want to have problems with the European Union! [chuckles]

**PJ:** *How do you and the Petitions Committee intend to follow-up with this report, what about all the new petitions received on this issue? Do you think there'll be a chance to be part of this scenario projected by the Commissioner for the Environment -- Mr. Janez Potočnik -- about the creation of hun-*

*dreds of thousands of new jobs?*

**Iturgaiz Angulo MEP:** I would think that the Committee expects that much as it was the case with the Auken Report (on the general topic of Urbanization), the Iturgaiz Report will serve as some sort of indication in the future handling of petitions about Waste Management issues, regardless of where they come from. The new cases should be considered in the light of this significant result achieved by all the Members of the Committee and we should be spared the reinvention of the wheel for every single case. Besides, a letter should be sent to the petitioners in order to let them know that their grievances will be considered against the backdrop set by this Report. As for Mr. Potočnik scenario, I think we shall have a say and we should pursue collaboration. I started the interview with the example of consolidating color-codes for different types of refuse across the EU. This and other proposals can be discussed and implemented with the necessary cooperation of the European Commission and Member-states. In the next few weeks, after the approval of the Report to avoid any potential pressure, I will also meet some of the most dynamic actors of the European Waste-Management sector to understand how and where this Report can provide a stimulus towards the resolution of crisis situations.

**O**n this note **PJ** is thanked for its facilitating role in spreading the word of the Petitions Committee and, equally thankful, **PJ** shakes hands and goes back to work on its mission.

## THE PULSE

**I**sometimes think that working in the Petitions Committee and trying to effectively manage the concerns that so many European citizens and residents raise with us is equivalent to "**mission impossible**". Very few people these days believe in magic, and I am one of them, so therefore it becomes of utmost importance for the credibility of the institution, and indeed



l to r: Head of Unit -- Mr. David Lowe

for the petitions process itself, that we are able to function in the most transparent way while at the same time respecting the right to privacy of petitioners - some petitions after all, may be of a sensitive character. If solutions are to be found for local communities, and the citizens who live within them, it is usually the result of accurate information, hard work and patience. Members of the Committee are "experts" in this.

**I**t is vitally important that our petitioners are treated with respect, and properly informed about the different stages of our work, and my colleagues in the team do spend a lot of time doing just this behind the scenes. They also spend a great deal of time, when they are not assessing the new petitions or investigating them, explaining to other petitioners why their petition has been closed and on what basis the Committee has reached its decision. This may disappoint. Very often people are not content with the results obtained - or rather the lack of result. We need to provide explanations and justifications for our actions as

best we can, especially when the outcome is not favourable to the position adopted by petitioners - a position, which we must emphasise; we have a duty to respect. Very often our search for non-judicial remedies is equated with obtaining natural justice, beloved of many 18th century philosophers of the enlightenment, but no less important to the 500 million European citizens today. Parliamentary solutions to individual petitions are therefore generally political solutions - not specifically or technically legal solutions. This is especially true when dealing with petitions which raise allegations of possible breaches of fundamental rights, or a breach of the values and principles on which the European Union is founded. But, it is often precisely on these issues that other significant interests are in opposition, where Member States themselves have both the power and authority to act - and where they may indeed fail to act in the way which the Petitions Committee or some of its Members would like.

**R**ecent examples of this concern the media freedom and the denial of minority rights in Hungary which were debated on the floor of the House, though not directly on the basis of petitions received, in the presence of the Hungarian Prime Minister himself. The issue quite naturally saw the House divided but citizens were aware that they at least were being treated with respect, that different views had a right to be expressed, that the debate was fairly and generously reported, and that a solution was sought. Petitions Committee meetings are frequently a microcosm of such debates.

"Mission impossible" it is not.

David Lowe

### About the Committee's Activities

**T**he Committee on Petitions is an **investigative** committee, not a legislative committee; it tries to ensure **non-judicial** remedies are possible for citizens when their claims are substantiated. It can organise **fact-finding** visits and report to **plenary** thus playing a vital role in re-connecting with European citizens and in reinforcing the **democratic legitimacy** and accountability of the **EU decision-making process**. The right to petition, contained in the Treaty on European Union, is a fundamental right inextricably linked to its citizenship. It is an important and often **effective way** for people to be directly involved in the Parliament's activity and to have their concerns, proposals or complaints specifically addressed by the Committee members (**M.E.P.s**).

The **Committee** often responds to petitions from **EU citizens** by working to resolve possible infringements of citizens' rights under the Treaty and by cooperating with

national, regional and local authorities on **issues** related to the application of **European laws** on such subjects as the environment, social affairs, human rights, freedom of movement and so on. The Petition Committee besides being in charge of the Petitions has also responsibilities for organizing the election of the **European Ombudsman** and for reviewing and debating his Annual Report and Special Reports. The **European Ombudsman**, currently **Mr. P. Nikiforos Diamandouros**, is based in **Strasbourg** and is responsible for dealing with **complaints** about **maladministration** in EU institutions and bodies.

This **newsletter**, and its sister **web-site**, is where you will find **updated** contacts and current information about the work and **activities** of the Committee.

## Next Committee's Meeting

The Committee on Petitions' **next** meeting will take place on:

**Tuesday, 19 March, 15h00 - 18h30**  
**Wednesday, 20 March, 09h00 - 12h30**

The meeting will be held in room **ASP A1G-3** (3rd Floor) of the "**Altiero SPinelli**" (**ASP**) building.

## Highlights from the January Meeting



l to r: Mr. Jahr MEP and Ms. Mazzoni MEP

The month of **January** 2012 brought about two meetings of the **Committee on Petitions** but while the latter -- so-called "**Constitutive meeting**" -- dealt with the **election/acclamation** of the **President** and **Vice-President** posts, the former revolved around a stimulating **Agenda of the Meeting** featuring many issues raised by our fellow European citizens, making it relevant and representative. The results of the "**Constitutive meeting**" were already announced, almost in real-time, in last issue's "**The Pulse**". We will not dwell on it much longer then but we will take note again that the **President of the Committee on Petitions of the European Parliament** remains Ms. Erminia **Mazzoni MEP** (EPP, IT), a woman and a President (see top-right picture) reappointed by acclamation and with sound support, who showed in the first half of the



Ms. Adina-Ioana Vălean MEP

legislature to be ready, willing and able to engage **EU Institutions** in order to put the **European citizens** center-stage and provide him/her with the right outlet to voice grievances and complaints -- and the occasional compliment if **PETI Journal** may say so.

**T**he other meeting, instead, took place on January 12 -- all-day -- and the underlying atmosphere was best summed up by Mr. Gilles **Chichester MEP** whom, tongue-in-cheekishly, during the lively and largely positive second exchange of views on the **Vălean Report** on the **EU Citizenship Report 2010**, stated that the complimentary tone of all

the speakers must mean that the "Committee on Petitions is indeed still in Christmas mode". While that might have been the case, or not, it was certain that the all-day meeting gave a certain edge to the Committee which evidently does not feel its action diluted and imbues the debates with a sense of urgency and a focus which may otherwise be less evident. The morning did not see any discussion about petitions but it felt extremely beneficial to clear doubts about the direction that a number of dossiers and missions were taking. The meeting is, as usual, available on the internet as a video-on-demand and we strongly encourage you to go and watch it, but we will try our best to



l to r: Ms. Basescu MEP, Ms. Mazzoni MEP, Ms. Paliadelis MEP and Mr. Iturgaiz Angulo MEP

inform through our own reporting as well. **PETI Journal** would like to say that at the entrance of the meeting the secretariat and the Presidency circulated a thought-provoking and **forward-looking** study about **e-Democracy** and **e-Participation** produced by the **STOA** department of the European Parliament. While we cannot share it physically with you, we can provide you with a direct **link** and, again, encourage you to download it. We can only guarantee that it will be worth your while ([bit.ly/xofuut](http://bit.ly/xofuut)). The first point on the **Agenda of the Meeting** (#7) was concerned with the "EU Citizenship Report: Dismantling the obstacles to EU citizens' rights". The **Rapporteur** -- Ms. Adina-Ioana **Vălean MEP** -- was able to introduce this second exchange of views to an Assembly that showed its sincere engagement and that complimented, while also stating their own points and priorities, the Rapporteur and the staff of the secretariat for a very good work in listening to everyone's position and trying very hard to fit the respective political sensibilities within the general framework of a Report that is certainly on the right track to become another successful adoption both in Committee and later on in Plenary. One of the highlights of the debate must certainly be Mr. **Cashman MEP**'s brilliant sentence stating that "*human rights are only abstract until they affect us*". The deadline for amendments was spelled out and, as we close this issue, **PJ** is made aware that in the fashion of a truly, strongly, felt Report the number of amendments received is copious but a lot of good work is being poured into it, in order to make sure that compromises and shared positions may be attained. This goes to show once again that in the interest of the **EU citizens** no efforts are spared by any Member, and their respective political parties, to achieve maximum effectiveness over mere partisanship. Very good work, indeed!

### In a nutshell

**Speakers:** Ms. **Mazzoni**, Mr. **van Baalen**, Ms. **Vălean**, Ms. **Bănescu**, Mr. **Boștinăru**, Mr. **Becker**, Ms. **Ždanoka**, Mr. **Salavrakos**, Ms. **Nedelcheva**, Mr. **Cashman**, Mr. **Boulland**, Mr. **Martínez Martínez**

**Responsible Administrator:** Ms. **Sandu**

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## Highlights January ... continued



l to r: Mr. Salavrakos MEP and Ms. Werthmann MEP

Points # 8 and 9 on the **Agenda of the Meeting** are intertwined and would be better illustrated by treating them as one single point, that is the official proposal, brought forward by the European Commission to intitle the year 2013 as the “European Year of Citizens”. We, the people of the Committee on Petitions, obviously think it is a very fitting idea for many reasons that can be best summed up by stating that there is always more to be done in the long and winding road to the concept of European Citizenship. Especially in time of crisis and delusion. Ms. Sophie Bernaerts, the representative of the European Commission gave a heartfelt speech on how and why the proposal came to be and the strategy that the Commission intends to pursue to attain an involvement that shall start at EU level but that in order to be really effective shall propagate through the Member-states and reach that territorial level that throughout Europe will have to see local **Mayors, Provinces** and **Regions** backing this initiative up and filling it with relevant content for the citizens themselves to feel actively engaged.

The Members of the Committee before addressing Ms. Bernaerts went on to have a first exchange of views on the Opinion on the European Year of Citizens of which the Committee on Petitions is responsible. Getting into the subject, introduced by the Rapporteur -- Mr. Nikolaos

**Salavrakos MEP** -- provided, in fact, a solid backdrop against which consider the rough spots of the European Commission’s proposal and allowed Members to voice their concerns without sounding, necessarily, critical of a project that engenders the spirit of our Committee. **PETI Journal** needs to report that the debate was very much “on the money” and many were the points of contact between the presentation of the European Commis-



l to r: Ms. Sophie Bernaerts

### In a nutshell

**Speakers:** Ms. Mazzoni, Mr. Salavrakos, Mr. Jahr, Ms. Nedelcheva, Mr. Becker, Ms. Iotova  
**Responsible Administrators:** Ms. Chioti

sion (EC). Where the EC called for “multipliers” (including PETI amongst them), Mr. **Becker MEP** and Mr. **Jahr MEP** suggested a strong collaboration with NGOs such as “**Youth On The Move**” and with **Regional** institutions, capable of mobilizing and engage. When Ms. Bernaerts introduced the freedom of movement within the EU as the main meaning attached to being a European Citizen, according to a recent survey commissioned by the EC, the Members were quick to point out that students, professionals and civil society would need to be enrolled somehow to provide that kind of ripple effect that the European Commission is striving to achieve. When the European Commission’s representative had her final word to move on to the next point viewers and attendees witnessed that Ms.



l to r: Chairman of the Committee Ms. Erminia Mazzoni MEP

Bernaerts had certainly been taking notes and showed her approval for the ideas exchanged on the floor. A lot of decentralized activities and the involvement of grassroots movements was promised, as it was a special attention to the concepts of transparency, openness and a big effort to step up informing EU citizens of their rights, **PJ** includes amongst them the right to petition of course.

Concerns about the necessary funding, expressed by some Members, were also ad-

ressed and the European Commission guaranteed that the necessary financial backing will be provided to make sure that all of the finalized actions will have the means to be deployed. On this note, the Committee took notice of the first official presentation of the European Year and reinvigorated by the frank and seemingly sincere engagement of the European Commission promised to include all of it relevant suggestions into the Opinion on which Mr. Salavrakos MEP is working. **PETI Journal** will be alert throughtout 2012 and guarantees to report essential news to its readers as they become available in order to act both as a trusted source of information and as a “multiplier” of the finalized action-plan.



Mr. Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez MEP

## Highlights January ... continued

Point # 10 of the **Agenda of the Meeting** offered the opportunity to have a first exchange of views on the Report about the **Fact-Finding Visit (FFV) to Berlin** (23-24.11.2011). The visit, which coincidentally will be expanded upon in our column **"Part and Parcel"** on page 9 of this issue, became more and more topical and urgent as a number of very emotional petitions consistently pour in, denouncing alleged discrimination by the German authorities towards the non-German half of the couple (in mixed-nationality marriages). This first exchange of views was initiated with a frank account by the Head of Delegation Ms. Ileana Malinova **Iotova MEP**. While the visit itself had been enriching and provided Members and the Committee in general with a willing counterpart, Ms. **Iotova MEP** was quick to point out, she thought that some rough spots and misunderstandings could be further ironed out to provide the Committee a shared *modus operandi* -- it would be hoped -- capable of providing answers and sound advice to existing and future potential petitioners. There was some natural resistance



l to r: Ms. Werthmann MEP, Ms. Iotova MEP, Mr. Jahr MEP, Mr. Wieland MEP, Mr. Becker MEP and Mr. Boulland MEP in Berlin

towards a few statements perceived slightly judgmental by the German MEPs but, truth

be told, a little explanation on the side goes a long way and helped gliding

### In a nutshell

**Speakers:** Ms. **Mazzoni**, Ms. **Iotova**, Mr. **Boulland**, Mr. **Wieland**, Mr. **Jahr**, Mr. **Salavrakos**  
**Responsible Administrator:** Ms. **Chioti**

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When the Members of the Committee reconvened for the afternoon session after a short lunch break, the first issue to occupy the floor was point # 11 of the **Agenda of the Meeting**, a first exchange of views on the Report on the **Fact-Finding Visit (FFV) to Romania** (23-26.11.2011). Much like the debate about the Report that closed the morning session, dealing with the visit to Berlin, this mission had been building up momentum and the amount of energy released by the delegation (a full-length report about this visit was featured in the last issue of the **PETI Journal** which we encourage you to check out) on this visit had already reached great heights. A subtle **subtext** about avoiding side-taking on national political scenarios shifted, at times, the debate away from the sheer scope of the mission but a very thorough first report by the **Head of Delegation**, and President of the Petitions Committee, Ms. Erminia **Mazzoni MEP** was able to put the discussion back on track and win a general consensus about it. As **PETI Journal** has already provided ample coverage of the visit and the Report has not been finalized yet, we will not be able to analyze the Report in great detail but it can be said, nonetheless, that the delegation's work was considered very important to tackle a number of petitions with a clear sense of what goes on "on the ground" and while the political con-

frontation on the national level remains fierce, it is hoped that the Committee will be able to reconcile different views towards common positions. These results will not be achieved without much debating and needed compromises on all sides of the political scene but the Members remain alert and attentive to provide answers to the issues that petitioners legitimately address us to target. International **adoptions**, windmills in the **Dobrogea** region, goldmine in **Roşia Montană** and a few other issues will all found an outlet for a tackling strategy in the final Report and its recommendations. Meanwhil, **PETI Journal** can only testify to a very good start, willing and able to kindle fertile debates and to provide stimulus to build consensus and provide for the legitimate attention that the petitioners requested upon themselves.



a view of the PETI delegation to Romania

### In a nutshell

**Speakers:** Ms. **Mazzoni**, Mr. **Boştinaru**, Mr. **Preda**  
**Responsible Administrator:** Ms. **Sandu**

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## Highlights January ... continued



l to r: Mr. István Bebes, Ms. Hanna Maaret Halmeenpää, Ms. Helena Annikki Maijala, Mr. Hannes Heikkilä and Ms. Anne Bland

Following an unusual long string of Reports, all needing debates at the same time in the Committee, the Assembly moved right ahead to deal with point # 12 of the **Agenda**. The petition **1154/2010** originally introduced by Mr. Iroda Jakucs **Ugyvedi**, a Hungarian national, on behalf of Mr. István **Bebes**, was illustrated by Mr. Bebes himself. Without hesitating, Mr. **Bebes**, himself an elected official as the mayor of the city of **Körmen**d in Hungary, stated again what it was contained in the petition. In essence he maintains that the Hungarian government failed to meet its numerous promises to provide the city he administers with the necessary financial resources to restore **Körmen**d castle from its state of abandon. He adds that the promised funds were supposed to come from **EU-released funds** such as the Cohesion and Structural funds and demanded inquiries into the use of these funds. The **European Commission's** represen-

tative confirmed what they had already communicated and based on the principle that Structural Funds programmes are exclusive competence of the Member-state the **EC** was able to argue that as far as they were concerned no wrongdoing was to be found in the procedure. Mr. **Jahr MEP** and Mr. **Boştinaru MEP** begged to differ and argued otherwise, especially in the light of a perceived lack of transparency at the regional level. The evidence to stand this ground was there but unfortunately no additional detail or proof could be produced by the petitioner and the Committee decided to close the petition. The Members wanted to send a signal though and make sure to highlight that the Committee would remain alert therefore it was decided to send anyhow the petition to our corresponding Committee in the **Hungarian Parliament** and to address a letter to the **Regional Development Authority**.

### In a nutshell

**Speakers:** Ms. **Mazzoni**, Ms. **Jahr**, Mr. **Boştinaru**  
**Responsible Administrator:** Mr. **Pinto**

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The petitions treated under the point # 13 were both (**1042/2009** and **771/2010**) concerned with an alleged breach of the **Water Framework Directive 2006/118/EC** in **Finland**. In particular both petitioners -- Mr. Hannes **Heikkilä** and Ms. Anne **Bland** (see pictures above) -- maintain that when the Finnish authorities approved the **Turun Seudun Vesi Oy** artificial ground water project, did not take into account alternatives which would ultimately prevent the destruction of the special soil type, of the flora and of the fauna existing in the **Turku** region and in its **Natura2000** surroundings. Both petitioners are explicit in their request as they invite the **European Parliament** to inquire and investigate in the matter to effectively establish whether any breach of the European environmental legislation is indeed existing. The **European Commission's** representative, when given the floor, showed respect and knowledge of the question

at hand but could not do more than just restating what had been already its official position. **EC's** view is one that though acknowledging the area as a particularly enchanting one and granted that the **EC** itself launched an infringement procedure for the guilty delay of the Finnish government in transposing the **Groundwater Directive 2006/118/EC**, the case debated before the Committee did not provide any evidence conducive a conclusion that highlighted any potential breaching of EU law. Mr. **Jahr MEP** and Mr. **Martínez Martínez MEP** albeit being sympathetic with the petitioners could not find a valid counterpoint to the otherwise punctual statement by the Commission and the Committee decided then to close the petition though inviting the proponents to return to the Committee shall new elements arise warranting the re-opening of the case.

### In a nutshell

**Speakers:** Ms. **Mazzoni**, Mr. **Jahr**, Mr. **Martínez Martínez**

**Responsible Administrator:** Ms. **Leffler-Roth** [download the relevant files](#)

When the petition **971/2009** came to be discussed under point # 14 of the **Agenda of the Meeting** the Members already knew that this case was particularly interesting and that given what it had been known thus far, this petition should be naturally referred to in the Committee's upcoming Opinion on the **Water Framework Directive**. As a matter of fact, the Committee would rule that at the end of the debate but first things first and let's move back to the issue at the heart of this petition. Ms. Angela **Flanagan** and her son Mr. Paul Edward **Flanagan** raise a legitimate question to the fact that their municipal authority approved an allegedly defective sewerage

system which could ultimately pose a serious public health hazard since it would pollute the nearby Tullibardine spring supply. To make things even worse, the petitioners claim, as the polluted spring is the one serving their abode, they are required to furnish their system with a costly water treatment solution in order to be safe. **PETI Journal** would like to remind at this point that the reason the Committee identifies itself as the main interlocutor of the European citizens stems exactly from cases such as this one. They seem, at first sight, as individual cases not necessarily warranting the attention of the EU Institutions but we think otherwise and no single case is ever small enough to build up that sense of

## Highlights January ... continued



l to r: Mr. Paul E. Flanagan, Ms. Angela Flanagan

belonging and vicinity that should bind the **EU Institutions**, and this is especially true of the European Parliament, to its citizens who elect it every five years. The **European Commission**, diligent in doing its homework,

proved again on top of the things and though not extremely helpful illustrated how and why there was not much that it could do as the **Tullibardine Spring Supply** seems to be regarded as a private water supply whose maintenance would rest with its users. The Committee, especially its President -- Ms. Erminia **Mazzoni MEP** -- and Mr. **Jahr MEP** decided to **keep** the petition **open** and to address a **letter** to the **Scottish Executive** and relevant **local authority**. This, it is hoped, would put some political pressure and could provide meaningful results. The Members also decided to send the file to the **Committee on Environment** for information.

### In a nutshell

**Speakers:** Ms. **Mazzoni**, Mr. **Jahr**

**Responsible Administrator:** Mr. **Heezen**

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**P**etition **1772/2009** - point **15** of the **Agenda** -- by Helena **Maijala** -- was not on the floor of the Committee for the first time as it was also discussed the last month of May. The petitioners (see **picture** box on page 7) have reinforced their points about the potential construction of a nuclear plant in **Hanhikivi** posing a serious threat to the local ecosystem and possibly being in breach of **Directive 79/409/EEC** and **92/43/EEC**. The lay of the land, though, as illustrated by the European Commis-

sioner's representative, and to a certain extent confirmed by the petitioners, is that being still at a designating stage, no final decisions had been assumed by either **Fennovoima** (the owner of the future plant) or the Finnish government. The Committee took note of the update and decided to **keep** the petition **open** while at the same time **remaining** vigilant and inviting the petitioner to **alert** it in case things shall start to move.

### In a nutshell

**Speakers:** Ms. **Mazzoni**, Ms. **Werthmann**

**Responsible Administrator:** Ms. **Leffler-Roth**

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**W**hile point **18 (1078/2009)** was postponed to a later date, points # **16; 17** and **18**, collectively dealing with four petitions (**346/2011; 356/2011; 361/2011** and **471/2011**) were discussed with no success. The European Commission's representative did in fact maintain its previous position and lacking any new, solid evidence, the Committee had not other

choice but **closing** the files. The notable exception was represented by petition **471/2011** which points out at the dangers of a nuclear power plant bordering the European Union in Estonia. This case, it was determined, would be sent to the **EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee** for information and the Committee would remain alert.

### In a nutshell

**Speakers:** Mr. **Jahr**

**Responsible Administrator:** Mr. **Heezen**

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**T**he **November** meeting **ended** with the **secretariat's** **proposals** to **close** a number of **petitions** in the light of the **European Commission's** written **reply** and/or other documents **received**. All of the proposals were approved except for point # **21** (the **Agenda of the Meeting** can be downloaded [here](#)) which will be kept **open** for further **enquiry**.

## Schedule of Meetings 2012

Thursday, 12 January, 09.00-12.30  
Thursday, 12 January, 15.00-18.30

Monday, 27 February, 15.00-18.30  
Tuesday, 28 February, 09.00-12.30

Monday, 19 March, 15.00-18.30  
Tuesday, 20 March, 09.00-12.30

Tuesday, 24 April, 09.00-12.30  
Tuesday, 24 April, 15.00-18.30

Tuesday, 8 May, 09.00-12.30  
Tuesday, 8 May, 15.00-18.30



Tuesday, 19 June, 09.00-12.30  
Tuesday, 19 June, 15.00-18.00

Thursday, 12 July, 09.00-12.30  
Thursday, 12 July, 15.00-18.30

Wednesday, 19 September, 15.00-18.30  
Thursday, 20 September, 09.00-12.30

Monday, 8 October, 15.00-18.30  
Tuesday 9 October, 09.00-12.30

Tuesday, 6 November, 09.00-12.30  
Tuesday, 6 November, 15.00-18.30

Monday, 3 December, 15.00-18.30



## Part and Parcel



l to r: three moments of the very informative meetings -- and lunch -- with their German counterparts, attended by the PETI delegation when visiting Berlin

There are times when duties just add up and going the extra-mile is both necessary and even commendable. On November 24, 2011 that became unmistakably clear when alongside the Fact-Finding Visit (FFV) to Romania (of which we reported about in our last issue) the Committee, its Members and secretariat, faced a second concurring, and just as delicate, mission to Berlin. In Germany's capital city, the Members of the Committee, headed by Ms. Iliana Iotova MEP and comprising the Members of the children's rights working group -- Mr. Philippe Boulland MEP, Ms. Angelica Werthmann MEP, Mr. Heinz K. Becker and Ms. Kolarska-Bobińska MEP would research a better understanding of a few German national Institutions. Supplemented by the two *ex-officio* Members -- Mr. Jahr MEP and Mr. Wieland MEP -- the delegation went on to meet, most notably, with both the Petitions Committee counterpart and the Committee on Family, Senior, Women and Youth of the German Bundestag and with the Jugendamt, the German child and youth welfare offices.



l to r: Ms. Werthmann MEP, Mr. Jahr MEP, Ms. Iotova MEP, Mr. Wieland MEP, Mr. Becker MEP and Mr. Boulland MEP in Berlin

The Committee on Petitions of the European Parliament needed to embark on this FFV with no hesitation as it continuously deal with petitions concerning alleged discrimination and mismanagement by the Jugendamt towards the non-German citizen parent. Tackling any issue is always a very delicate task, especially when it comes to the trans-national, pan-European nature of the EU, but when on top of it, the cases become emotionally charged by the presence of minors and the feelings of the succumbing partners, dealing with them requires the kind of bedside manners that only come with years of experience and a little bit of that human touch. Luckily, Petitions Committee Members seem to have both attributes in their toolbox but it still is a demanding job.



Mr. Philippe Boulland MEP

recurring comments -- it shall be noted here -- that the German interlocutors of the Committee stressed that the Jugendamt is not a court but an administrative body. While the aim of this visit, this being true of all

the Fact-Finding Visits of the Petitions Committee regardless of the visited Member-state, is to discover and learn how things work at the national level -- in order to find satisfying working solution -- the necessary questioning involved may feel wrongly, PETI Journal would like to state that here, more inquisitive than informative.

That is most certainly not the mission of our delegations though. The morning meetings came to an end with a very informative exchange with the Chairperson of the Committee on Petitions of the Bundestag -- Ms. Kersten Steinke. Through her, PETI learned that because of the federal nature of the German state, there was no help that her Committee could provide in cases concerned with the Jugendamt, as all Jugendamts fall under the responsibility of the federal states (Länder). Meeting up with PETI's counterpart at the Bundestag proved very satisfying. The delegation was able to discuss briefly the upcoming European Citizens Initiative (ECI) and paved the way towards trying and establishing a *modus operandi* when referring

petitioners from the Member-state level to the European one, and vice-versa. Equally engaging was also the audition with representatives of the International Social Service (ISS) whom explained how competences are assigned to different social services which then report back to the Jugendamt (or the the competent Courts) thus allowing for thorough analysis of the given cases with first-hand information gathered both in Germany and abroad. Lightly touched upon was also the case of a number of self-branded international Associations who do not seem to provide genuine advice to their members, on the contrary enhancing dramatically the level of conflict between parents and possibly with Germany.

It was right after this meeting that the delegation had a light lunch with some of its interlocutors before leaping into an afternoon as intense and enriching as any. The chance to spend the break together was extremely beneficial and helped to get to know each other, albeit it did not prove entirely sufficient to dissipate a whimsical askanceness in the looks when getting down again to understanding Jugendamt procedures. The afternoon session proved particularly topical when the delegation met with, amongst other, the Director of the Berlin Charlottenburg/Wilmersdorf Jugendamt - Ms. Uta von Pirani. As it was noted earlier, perhaps there may be some underlying misunderstanding on the fact that no judgement is sought by the delegation. The information gathered serves solely the purpose to fully comprehend, as an example, the appealing procedures to Jugendamt's decisions or the exact mission of a Jugendamter actions. Whatever the case though, the rest of the mission was gripping and thought-provoking and even in its tense moments could be best summed up by a statement by Mr. Boulland MEP who made sure, clearly and unequivocally that the meeting had provided "a new basis for a better collaboration between the Committee on Petitions and the competent German authorities". On this note our reporting takes a pause. Findings and recommendations of the delegation will be shared with our loyal followers when the Report will be adopted.

## Meet the M.E.P.s

Once the first round of interviews with the Coordinators of the political groups was under its belt, *PETI Journal* determined it would be just about time to exchange a few words with the Members of the Committee that every day engender the spirit of the Assembly and the associated right to petition through their tireless work for their local constituencies, and in the general interest of the European citizen. As we start over from the largest political group -- EPP -- Ms. Mariya Ivanova Nedelcheva MEP's constant hard-work and dedication, to her own Bulgarian people and to the citizen at large, did not go unnoticed and warranted her the first spot on *PJ*'s agenda. With that in mind, as the Parliament heads to Strasbourg, *PJ* confirms its time slot and is reassured by the fact that Ms. Nedelcheva MEP will talk to us in between the topical votes that would eventually change the Bureau of the European Parliament for the second part of the 7th Legislature. When *PJ* reaches her office it was clear it was in for a great interview. Ms. Nedelcheva MEP would grant us a candid view of her commitment, straying from trite political clichés. Upon entering, *PJ* was offered



Ms. Mariya Ivanova Nedelcheva MEP

a nice seat and through the time it took to unholster the digital recorder and start questioning her, Ms. Nedelcheva MEP, in an elegant light grey suit, focused on the task at hand and emanated a vibrant, perceivable energy which fed us throughout.

*PJ*: What do you think of the right to petition the European Parliament as a general principle included in the Treaties?

**Nedelcheva MEP**: Hello and thank you for this interview. I like the *PETI Journal* and am happy to be in it. I think that the right to petition is a fundamental one and it is commendable that the fathers of our treaties decided to give it a permanent legal basis. After the Lisbon Treaty the powers of the European Parliament have been greatly enhanced and it would not hurt to remember here that the European Parliament is still the only EU institution directly elected by the European people. It is just normal, then, that it provides for a way to protect its citizens, a very large constituency. When it comes to this question I also like to note that the number of petitions this Committee receives every year can be seen as two sides of the same medal. On one hand it shows that Europe, for the most part, is engendered by a mature civil society that is not afraid to speak up and to refer things to the European Parliament as the Treaty entitles them. On the other hand, however, as the experience on this Committee can teach you, a large part of the petitions we examine could be resolved with improved democratic dynamics and sheer communications at Member-state level.

*PJ*: Your answer opens up new spaces. Our readers would be very interested to know what are your feelings about the special procedure available to the Committee on Petitions. I am talking about the fact-finding visits (FFV) and all that it implies as a way for the European Parliament to gather first-hand knowledge of the issues at hand at Member-state level.

**Nedelcheva MEP**: I like to look at fact-finding visits (FFV) under two points of view. The Committee considers a FFV as a measure of last resort when many petitions come in about the same area/region and after a reasonable amount of time in which nothing seems to happen. In that case a FFV bears both the *gravitas* of a visit from the European Institutions to send a reassuring message to the European citizens and a wake-up call to the local and national Administrations in charge of solving the case at hand. This is one facet of a fact-finding visit and it is the more symbolic one, then you have another facet, one that allows Members after having discussed the case from papers to see with their own two eyes what goes on "on the ground", oftentimes triggering the tackling strategy that will

then be adopted by the Committee collectively. In terms of accelerating the process there is nothing better than that. We are there, we see things, we are mostly with representatives of the local governments and we can pose the right questions avoiding the delays of more formal requests. These would be the two aspects I consider the most but over the last few years, at least since I have been a Member of *PETI*, I have also witnessed something that deeply worries me and that I think would be particularly fitting to be voiced in our *PETI Journal*. I am afraid that "nationalizing" the fact-finding visits, that is using them to pursue personal or party's agendas on a national level detract from the strength and importance of our role *vis-à-vis* the petitioners and our national counterparts. I have seen that happening and I hope we can all together stay away from it. We claim, and most certainly tend to be, independent in our analysis and we have to remain neutral in order to guarantee more effective dialogue with the petitioners.

*PJ*: Our readers shall be aware that although they may be reading this interview in English or Bulgarian, the original version was in French because your French, benefiting from several years of studies abroad, is pitch-perfect. *PJ* thinks that Members can effectively work in their own language aided by the brilliant work of our fellow-colleagues translators and interpreters, however being able to fully engage in other languages other than one's own must provide some sense of ease when dealing in such an international environment. Is this assumption correct and if so to which extent?

**Nedelcheva MEP**: Thank you for your question [graciously smiling n.d.a.]. I think that you certainly touched upon an important subject. I agree, it is not strictly necessary to be able to speak more languages fluently but, as it is said, when one learns a language, one also learns the culture underlying it and it inevitably opens one's mind providing insightful views on other people's culture. It is enriching to have the possibility to look at things from different points of view and it adds greatly to the capacity of empathizing with fellow colleagues, citizens and even counterparts. That is why it is important to maintain all of the programs promoting cultural exchanges between the Member-states at all costs because only this kind of international exposure can guarantee for future generations ability to analyze events in a true trans-national fashion rather than through tired, national-only, old categories.

*PJ*: What kind of advice would you offer Member-states in order to improve their application of EU law?

**Nedelcheva MEP**: This is a difficult question. It really is. As long as the European Union will not be a true political union it will be very hard to oblige the correct and timely implementation of EU law in Member-states. In fact it is in the name. What is a directive after all. A prescription towards a result that leaves (too much) room to reach it. This proves very frustrating to the citizens that may witness certain Member-states implementing EU law effectively and as soon as possible and other lagging behind and providing less protection. This, I believe, is yet another aspect in which the Committee on Petitions has a little but important role perfectly carved out for itself, thanks to our direct contact with the citizens and through the outreach means that the secretariat has put in place.

*PJ*: Is there any special power you would like to see attributed to the Committee on Petitions?

**Nedelcheva MEP**: It is not about new or more far-reaching powers. I think that the Lisbon Treaty provides the Petitions Committee with enough, forceful powers. What the big challenge will be entails filling those powers with meaningful actions in the interest of the European citizenry. We are now witnessing the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) and we have had a crucial role in defining it and I would hope and wish that we will be looking at things closely and provide precious feedback about it. We shall also not back down and request a role in it for us as we are the de-facto Committee when it comes to dealing with the citizens. To me our Committee is a symbol and we all know how symbols are important.

On this note the interview was cut short by a call from her assistant inviting her to go to Plenary and, as you can see, *PJ* enthusiastic tone was no hype as Ms. Nedelcheva MEP engaged us and our readers with very provoking reflections.

## Meet the M.E.P.s (Bulgarian version)

След първия кръг от интервюта с координаторите на политическите групи **PETI Journal** реши, че е точното време да разменим няколко думи с членовете на Комисията по петиции, които всеки ден поддържат духа ѝ и свързаното с нея право на петиции чрез неуморната си работа в името на своите местни избиратели и в общ интерес на европейските граждани. Тъй като започваме от най-голямата политическа група - ЕНП - постоянната работа и отдаденост на г-жа Мария Неделчева в името на собствения ѝ български народ и на гражданите като цяло не остават незабелязани и оправдано ѝ отреждат първото място в дневния ред на **PJ**. Имайки предвид това, тъй като Парламентът се отправя към сесията си в



M. Mariya Ivanova Неделчева

Страсбург, **PJ** потвърждава времето на срещата и е успокоен от факта, че г-жа Неделчева, член на ЕП ще разговаря с нас във времето на актуалните избори, които в крайна сметка ще променят Бюрото на Европейския парламент във втората част на 7-ми законодателен мандат.

Когато **PJ** стигна до офиса ѝ беше ясно, че предстои голямо интервю. Че г-жа Неделчева ще направи един откровен преглед на ангажиментите си, като се отгърси от политическите клишета. След въвеждането ни офиса ни беше пред-

ложено удобно място и през времето, необходимо за включване на цифровото записващо устройство и началото на разговора, г-жа Неделчева, член на ЕП, в елегантен светлосив костюм, се фокусира върху задачата, излъчвайки жизнена, доловима енергия, която впоследствие ни предаде.

**PJ:** Какво мислите за правото да отправят петиции до Европейския парламент като общ принцип, включен в Договорите?

**М. Неделчева:** Здравейте, благодаря Ви за това интервю. Харесвам **PETI Journal** и съм щастлива да бъда в него. Мисля, че правото на петиции е основно и е хубаво, че бащите на нашите договори са решили да му се даде постоянно правно основание. След Договора от Лисабон правомощията на Европейския парламент значително се увеличиха и не пречи да напомним, че Европейският парламент е единствената институция на ЕС, която се избира пряко от европейските граждани. И е просто нормално той да осигури начин да защити своите граждани и тъй като стана дума за това, също бих искала да отбележа, че броят на петициите, които тази комисия получава всяка година, може да се разглежда като двете страни на една и съща монета. От една страна показва, че Европа, в по-голямата си част, има едно зряло гражданско общество, което не се страхува да говори открито и да отправя въпросите си към Европейския парламент, както е залегнало в Договора. От друга страна, обаче, както показва опитът в тази комисия, голяма част от петициите, които разглеждаме, могат да бъдат решени с подобряване на демократичните динамики и ясната комуникация на ниво държава-членка.

**PJ:** Вашият отговор открива нови пространства. На нашите читатели ще бъде много интересно да узнаят, какви са Вашите позиции относно специалната процедура, която е на разположение на Комисията по петиции. Говоря за Посещенията с цел установяването на факти и всичко, което те представляват като начин за Европейския парламент да събере информация от първа ръка на ниво държава-членка.

**М. Неделчева:** Предпочитам да гледам на посещенията с цел установяването на факти от две аспекта. Комитетът приема тези посещения като последна мярка, след като са получени много петиции от една и съща област / регион и след изтичането на определен период от време, в който изглежда нищо не се е случило. В този случай проучвателните посещения имат значението както на посещение на европейските институции, което да изпрати насърчително послание до европейските граждани, така и на сигнал за събуждане до местните и национални администрации, отговарящи за разрешаването на проблема. Това е единият аспект на посещенията за установяване на факти и той е по-скоро символичен. Има обаче и друг аспект, който позволява на членовете, след като са обсъдили делото

по документи, да видят със собствените си очи това, което се случва "на терена", често задействайки стратегията за решаване на проблема, която да бъде колективно приета от Комисията по петиции. По отношение на ускоряване на процеса няма нищо по-добро от това. Ние сме там, ние виждаме нещата, ние сме през по-голямата част от времето с представителите на местните правителства и можем да зададем правилните въпроси, за да се избегне още по-голямото забавяне на официалните запитвания. Това са двата аспекта, които аз взимам предвид най-много, но през последните няколко години или поне откакто съм член на **PETI**, съм свидетел също така на нещо, което дълбоко ме тревожи и мисля, че ще бъде особено подходящо да се каже чрез **PJ**. Опасявам се, че чрез "национализирането" на проучвателните посещения, които се използват, за да се преследват лични интереси или такива от дневния ред на партията на национално ниво, се отнема от силата и значението на нашата роля по отношение на вносителите на петиции, както и на националните ни колеги. Виждала съм подобно нещо да се случва и се надявам да можем всички заедно да стоим далеч от това. Ние твърдим че сме и най-вероятно сме независими в нашия анализ и трябва да останем неутрални, за да се гарантира по-ефективен диалог с вносителите на петицията.

**PJ:** Трябва да бъде ясно на читателите ни, че дори и да четат това интервю на английски или български, оригиналната версия е на френски, защото Вашият френски, след няколко години обучение в чужбина, е повече от перфектен. **PJ** е на мнение, че членовете на парламента могат ефективно да работят на собствения си език, подпомагани от брилянтната работа на техните колеги преводачи. Въпреки всичко, способността да комуникират и работят на езици, различни от собствения си би трябвало да улеснява работата в международна среда. Вярно ли е това предположение и ако да до колко?

**М. Неделчева:** Благодаря Ви за този въпрос [бел.ред. с любезна усмивка]. Мисля, че засегнахте важна тема. Съгласна съм, че не е абсолютно задължително да говориш свободно повече езици, но както се казва, когато човек научи един език, той научава и неговата култура и това неизбежно отваря съзнанието му към по-дълбок поглед за културата на другите. Обогастващо е да погледнеш нещата от различна гледна точка и помага много да симпатизираш на колегите си, и на гражданите. За това е важно на всяка цена да се запазят всички програми, които подпомагат културния обмен между държавите членки, защото само този вид излагане на международна среда може да гарантира способността на бъдещите поколения да анализират събитията по международен начин, а не през остарялата, чисто национална, призмата.

**PJ:** Какъв съвет бихте дала на държавите членки за подобряване прилагането на Европейското законодателство?

**М. Неделчева:** Това е труден въпрос. Наистина е такъв. Докато ЕС не стане истински политически съюз ще бъде много трудно да се осигури правилно и навременно прилагане на Европейското право в държавите членки. Всъщност, това си личи и от името. В края на краищата какво е една директива - препоръка към даден резултат, която остава (прекомерна) свобода за това как да бъде постигнат този резултат. Това може да е доста обезсърчаващо за гражданите, които стават свидетели как определени държави-членки прилагат ефективно и бързо правото на ЕС, и други, които изостават и осигуряват по-слаба защита. Вярвам, че това е още един аспект, в който Комисията по петиции има малка, но много важна роля, която е извоювала за себе си благодарение на директния ѝ контакт с гражданите, и чрез средствата за достъп, които секретариатът е създал.

**PJ:** Има ли определени правомощия, които бихте искала да бъдат дадени на Комисията по петиции?

**М. Неделчева:** Не става дума за нови или по-обхватни правомощия. Мисля, че договора от Лисабон дава на Комисията по петиции достатъчно и силни правомощия. Голямото предизвикателство ще бъде да изпълним тези правомощия със смислени действия в интерес на европейското гражданство.

Сега сме свидетели на Европейската гражданска инициатива и имаме решаваща роля в нейното дефиниране. Ще се надявам, че ще наблюдаваме развитието ѝ от близо и ще даваме ценна обратна връзка за нея. В никакъв случай не трябва да се отказваме да изискваме роля за нас в инициативата, защото де факто ние сме комисията, която се занимава с гражданите. За мен нашата комисия е символична и ние всички знаем колко важни са символите.

На това място интервюто бе прекъснато за кратко от асистента ѝ, поканвайки я да отиде в пленарна зала, но както виждате, **PJ** има много позитивно отношение, защото М. Неделчева представи на нас и на читателите ни някои много провокационни размисли.

## About this publication

The on-going efforts, at the Secretariat of the Petition (**PETI**) Committee and, more in general, at the European Parliament, head towards one single goal, that is both its mission and its vision: to serve the people of Europe effectively and respectfully. This new communication tool that you hold in your hands is fully serving its mission if it will allow for two-way conversation. The **PETI Journal** is intended for both on-line and off-line fruition. The secretariat tried hard to maintain the same characteristics but in order to avoid very lengthy and hard-to-remember links all of the external websites references are intended in an on-line, click-through, fashion. As a general thumbrule, external links and documents are generally highlighted either by the presence of a discreet icon or through an underlining of the keywords/sentence.

If you picked up, or subscribed to, this newsletter it is because you want to know **PETI's** activities better. The Secretariat would like to get to know you better too. Yes indeed, you can petition the Parliament **ONLY** complying with the procedures described on our web-site and, let us be clear about this, **petitions** can be officially considered as such only if they are submitted through the *appropriate means*. However, that does not mean that a dialogue with the readers would hurt. On the contrary the Secretariat believes that the more the dialogue, the better it is for the Union, our Union.

Let the **PETI** Secretariat know who you are, where you are, what piques your interests and what you consider it might be an useful addition to the editorial content. The Secretariat cannot promise it will abide but will certainly consider the best suggestions.

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**About the editor:**

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