



Public consultation on the European citizens' initiative

answered by  
The ECI Campaign

## The European citizens' initiative and you / General considerations



(....)

**Would you have been more confident in providing your personal data to a public authority instead of to the organisers of the proposed initiative?**

No

**What would make you support a citizens' initiative? (more than 1 answer possible)**

It is a topic which needs EU level action and cannot be handled by my national Government acting alone;

I want to take part in European democracy and policy making;

It is important that policy-makers hear the voice of citizens and/or involve grassroots organisations.

(.....)

**Do you consider that the European citizens' initiative has so far achieved its objective of fostering the participation of citizens in the democratic life of the EU and bringing the EU closer to the citizens?**

Rather disagree

**In your view, how important are the following considerations when revising the rules for the European citizens' initiative?**

**a) Signing an initiative should be as simple as possible (statements of support should be collected in a user-friendly way and the personal data requested should be kept to the minimum needed).**

Very important

**b) The rules and procedures for organising an initiative should not be burdensome and should remain proportionate to the nature of the tool (a tool for citizen participation which does not lead to a binding outcome).**

Very important

**c) Citizens' initiatives should be launched only on issues relevant to citizens in a significant number of member states.**

Neither important nor unimportant

**d) Citizens' initiatives should foster debate and interactions between like-minded citizens across the EU as well as between themselves and the EU institutions.**

Rather important

**e) The rules for giving support to an initiative should allow the use of the best available technology in terms of security and user-friendliness.**

Very important

**f) Other**

Organisers must be confident about the political impact. ECI s should not be reduced to only being tools for discussions.

## Different aspects of the lifecycle and stages of the ECI



## Preparatory phase of a citizens' initiative / Citizens' committee

**In accordance with the Regulation, the Commission has established a point of contact which provides information and assistance to organisers. Do you consider that the provision of information and assistance to organisers in this phase should be strengthened?**

Strongly agree

**Assistance to organisers in the preparatory phase should be provided by:**

The Commission through its point of contact ('helpdesk'),

Independent expert(s), for instance through an online collaborative platform

**In your opinion, what would be the best way(s) to limit the liability of organisers?**

Reduce the amount of personal data collected from signatories;

Organisations should be allowed to be part of the citizens' committees;

Other:

OCS: Organisers should not be responsible for the online collecting system, but should be able to select either collaborative platforms (some of which already exist, e.g. openECI) or the authorities as responsible bodies.

Legal status: Citizens' Committees for ECI s should be defined as a "legal" body of EU-law-making and therefore not be held liable.

**Do you have any other suggestions for improving this preparatory phase/the citizens' committee?**

To further reduce the liability of the organisers it should be made clear that organisers are only be liable if they act unlawful or with serious negligence.

**Registration phase**

**Should the registration phase continue to include an admissibility check to verify that the proposed initiative does not fall outside the Commission's powers?**

Yes

**Should the legal assessment indicate that the proposed initiative partly or fully falls outside the Commission's powers:**

Organisers should have the possibility to redraft their proposed initiative so that it falls within the Commission's powers, on the basis of a preliminary assessment by the Commission. They could then collect statements of support on the basis of the redrafted initiative, once legally cleared;

**In order to redraft their proposed initiative, the organisers should have the possibility to be assisted by:**

Independent expert(s), for instance through an online collaborative platform;

An officer within the Commission with an independent and impartial role for the European citizens' initiative ('hearing officer')

**Do you have any other suggestions for improving the registration phase?**

Should organisers decide to go to court because of the commission's decision of inadmissibility, or if they want to challenge the follow-up decision, the court should decide within 6 months.

To avoid possible conflicts of interest, it would be good to have another authority than the commission deciding on the admissibility.

## Collection phase

### Online Collection

**The hosting of online collection systems exceptionally offered by the Commission should be:**

Made permanent and simplified (transformed into an online collection platform readily available for organisers upon registration, without the need for a certification) while still remaining optional.

**If you were to organise an initiative and the Commission offered an online collection system free of charge with no need for certification, which option would you choose?**

I would build my own system and get it certified by the relevant national authority.

**To which extent do you agree on the importance of using new solutions for electronic identification such as eID or electronic signature for supporting initiatives?**

Rather agree

**Would these electronic identification solutions make the online collection more user-friendly for citizens and organisers?**

Yes, to some extent

**To which extent do you agree that several ways for providing support to an initiative online (filling the form online, using eID, using other e-identification solutions) should be available in parallel in order to maximise the user-friendliness of the tool?**

Strongly agree

### Collection in paper form

**In the case of a single online platform to gather support, how should the collection of statements of support in paper form be organised?**

Organisers should collect statements in paper form and send them to the competent national authorities for verification at the end of the collection period. At the same time, they should have the possibility to record the number of statements collected on the online platform during the collection process.

### Requirements for signatories

**In your view, should EU citizens residing outside the EU be allowed to support a European citizens' initiative?**

Yes

**In your view, what should be the minimum age to give support to an initiative?**

It should be harmonised at 16.

**Personal data to be provided by signatories  
and subsequent verification process**

**In your view, what should be verified in relation to the signatories' personal data?  
Please keep in mind that a citizens' initiative is a tool for citizen participation which  
does not lead to a binding outcome.**

**a) that data is not entered by a robot and that the overall probability of having  
entered fake data is below predetermined thresholds (based on data analysis  
techniques)**

Yes

**b) that a person corresponding to the data provided exists**

Yes

**c) that the person is eligible to support a citizens' initiative**

Yes

**d) that the person has provided his/her own data (that he/she did not  
introduce someone else's data fraudulently)**

Yes

**e) that this person has not supported an initiative more than once.**

Yes

**f) Other:**

A lower amount of personal data required is essential to improve the user-friendliness.  
Also: Use technical means where possible to keep the system simple while fulfilling the  
requirements, reduce bureaucracy. (e.g.: collection software can automatically control  
whether citizens sign in for a 2nd time. A prove that persons provide their own data could be  
achieved through random sampling and contacting signatories to declare that they have  
supported the initiative.)

**Among the following types of personal data, which one(s) would you not be willing to  
provide when giving your support to a European citizens' initiative?**

Name at birth;

Place of birth;

Personal identification (document) number;

Driving license number

The last three digits of your personal identification (document) number /driving license  
number

Email address

**The current Regulation sets out different data requirements for signatories depending on the member states (see above). Among the following options, which one do you think would be the most user-friendly?**

Requiring the same set of personal data in all member states. Then signatories may be contacted to provide additional personal data depending on the country they come from, for verification purposes;

**According to you, who needs to have access to the signatories' personal data?**

Organisers or other persons acting on their behalf who collect the statements of support and the public authorities in charge of their verification;

**Should signatories be kept informed about the initiative they have signed and its follow-up, for example by email?**

Yes, by the organisers;

Yes, by the Commission

Signatories should have the option to receive general information about the European citizens' initiative, including on other initiatives they might be interested in;

### **Time limit for the collection of support**

**Should the time limit for collecting statements of support (12 months from the date of registration) be revised?**

Yes

**In your view, how should the time limit be changed?**

It should be extended to 18 months and it should be possible for the organisers to choose the start date of their collection within a given time period.

**Do you have any other suggestions for improving the process of collection of statements of support and their verification?**

Organisers should be able to choose the start date of their signature collection. This is essential.

Email addresses should not be mandatory for verification. But it should be possible to give them on an optional basis to organisers, in order to obtain information (in one step with giving data for verification)

Already existing independent OCS like openECI are widely used and accepted. They should be supported as a system to choose and be hosted on EC servers.

*(More suggestions on signature collection and verification in last space for specification)*

## Submission to the Commission and follow-up

**Do you think that there should be a time limit for the submission of a successful initiative to the Commission?**

Yes

**In your view, what should be this time limit?**

Between six months and one year from the end of the collection;

**According to you, what would be the best way(s) to ensure that stakeholders representing different views are heard before the Commission replies to the initiative?**

b) The Commission should be given more time before its reply so that it can consult widely and transparently (for example by organising an open public consultation);

c) Other: Hearings in EP: Organisers should get the appropriate attention for their issue. The EP hearing should therefore be reserved for them, and they should also be allowed to call in experts.

Additional discussions and stakeholder meetings can be organised where an ECI topic causes controversies. The commission should carry out a public consultations after the hearing, where everybody can give pro or con arguments. The commission should have more time for its decision in this case.

**Should the European Parliament and the Council be invited to express their views before the Commission takes position on a successful initiative?**

Yes

**Do you have any other suggestions for improving the examination procedure and the possible follow-up to initiatives that have reached the required number of signatories?**

Each successful ECI should be discussed and voted on in the European Parliament (including a plenary vote). The EP should deliver its resolution to the Commission, as a recommendation regarding the commission's decision on how to proceed. (This resolution of the EP means no anticipation of any legislative procedure.)

## Transparency and awareness-raising

**What more could be done to better inform citizens and communicate on the European citizens' initiative?**

We recommend to fully exploit "Digital Technology" for making European Democracy Work by providing a Digital Public Participation Platform that includes a Support Infrastructure for Citizens' Participation

Online platforms make online campaigning scalable and rapid and enormously increase the outreach (one of the biggest challenges in the EU given its size and diversity).

## Further comments or suggestions

### Expat EU citizens

No adult EU citizen wanting to sign an ECI should be excluded. British and Irish citizens living abroad must be able to sign, too. This is essential in order to stay non-discriminatory.

### Data:

Less personal data required are more important for the user-friendliness than harmonising them.

### Translations

A regular translation service should be integrated into the ECI regulation. Suggesting an ECI in all EU languages considerably improves participation opportunities for all.

### OCS

Commission´s OCS should be user-friendly for handicapped citizens (“captcha”) and allow to enter data in one go instead of several clicks. It should be mobile-friendly and social media plugin-compatible.

