

**Question for written answer E-001053/2021
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Elisabetta Gualmini (S&D)

Subject: European citizens' initiatives

The COVID-19 pandemic is having a major impact on social life and, consequently, also on access to information and democratic participation. The internet greatly facilitates this, but the digital divide and the level of digital literacy in Europe today does not fully soften the blow. As evidence of this, Regulation (EU) 2020/1042 was adopted on 15 July 2020 to allow for the extension of the deadlines provided for in Regulation (EU) 2019/788 on the European citizens' initiative (ECI), and the Commission subsequently intervened by means of implementing acts to further postpone those deadlines owing to the evolution of the pandemic.

In view of the above:

1. Does the Commission not think it might be helpful to provide citizens with more information about ECIs, for example by sending out information material to all EU citizens?
2. Will it allocate specific funds for that purpose under the budget line for communication?