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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

21 ECI CAMPAIGNS ASK COMMISSIONER TIMMERMANS TO “MAKE THE ECI WORK”

Call for less restrictive registration, removal of ID numbers and action on successful ECIs

Brussels – Twenty-one European Citizens’ Initiative (ECI) campaigns have united behind a powerfully worded letter calling on European Commission First Vice-President Frans Timmermans to propose “deep and meaningful” ECI reform. They both express frustration with the ECI’s current design and confidence that, with reform, the ECI can still work. They stress that the European Union needs what the ECI can offer, such as the ideas and involvement of its citizens and shared European goals to overcome national divisions.

Created by the Treaty of Lisbon (article 11.4), the ECI allows one million citizens to invite the European Commission to propose a legal act to implement the treaties. In use since April 2012, the ECI is the world’s first tool for transnational participatory and digital democracy. It is the only official instrument for citizens to influence the EU policy agenda.

The letter will be presented to Commissioner Timmermans at The ECI Day 2015 conference in Brussels on 13 April 2015. Sponsored by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), this annual event is designed to support the ECI and its users. The Commission’s recently released [report on the ECI](#) is expected to be a major topic of discussion. While it acknowledges some problems with the ECI, it proposes no major changes to its design.

All three successful ECIs, *Right2Water*, *One of Us* and *Stop Vivisection*, signed the letter, as well as the first ECI (*Fraternité 2020*) and latest ECI (*On the Wire*) to be registered. The 21 ECI campaigns cover a wide range of topics -- from the environment (*End Ecocide*, *30 km/Making Streets Liveable*, *Pour une gestion responsable des déchets*) to the economy (*Unconditional Basic Income*, *ACT 4 Growth*, *New Deal 4 Europe*, *For a Socially Fair Europe*, *A Europe of Solidarity*) and from education (*High Quality European Education for All*, *Teach for Youth*) to product regulation (*Single Communication Tariff*, *European Free Vaping*, *Weed Like to Talk*), free speech (*Media Pluralism*) and more (*End to Front Companies*, *Central public online collection platform for the ECI*).

“We’ve been overwhelmed by the positive support from former ECI campaigners for this letter and the [12 ECI reforms](#) it advocates,” says Carsten Berg, coordinator of The ECI Campaign. *“ECI users know how significantly the ECI must change if it is to continue to be used and ultimately fulfil its promise of meaningful participatory democracy at EU level.”*

Since April 2012, 47 ECIs have been proposed, 20 rejected, 27 registered, 3 succeeded and none led to policy change. ECI use crashed in 2014 and only three ECIs are now open. If the ECI is to continue to be used, it must become much easier to register and run an ECI and successful ECIs must lead to meaningful action. See attached letter for details.

The ECI Campaign (www.citizens-initiative.eu) is an independent non-profit that works for the successful introduction and implementation of the European citizens’ initiative right. For more information contact Carsten Berg at +49-1764-3064365 or berg@citizens-initiative.eu.