

Brussels, 15 February 2008

Commission adopts 5th Report on Union Citizenship

Today the European Commission adopted its fifth report on citizenship of the European Union. The report assesses the application of the rights conferred on Union citizens by the Treaty establishing the European Community during the period 1 May 2004 to 30 June 2007.

Vice-President Frattini, EU Commissioner responsible for Justice, Freedom and Security pointed out that "*more and more European citizens study, get married, live or work in a Member State of which they are not nationals. As of 1 January 2006, there were approximately 8.2 million EU citizens who were exercising their right to reside in another Member State. The Commission places the citizen at the heart of its policies and is determined to strengthen and improve the way citizens are informed of their rights and to ensure that they actually benefit from such freedoms across the Union*".

The report focuses on developments during the reporting period with regard to the legal core of citizens' rights, guaranteed by Articles 19 to 21 of the Treaty establishing the European Community. In particular, the right to move and reside within the EU, the right to vote and stand as a candidate in European and municipal elections in the Member State of residence, the right to diplomatic and consular protection in third countries, the right to petition the European Parliament (EP) and the right to apply to the Ombudsman.

Furthermore, the report takes stock of advances in areas closely related to citizenship in the wider sense, such as equal treatment on grounds of nationality and the protection of fundamental rights.

A 2007 Flash Eurobarometer public opinion survey of EU citizenship published with this report reveals that the majority (78%) of EU citizens claim familiarity with the term "citizen of the European Union" and most of them (90%) know that they are simultaneously Union citizens and Member State nationals. However, less than one-third (31%) of respondents from the 27 EU countries consider themselves 'well informed' about their rights as citizens of the European Union.

For more information:

Report from the Commission: Fifth Report on Citizenship of the Union and Commission Working Paper relating to the Fifth report on Citizenship of the Union
http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/news/information_dossiers/5th_citizenship/index_en.htm

To find out more about Vice President Frattini's work please see his website
http://www.ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/frattini/index_en.htm