
Parliament makes it easier to organise a European Citizens' Initiative

- New rules and digital tools to foster participatory democracy
- More effective, accessible, user-friendly
- Designed for transparency, accountability and data protection

MEPs update Citizens' Initiative rules to increase chances of requests being successfully tabled.

The European Parliament adopted on Tuesday new rules for the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI), by 535 votes in favour, 90 against and 41 abstentions. The updated mechanism intends to enable as many citizens as possible to launch and support new initiatives and to strengthen participatory democracy.

A stronger voice in the EU

National authorities will check whether signatures are valid through random sampling. MEPs also urge member states to consider reducing the minimum age for participation to sixteen years.

Partial registration will become possible, so long as the relevant part of the initiative is not manifestly outside a Commission competence area. Once an ECI is successfully registered, the Parliament will be able to organise a public hearing involving those organising the initiative.

The Commission will have to set out its conclusions and any action it intends to take within six months, explaining in a clear and detailed manner its reasoning.

Digital support

New online, user- and disability-friendly tools will be set up, namely a management platform, a register, and information webpages, next to information and support points in each member state. These will make it easier to:

- set up and manage an initiative; organisers will receive an assessment of the likelihood of the Commission approving its registration;
- collect signatures through a free, online service, in any of the EU official languages and with organisers able to choose the starting date of their campaign;
- declare support, as EU citizens will be able to sign up regardless of where they live or their nationality, providing minimal personal information under EU data privacy rules;
- stay informed with up-to-date information on initiatives, their status and responses provided by EU institutions;
- exchange views and best practices through an online forum for citizens, groups of organisers, civil society organisations and external experts with ECI experience; and
- ensure accountability for organisers, who will be required to publish detailed information on their funding if they receive contributions exceeding 500 Euros from a single sponsor.

The new tools will be in place by the beginning of 2020 and organisers will continue to be able to use secure third party platforms until the end of 2022.

Next steps

Once the Council has completed the approval process, the new mechanism will apply as of 1 January 2020.

Background

ECIs were introduced by the Lisbon Treaty and started in April 2012. A formally registered ECI allows one million citizens from at least one quarter of EU member states to urge the Commission to act in areas where it has the power to do so, in line with European values.

Since 2012, approximately 9 million Europeans from all 28 member states have participated. Four initiatives have so far been successfully registered and the Commission has committed to follow-up actions on three of those, including one on ending seasonal time-change.

Further information

[Procedure file](#)

[Committee on Constitutional Affairs](#)
[Profile of rapporteur György Schöpflin \(EPP, HU\)](#)
[European Citizens' Initiative: Basic Facts](#)

[Current rules](#)

[European Parliament resolution \(2015\) identifying the current provisions' shortcomings](#)

[EP Press Release: EU citizens' initiative to be overhauled to improve chances of success](#)

[EP Press Release: European Citizens' Initiative reform to strengthen participatory democracy](#)

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