


# Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	<a href="#">1998/2005(INI)</a>	Procedure completed
Committee on Petitions. Annual report 1997-1998		
Subject 1.20.03 Right of petition 8.40.01.06 Committees, interparliamentary delegations		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	<b>PETI</b> Petitions	PPE <a href="#">FONTANA Alessandro</a>	05/02/1998

Key events			
01/01/1998	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
23/06/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
23/06/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary	<a href="#">A4-0250/1998</a>	
16/07/1998	Debate in Parliament		
16/07/1998	Decision by Parliament	T4-0452/1998	Summary
16/07/1998	End of procedure in Parliament		
21/09/1998	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1998/2005(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 227-p7
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	PETI/4/09653

Documentation gateway				
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		<a href="#">A4-0250/1998</a> <a href="#">OJ C 292 21.09.1998, p. 0003</a>	23/06/1998	EP

## Committee on Petitions. Annual report 1997-1998

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The Committee adopted the report presented by Sandro FONTANA (EPP, I), on its activities for 1997-98. In his report Mr Fontana drew Parliament's attention to the importance of the right of petition as enshrined in the Treaties and to its role in the building of Europe. He emphasised that Parliament did not have any real power to initiate legislation, even though this is a characteristic power of parliaments in all the democratic countries of the world. The result, he said, was that EU legislation did not emerge from the grass roots, i.e. the electorate and their representatives elected by universal suffrage, but from on high, i.e. the Commissioners designated by the governments and the Council of Ministers. There was thus a serious democracy deficit, he argued, which would only be remedied "when we move beyond the present situation, under which Parliament only has powers of co-decision, to one in which it has genuine powers to initiate legislation". Hence the importance of a petitions committee which recorded the expectations and complaints voiced by the public with regard to EU directives and was able to suggest to Parliament and the Union ways in which these directives might be modified. Mr Fontana's report listed a number of cases illustrating how, thanks to the Petitions Committee, the Council had been obliged to alter certain directives which were a hindrance rather than a help to European integration. In this connection, Ms SCHMIDBAUER (PES, D) tabled an amendment, which was adopted unanimously, regretting that the Council had ignored not only the committee's requests concerning failures to implement, or infringements of, Community law but also its call for regular attendance by Council officials at committee meetings. ?

## Committee on Petitions. Annual report 1997-1998

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Adopting the report by Mr Alessandro Fontana (UPE, I) on the deliberations of the Committee on Petitions during the parliamentary year 1997 to 1998, Parliament draws attention to the importance of the right of petition enshrined in the Treaties, not only for the Union's citizens and residents but also for its Institutions. It emphasises that the right of petition ensures the Union's citizens of the possibility of full democratic participation and information; however there are not sufficient staff to carry out this task; it thus reiterates its call for the appropriate resources to ensure that citizens are properly informed of their right of petition. By this means it seeks to remain in permanent contact with public opinion while improving its monitoring of the general operation of the Community. Emphasising the greater use of information technologies, it welcomes the proposal to enable petitions to be accepted via the Internet and calls on the relevant departments to put this into practice. It regrets that the Council has ignored the Committee's summonses concerning serious failures to implement, or infringement of, Community law and its call for regular attendance by Council officials at committee meetings. It hopes that there will be an improvement in the action taken by Member States in cases in which infringements are reported. It instructs its committees to continue to give careful consideration to the petitions referred to them, ensure they are adequately followed up, and consider the possibility of including in their current and future programme of work the petitions referred to them as falling within their province. ?