

European Citizens' Initiative: Political agreement reached on the Commission's proposal

A political priority of the Juncker Commission, the reformed Citizens' Initiative will be more user-friendly, making it easier for Europeans to participate in the democratic process.

Welcoming the agreement First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *"9 million Europeans from all 28 Member States have already spoken up through the European Citizens Initiative. But we can do better if more citizens use this instrument for democratic participation at EU level. Today's agreement is a major step forward because we simplify the current rules and make it easier for European citizens to make themselves heard. They will now have an easily accessible and user-friendly tool at their disposal to ask the EU institutions directly to act on the issues they really care about. In the end it wasn't possible to lower the participation age from 18 to 16 years old across the EU, and I regret that. However, each country has the possibility to do so for their own citizens, so I would encourage them to allow younger generations to also have their say."*

The reformed European Citizens' Initiative will make it easier to:

- **Set-up initiatives:** Enhanced support will be made available to the organisers through contact points in each Member State and an online collaborative platform offering advice and allowing like-minded citizens from across Europe to get in touch to prepare their initiatives;
- **Register initiatives:** a more citizen-friendly procedure will give organisers a chance to revise their proposed initiative before the Commission's registration decision, to avoid situations where they are not allowed to collect signatures because the initiative does not fall within Treaty competences;
- **Organise the collection of signatures:** a free service for the online collection of signatures will be provided by the Commission to organisers, who will also have more flexibility to choose the starting date of their campaign;
- **Support initiatives:** all EU citizens will be able to support initiatives regardless of where they live; they will need to provide less personal data when giving their support to an initiative;
- **Follow-up on successful initiatives:** After the initiative has gathered the required support of 1 million citizens, the phase of examination will be extended from 3 to 6 months, leaving time for more meaningful awareness-raising, engagement and debate before the Commission sets out its legal and political conclusions.

Next steps

The provisional agreement reached today must now be formally approved by the

European Parliament and the Council. Following their approval, the new Regulation on the European Citizens' Initiative will be published in the EU's Official Journal and start applying as of 1 January 2020.

Background

European Citizens' Initiatives were introduced with the Lisbon Treaty and launched as an agenda-setting tool in the hands of citizens in April 2012, upon the entry into force of the European Citizens' Initiative Regulation which implements the Treaty provisions.

In 2017, as part of President Juncker's State of the Union address, the European Commission tabled [reform proposals for the European Citizens' Initiative](#) to make it even more user-friendly. Today, the European Parliament and the Council agreed on this proposal.

Once formally registered, a European Citizens' Initiative allows one million citizens from at least one quarter of EU Member States to invite the European Commission to propose a legal act in areas where the Commission has the power to do so.

The conditions for admissibility, as foreseen by the European Citizens' Initiative Regulation, are that the proposed action does not manifestly fall outside the framework of the Commission's powers to submit a proposal for a legal act, that it is not manifestly abusive, frivolous or vexatious and that it is not manifestly contrary to the values of the Union.

For More Information

[Press Release](#): State of the Union 2017 – Democracy Package: Reform of Citizens' Initiative and Political Party funding

[Questions & Answers](#): State of the Union – Democracy Package: Questions & Answers on the European Citizens' Initiative and Political Parties Funding

[Press Release](#): European Citizens' Initiative: 9 million citizens have got involved in EU law-making