

# Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	<a href="#">2011/2182(INI)</a>	Procedure completed
EU citizenship report 2010: dismantling the obstacles to EU citizens' rights		
Subject 1.20 Citizen's rights		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	<b>PETI</b> Petitions		06/09/2011
		ALDE <a href="#">VĂLEAN Adina</a>	
		Shadow rapporteur	
		PPE <a href="#">BOULLAND Philippe</a>	
		S&D <a href="#">GERINGER DE OEDENBERG Lidia Joanna</a>	
		Verts/ALE <a href="#">ŽDANOKA Tatjana</a>	
		EFD <a href="#">SALAVRAKOS Nikolaos</a>	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	<b>EMPL</b> Employment and Social Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	<b>ENVI</b> Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	<b>ITRE</b> Industry, Research and Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	<b>IMCO</b> Internal Market and Consumer Protection		05/09/2011
		S&D <a href="#">GRECH Louis</a>	
	<b>TRAN</b> Transport and Tourism	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
<b>CULT</b> Culture and Education		18/11/2010	
	ALDE <a href="#">LØKKEGAARD Morten</a>		
<b>JURI</b> Legal Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.		
<b>LIBE</b> Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs		12/07/2011	
	Verts/ALE <a href="#">ŽDANOKA Tatjana</a>		
<b>AFCO</b> Constitutional Affairs		12/07/2011	
	S&D <a href="#">GURMAI Zita</a>		
<b>FEMM</b> Women's Rights and Gender Equality	The committee decided not to give an opinion.		

## Key events

27/10/2010	Non-legislative basic document published	<a href="#">COM(2010)0603</a>	Summary
15/09/2011	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
28/02/2012	Vote in committee		
06/03/2012	Committee report tabled for plenary	<a href="#">A7-0047/2012</a>	Summary
29/03/2012	Results of vote in Parliament		
29/03/2012	Debate in Parliament		
29/03/2012	Decision by Parliament	<a href="#">T7-0120/2012</a>	Summary
29/03/2012	End of procedure in Parliament		

## Technical information

Procedure reference	2011/2182(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	PETI/7/06794

## Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		<a href="#">COM(2010)0603</a>	27/10/2010	EC	Summary
Committee draft report		<a href="#">PE473.706</a>	10/11/2011	EP	
Committee opinion	<b>AFCO</b>	<a href="#">PE472.270</a>	08/12/2011	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		<a href="#">PE480.601</a>	20/01/2012	EP	
Committee opinion	<b>CULT</b>	<a href="#">PE474.001</a>	24/01/2012	EP	
Committee opinion	<b>IMCO</b>	<a href="#">PE473.707</a>	25/01/2012	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		<a href="#">A7-0047/2012</a>	06/03/2012	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		<a href="#">T7-0120/2012</a>	29/03/2012	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		<a href="#">SP(2012)426</a>	18/07/2012	EC	

## EU citizenship report 2010: dismantling the obstacles to EU citizens' rights

PURPOSE: to present EU citizenship report 2010 on dismantling the obstacles to EU citizens' rights.

BACKGROUND: as the Court of Justice of the European Union has stated on several occasions, EU citizenship is destined to be the

fundamental status of Member States' nationals, enabling those who find themselves in the same situation to enjoy within the scope of the Treaty the same treatment in law irrespective of their nationality. The Court has, in particular, ruled that citizens are entitled to reside in another Member State purely as citizens of the Union, thus recognising EU citizenship as a source of the right of free movement.

The entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty strengthened the notion of EU citizenship and its accompanying rights in several ways. The right of EU citizens in third countries to enjoy protection by the consular and diplomatic authorities of all Member States is enshrined as a clear individual right in the TFEU and the Lisbon Treaty complements citizenship rights by introducing a new right, the Citizens' Initiative, which enables one million citizens to invite the Commission to bring forward legislative proposals.

The rights inherent in EU citizenship are further enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, which is legally binding. In addition, EU citizenship rights are firmly anchored in primary EU law and substantially developed in secondary law. Those who are taking advantage of the European project by extending aspects of their life beyond national borders, through travel, study, work, marriage, retirement, buying or inheriting property, voting, or just shopping online from companies established in other Member States should fully enjoy their rights under the Treaties.

However, a gap still remains between the applicable legal rules and the reality confronting citizens in their daily lives, particularly in cross-border situations. The large number of complaints and enquiries the Commission receives every year, recent Eurobarometer surveys, and discussions with stakeholders, provide ample evidence of the many obstacles standing in the way of citizens' enjoyment of their rights. The European Parliament's report on [Problems and prospects concerning European citizenship](#) detailed persistent obstacles to the cross-border enjoyment of rights and called on the Commission to list these obstacles and to make concrete proposals for addressing them.

The Commission seeks now to reinforce EU citizenship, by revitalising the link between the citizens and the EU and by giving real effect to their rights. This report shows how EU citizenship brings rights and benefits to citizens. It describes main obstacles that citizens still encounter in their daily lives when they exercise their EU rights across national borders and outlines the measures envisaged to empower them to enjoy their rights.

The report is issued in parallel with the Communication "[Towards a Single Market Act: For a social market economy](#)", which focuses on the elimination of obstacles by Europeans when exercising their rights conferred to them by the Single market acquis, i.e. when they are acting as economic operators within the Single market, for instance as entrepreneurs, consumers or workers.

CONTENT: the report aims to tap into EU citizens' ideas, concerns and expectations, whilst bringing them closer together in the process. It is intended to open a debate and exchange on how EU citizenship can fulfil its potential in terms of enhancing Europeans' life chances by delivering concrete benefits that will have a visible impact.

In many of the areas, the lack of EU legislation is not the main reason why citizens are facing obstacles in the exercise of their rights. In some instances, the existing rules need to be expanded or updated or even radically overhauled to keep pace with evolving socio-economic or technological realities.

The majority of actions identified to dismantle obstacles fall into three main categories:

- actions effectively enforcing EU rights;
- those that make their enjoyment easier in practice, and
- measures raising awareness about them.

The EU needs to deliver at all these levels to make sure that citizens' rights are a tangible reality. This report identifies 25 short- and medium-term initiatives for tackling the obstacles to citizens' enjoyment of their rights. The Commission will:

1. make it easier for international couples (either married or registered partners) to know which courts have jurisdiction and which law applies to their property rights (e.g. a jointly owned house) by proposing a legislative instrument in 2011;
2. facilitate the free circulation of civil status documents (e.g. birth certificates) by proposing legislative instruments in 2013;
3. enable both citizens and legal practitioners to easily find multilingual information on justice via the European e-Justice web portal;
4. further improve the protection of persons suspected and accused in criminal proceedings, including safeguarding suspects' access to a lawyer and communication with the outside world while in detention, by proposing two legislative instruments in 2011;
5. improve the protection of victims of crime by proposing a package of measures, including a legislative instrument, in 2011;
6. simplify the formalities and conditions for the registration of cars previously registered in another Member State by proposing a legislative instrument in 2011;
7. propose to facilitate access to cross-border healthcare and is also putting in place pilot actions to equip Europeans with secure online access to their medical health data and to achieve widespread deployment of telemedicine services by 2020;
8. increase the effectiveness of the right of EU citizens to be assisted in third countries, including in times of crisis, by the diplomatic and consular authorities of all Member States, by proposing legislative measures in 2011 and by better informing citizens via a dedicated website and targeted communication measures;
9. modernise the current rules for the protection of consumers buying package travel, especially over the internet, and facilitate the purchase of package travel from other Member States by making a legislative proposal in 2011;
10. seek to complete the legislative framework allowing to ensure a set of common rights for passengers travelling by any transport mode across the EU and ensure adequate enforcement of these rights, including the rights of air passengers (e.g. in case of long delays and cancellations);
11. propose additional ways to ensure that passengers with reduced mobility can more easily access all means of transport and relevant infrastructure, and will give, from 2010 onwards, an annual award to the most accessible European cities, and promote better access to services such as travel insurance and will develop the use of EU wide standards on accessibility to the built environment, by proposing, in 2010, an EU Disability Strategy 2010-2020;
12. propose ways to increase consumer confidence in tourism products, by organising awareness-raising campaigns for European tourists and by monitoring consumer satisfaction with various tourism services;
13. set out in an understandable way the rights of users of online services by publishing a Code of EU Online Rights by 2012;
14. facilitate fast and inexpensive out-of-court resolution of consumer problems in the EU by proposing a legislative instrument on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms in 2011, by exploring proposals for an EU-wide online dispute resolution system for eCommerce transactions by 2012 and by promoting wider use of mediation by 2013;
15. facilitate free movement of EU citizens and their third-country family members by enforcing EU rules strictly, including on non-discrimination, by promoting good practices and increased knowledge of EU rules on the ground and by stepping up the

- dissemination of information to EU citizens about their free movement rights;
16. improve the provision of information to citizens and is developing a new system of electronic exchange of data to reduce delays and difficulties in the exchange of social security information;
  17. ask Member States to ensure that in future, publication of the results of the European Parliament elections takes place at the same time in all Member States;
  18. ask Member States to ensure that voting rights of EU citizens in their Member State of residence are fully enforced, that EU citizens can be members of or found political parties in the Member State of residence and that Member States duly inform EU citizens of their electoral rights;
  19. propose the simplification of the procedure for EU citizens when standing as candidates in their Member State of residence, and will improve the current mechanism for preventing double voting in European Parliament elections;
  20. launch a discussion to identify political options to prevent EU citizens from losing their political rights as a consequence of exercising their right to free movement;
  21. develop the Your Europe web portal into a one-stop-shop information point on the rights of citizens and businesses in the EU, easy to use and accessible via the web (<http://ec.europa.eu/youreurope>) and via a free phone number (Europe Direct Contact Centre);
  22. streamlining its information networks in the Member States so that citizens easily find the right contact point at national, regional and local level;
  23. strengthen citizens' awareness of their EU citizenship status, their rights and their meaning in their daily lives by proposing the designation of 2013 as the European Year of Citizens and by organising targeted events on EU citizenship and citizen related EU policies during this Year;
  24. make it simpler for EU citizens and stakeholders to use the financial support the Commission provides for the development of EU citizenship, by exploiting synergies among the available EU funding instruments and rationalisation;
  25. explore ways to further strengthen information on European affairs, characterised by independent, professional and high-quality reporting; in this context, the Commission will also explore options for a more sustainable financing of Euronews.

Follow-up: the Commission considers this to be the beginning of a process for further identification of obstacles that citizens still face and solutions for them. The report will launch a debate with other EU institutions, notably the European Parliament and the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and with civil society. This process should allow the Commission to present in 2013, a European year to be dedicated to citizens, an assessment of its output and the initial impact of the report's actions.

The Commission will then be in a position to announce an ambitious and comprehensive action plan toward completing the removal of persistent obstacles standing in the way of citizens' enjoyment of their rights.

## EU citizenship report 2010: dismantling the obstacles to EU citizens' rights

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The Committee on Petitions adopted the own-initiative report drafted by Adina-Ioana VĂLEAN (ADLE, RO) on the EU Citizenship Report 2010: Dismantling the obstacles to EU citizens rights.

Members welcome the EU Citizenship Report 2010 and call on the Commission to ensure that the legislative and non-legislative measures provided for in the report are put forward as soon as possible.

Right to petition the European Parliament: noting that, although the right to petition the European Parliament is expressly provided for in the Treaties, it is not sufficiently well known or used, and therefore Members call for improved, active communication to citizens about their right to petition in one of the official languages of the European Union. The report calls on the Commission to join it in doing more to advertise the right to petition through their offices in the Member States, their decentralised information networks.

European Citizens Initiative (ECI): the report calls for the effective, transparent and accountable implementation of the ECI Regulation (which will apply from 1 April 2012) and, in particular, calls on the EU institutions and Member States to put in place all the necessary administrative and practical arrangements in a timely manner, to take an active role and participate effectively in informing citizens about this new instrument. Members take the view, moreover, that the Committee on Petitions, on account of its experience of direct contact with citizens, should be given the responsibility of holding public hearings for organisers of successful European citizens initiatives.

Fundamental rights: the Commission is called upon, when preparing its annual report on the application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, to focus not only on the application of the Charter, but also on all EU Treaty articles relating to fundamental rights and on the situation of fundamental rights in the European Union.

Right of access to information: the report recognises the right of access to information as one of the cornerstones of democracy and stresses that access to information must not lead to the violation of other fundamental rights such as the right to privacy and data protection. Members take the view that greater access to information on investigations and infringement files could be provided by the Commission without jeopardising the purpose of the investigations and that an overriding public interest might well justify access to these files, particularly in cases where fundamental rights, human or animal health and the protection of the environment against irreversible damage may be at stake.

Free movement: the report calls on the Member States to remove obstacles to the free movement of EU citizens and to take action to guide and advise mobile workers regarding employment opportunities and living and working conditions in the EU, while also making citizens aware of the risks inherent in illegal work and of the advantages associated with obtaining legal work (tax, social security, right to professional training, right to citizenship, right to housing, right to family reunification, access to education and training for children), through existing tools (EURES).

Members call on those Member States which have decided, under the EU Accession Treaty for Romania and Bulgaria, to introduce a seven-year moratorium, until 1 January 2014, on the right to free movement within the EU for workers from those two countries, or to continue applying transitional arrangements restricting access by Romanian and Bulgarian nationals to their labour markets, to review their decisions as soon as possible, taking into consideration the principle of equality, the prohibition of discrimination, the unjustified nature of those decisions and the principle of solidarity, so that the employment rights associated with EU citizenship are no longer restricted for Romanian and Bulgarian citizens.

Fiscality: the report calls for better coordination between Member States dealing with problems such as double taxation and lack of

harmonisation of pension taxation for EU citizens, and calls, therefore, on the Member States to enhance and update their bilateral cooperation agreements. Members take the view that the convergence of European tax and social security rules and the harmonisation of national social security schemes are viable solutions for dealing with difficulties in relation to coordination between Member States concerning detailed procedures within their own systems.

Mass expulsions: the report highlights the fact that mass expulsions represent a breach of the FMD, in addition to contravening the basic values and principles underpinning the European Union. It urges Member States to abolish policies and to annul and repeal laws that discriminate, either directly or indirectly, against the Roma and other minority groups on the grounds of race and ethnicity, and calls on them to stop all instances of persecution, eviction and expulsion, or of confiscation of the assets of any minority group.

Disabled persons: Members recall that the almost 80 million people with disabilities in the European Union still face obstacles, insurmountable in many instances, when, in various ways, they exercise their right of free movement as citizens of the Union. They call, accordingly, on the EU institutions and the Member States to identify and eliminate obstacles and barriers restricting the ability of people with disabilities to benefit from the rights of EU citizens, and to make it easier for people with disabilities to gain access to all means of transport, infrastructure facilities, public education and information, without delays or extra costs.

Cross-border healthcare: the report calls on the Commission and the Member States with regard to the Commissions proposals to facilitate better access to cross-border healthcare, and given that patients right to information is fundamental to inform EU citizens more fully about their rights and the means available for enforcing them, including practical aspects such as the reimbursement of costs on the basis of the European health insurance card. It calls on the Commission and the Member States to make the greatest possible use of the existing potential for telemedicine and e-health services by 2020, while also complying fully with European data protection provisions. Members warmly welcome the Commissions initiative of developing a new system for the electronic exchange of social security data, and call accordingly for enhanced cooperation between national social security systems.

On-line purchasing and mobile telephony: the report notes that the greatest obstacles preventing citizens from benefiting from the larger product range and competitive prices available in the single market are a lack of knowledge of consumer rights in other EU countries and a lack of information for consumers making online purchases in other Member States. Moreover, it notes the disparities between Member States with regard to mobile telephony and internet accounts and emphasises that reductions in roaming charges have come about solely as a result of EU legislation. Members call on the Commission to look on the development of the digital single market as a priority.

Members call for the publication of cost prices in each Member State for SMS and MMS messages, calls charged by the minute and internet connections, in order to promote the establishment of European flat rates, thereby making it possible to reduce mobility costs.

Banking services: Members take the view that access to banking services for EU citizens who establish themselves in another Member State should be further facilitated. They urge the Commission to take the necessary legislative measures to ensure access for all EU citizens to a basic payment account and stress the need to improve the transparency of banking fees.

Obstacles to mobility: Members take the view that an updated Qualifications Directive should focus on eliminating obstacles to educational mobility, paying special attention to young people, while simultaneously streamlining the sources of information currently available to professionals and ensuring coordination with the Your Europe portal. They urge the Commission to streamline the provision of information on mobility for EU students, teachers and researchers by setting up a one-stop-shop system.

Members take the view that the establishment of a physical and online one-stop shop for citizens, Your Europe, is of great importance for individuals seeking advice or redress, whether they are long-term or new residents. They also propose that a specific, very regularly updated internet portal be set up to allow national, regional and local authorities to flag up those sectors of the economy looking for manpower, in order to facilitate voluntary mobility.

As regards cross-border workers, who suffer a great deal from administrative red tape in Member States, as being in need of better, more targeted information about their social and professional rights, the Commission encouraged to produce information material outlining in clear and simple terms the rights enjoyed by all EU citizens moving, working, studying, shopping, travelling and exercising their political rights across borders.

Civil status issues: underlining the importance of administrative cooperation on civil-status issues, Members point out that any Union citizen recognised as the parent of a child born in or out of wedlock must be informed, in the event of separation, about his or her scope for redress in order to obtain visiting rights, except in cases where, by common agreement between the parents and child's home countries, it has been established that this would place the child at genuine risk. It calls for the appointment of a mediator or, at the very least, a child's mediator in every Member State, who would have sufficient powers to access any documents and review court decisions. Members call on those Member States which have not done so to ratify the [Council decision of 12 July 2010](#) authorising enhanced cooperation in the area of the law applicable to divorce and legal separation.

Electoral rights: the report recognises that there are a number of obstacles preventing EU citizens full enjoyment of their electoral rights when residing in a country other than their own, whereas this is the most tangible political right of Union citizens and its exercise must be free of all discriminatory and obstructive formalities. They stress that, inter alia, more direct participation by citizens through European political parties is a decisive step towards achieving more Europe and a more authentic democracy.

Lastly, the committee welcomes the Commissions proposal to declare 2013 as the European Year of Citizens and proposes that the Commission launch a Union-level competition in 2012 to design a logo for the European Year of Citizens.

## EU citizenship report 2010: dismantling the obstacles to EU citizens' rights

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the EU Citizenship Report 2010: Dismantling the obstacles to EU citizens rights.

Parliament welcomes the EU Citizenship Report 2010 and calls on the Commission to ensure that the legislative and non-legislative measures provided for in the report are put forward as soon as possible. It recalls that Union citizens regardless of their disabilities have, inter alia, the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States, the right to vote and to stand as candidates in elections to the European Parliament and in municipal elections in their Member State of residence, the right to the provision of consular protection by the diplomatic and consular authorities of another Member State in third countries, and the right to petition the European Parliament, to apply to the European Ombudsman, and to address the EU institutions and advisory bodies in any of the Treaty languages.

Right to petition the European Parliament: noting that, although the right to petition the European Parliament is expressly provided for in the Treaties, it is not sufficiently well known or used, and therefore Parliament calls for improved, active communication to citizens about their right to petition in one of the official languages of the European Union. The resolution calls on the Commission to join it in doing more to advertise the right to petition through their offices in the Member States, their decentralised information networks.

European Citizens Initiative (ECI): the resolution calls for the effective, transparent and accountable implementation of the ECI Regulation (which will apply from 1 April 2012) and, in particular, calls on the EU institutions and Member States to put in place all the necessary administrative and practical arrangements in a timely manner, to take an active role and participate effectively in informing citizens about this new instrument. Members take the view, moreover, that the Committee on Petitions, on account of its experience of direct contact with citizens, should be given the responsibility of holding public hearings for organisers of successful European citizens initiatives.

Fundamental rights: the Commission is called upon, when preparing its annual report on the application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, to focus not only on the application of the Charter, but also on all EU Treaty articles relating to fundamental rights and on the situation of fundamental rights in the European Union.

Right of access to information: Members call on all Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies to ensure that the right of access to documents is guaranteed by improving transparency and making access to documents and information easy, user-friendly and comprehensible, including through the provision of barrier-free technologies, so as to enable citizens to participate more closely in the decision-making process. They point in this context to the central importance of the work of the European Ombudsman in upholding the right of access to Union institutions documents.

The resolution recognises the right of access to information as one of the cornerstones of democracy and stresses that access to information must not lead to the violation of other fundamental rights such as the right to privacy and data protection. Members take the view that greater access to information on investigations and infringement files could be provided by the Commission without jeopardising the purpose of the investigations and that an overriding public interest might well justify access to these files, particularly in cases where fundamental rights, human or animal health and the protection of the environment against irreversible damage may be at stake.

Free movement: Members encourage the Commission to continue its current efforts to ensure that Member States transpose and implement the FMD fully and correctly, making full use of its power to launch infringement proceedings. Member States are invited to remove existing legal and practical barriers to the free movement of citizens and not to introduce cumbersome, unjustified administrative procedures or to tolerate unacceptable practices restricting the application of that right.

Members reiterate their previous calls for the Member States to ensure freedom of movement for all EU citizens and their families, without discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or nationality. It calls on the Member States to implement fully the rights granted under Directive 2004/38/EC not only to different-sex spouses, but also to registered partners, members of the household of an EU citizen and partners who are in a duly attested stable relationship with an EU citizen, including members of same-sex couples. In plenary, Parliament calls on the Member States to remove obstacles to the free movement of EU citizens and to take action to guide and advise mobile workers regarding employment opportunities and living and working conditions in the EU, through existing tools such as (EURES).

Members call on those Member States which have decided, under the EU Accession Treaty for Romania and Bulgaria, to introduce a seven-year moratorium, until 1 January 2014, on the right to free movement within the EU for workers from those two countries, or to continue applying transitional arrangements restricting access by Romanian and Bulgarian nationals to their labour markets, to review their decisions as soon as possible.

Fiscality: the resolution calls for better coordination between Member States dealing with problems such as double taxation and lack of harmonisation of pension taxation for EU citizens, and calls, therefore, on the Member States to enhance and update their bilateral cooperation agreements.

Mass expulsions: the resolution highlights the fact that mass expulsions represent a breach of the FMD, in addition to contravening the basic values and principles underpinning the European Union. It urges Member States to abolish policies and to annul and repeal laws that discriminate, either directly or indirectly, against the Roma and other minority groups on the grounds of race and ethnicity, and calls on them to stop all instances of persecution, eviction and expulsion, or of confiscation of the assets of any minority group.

Disabled persons: Parliament recalls that the almost 80 million people with disabilities in the European Union still face obstacles, insurmountable in many instances, when, in various ways, they exercise their right of free movement as citizens of the Union. It calls, accordingly, on the EU institutions and the Member States to identify and eliminate obstacles and barriers restricting the ability of people with disabilities to benefit from the rights of EU citizens, and to make it easier for people with disabilities to gain access to all means of transport, infrastructure facilities, public education and information, without delays or extra costs.

Cross-border healthcare: the resolution calls on the Commission and the Member States with regard to the Commissions proposals to facilitate better access to cross-border healthcare, and given that patients right to information is fundamental to inform EU citizens more fully about their rights and the means available for enforcing them, including practical aspects such as the reimbursement of costs on the basis of the European health insurance card. It calls on the Commission and the Member States to make the greatest possible use of the existing potential for telemedicine and e-health services by 2020, while also complying fully with European data protection provisions. Members warmly welcome the Commissions initiative of developing a new system for the electronic exchange of social security data, and call accordingly for enhanced cooperation between national social security systems.

On-line purchasing and mobile telephony: Parliament notes that the greatest obstacles preventing citizens from benefiting from the larger product range and competitive prices available in the single market are a lack of knowledge of consumer rights in other EU countries and a lack of information for consumers making online purchases in other Member States. Moreover, it notes the disparities between Member States with regard to mobile telephony and internet accounts and emphasises that reductions in roaming charges have come about solely as a result of EU legislation. Members call on the Commission to look on the development of the digital single market as a priority.

Members call for the publication of cost prices in each Member State for SMS and MMS messages, calls charged by the minute and internet connections, in order to promote the establishment of European flat rates, thereby making it possible to reduce mobility costs.

Banking services: Members take the view that access to banking services for EU citizens who establish themselves in another Member State should be further facilitated. They urge the Commission to take the necessary legislative measures to ensure access for all EU citizens to a basic payment account and stress the need to improve the transparency of banking fees.

Obstacles to mobility: Members take the view that an updated Qualifications Directive should focus on eliminating obstacles to educational mobility, paying special attention to young people, while simultaneously streamlining the sources of information currently available to professionals and ensuring coordination with the Your Europe portal. They urge the Commission to streamline the provision of information on mobility for EU students, teachers and researchers by setting up a one-stop-shop system.

Parliament takes the view that the establishment of a physical and online one-stop shop for citizens, Your Europe, is of great importance for individuals seeking advice or redress, whether they are long-term or new residents. It also proposes that a specific, very regularly updated internet portal be set up to allow national, regional and local authorities to flag up those sectors of the economy looking for manpower, in order to facilitate voluntary mobility.

As regards cross-border workers, who suffer a great deal from administrative red tape in Member States, as being in need of better, more targeted information about their social and professional rights, the Commission encouraged to produce information material outlining in clear and simple terms the rights enjoyed by all EU citizens moving, working, studying, shopping, travelling and exercising their political rights across borders.

Civil status issues: underlining the importance of administrative cooperation on civil-status issues, Members point out that any Union citizen recognised as the parent of a child born in or out of wedlock must be informed, in the event of separation, about his or her scope for redress in order to obtain visiting rights, except in cases where, by common agreement between the parents and child's home countries, it has been established that this would place the child at genuine risk. It calls for the appointment of a mediator or, at the very least, a children's mediator in every Member State, who would have sufficient powers to access any documents and review court decisions. Members call on those Member States which have not done so to ratify the [Council Decision of 12 July 2010](#) authorising enhanced cooperation in the area of the law applicable to divorce and legal separation.

Electoral rights: the resolution recognises that there are a number of obstacles preventing EU citizens full enjoyment of their electoral rights when residing in a country other than their own, whereas this is the most tangible political right of Union citizens and its exercise must be free of all discriminatory and obstructive formalities. Parliament stresses that, inter alia, more direct participation by citizens through European political parties is a decisive step towards achieving more Europe and a more authentic democracy.

Lastly, Parliament welcomes the Commission's proposal to declare 2013 as the European Year of Citizens and proposes that the Commission launch a Union-level competition in 2012 to design a logo for the European Year of Citizens.