



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

MEETING WITH EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVES (ECI) ORGANISERS ON ECI ONLINE COLLECTION

20 November 2012

SUMMARY REPORT

PARTICIPANTS

European Commission:

Declan Deasy (Chair), Natalia Aristimuño, Cristian Dobre, Marc Vanloo (Informatics DG - DIGIT)

Charlotte Rive, Annalisa Buscaini, Michael Breslin (Secretariat General – Institutional team G4),

Ulrich Kröner, Peter Flack (DG Human Resources and Security – Security Directorate)

ECI "Uno di Noi":

Ana Del Pino

ECI "Right to water":

Pablo Sanchez Centellas

Xavier Dutoit

ECI "Fraternité 2020":

Augustina Vasilieva

ECI "Media Pluralism":

Giovanni Melogli

ECI "Single Communication Tariff Act":

Mathieu Camescasse

1. OPENING, PRESENTATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS AND COMMUNICATION OF THE AGENDA

The Chair asked participants to introduce themselves and presented the agenda.

2. CURRENT GENERAL STATE OF PLAY

The Commission commented that **good progress** was made since the previous meeting, with the first of the online collection systems hosted on the Commission's servers now certified and operational. Another important step was the setting of the new deadline for collection of statements of support: 1 November 2013 for all initiatives registered before 31 October 2012.

The Commission repeated its availability for, in many cases already ongoing, **bilateral contacts** and support to organisers, especially for those whose systems are hosted on its servers.

The Commission clarified that organisers are **responsible for managing the collection of statements of support**, which includes contacts with the signatories.

3. STATE OF PLAY OF HOSTING AND CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE

The Commission informed that **three initiatives** ("Fraternité2020", "Right to water" and "30 km/h") are currently collecting statements of support online, **one** of which, "Fraternité2020", is hosted by the Commission. In addition to the one of "Fraternité2020", **six** more Hosting Agreements were signed and, according to the information available, of these, "Uno di Noi" submitted the certification request to the Luxemburgish authority on 15 November.

The Commission reported about the important commitment of the **Luxemburgish authority** (the Centre des Technologies de l'Information de l'Etat - CTIE) to the process and reassured organisers that, having now been tested and completed a first time, the certification procedure should run more smoothly for future proposed initiatives. Participants were referred to the official webpage of Luxembourg on the citizens' initiative to find comprehensive information on how to request the certification to the Luxemburgish authority:

<http://www.guichet.public.lu/fr/citoyens/citoyennete/democratie-participative/depot-requetes-petition/initiative-citoyenne-europeenne-EN/index.html>

4. TOUR DE TABLE AND QUESTIONS

"**Single Communication Tariff Act**" announced they had submitted the certification request earlier that day (20 November in the morning) and that they plan to start the online collection at the beginning of December.

"**Fraternité2020**" confirmed they are already collecting online with good results and thanked the Commission for the assistance. They raised the issue of an Austrian ID format being rejected by the online collection system and asked whether the Commission could indicate an e-mail address to which signatories could directly address any problems they encounter when completing the online forms.

The Commission informed organisers that it had contacted the competent Austrian authority which is currently analysing possible solutions. The Commission underlined that the organisers, being responsible for the collection of their proposed initiative, should continue to be the first point of contact for signatories. If necessary, organisers can then contact the Commission through the usual e-mail address (EC-ECI-OCS@ec.europa.eu).

"**Uno di Noi**" confirmed they had submitted the certification request to CTIE (15 November) and said they hope starting the online collection at the beginning of December.

"**Media Pluralism**" said they also submitted the certification request. It was clarified afterwards that they had sent the documentation to the Commission for review, but not yet the full certification request to CTIE. Mr Melogli added that they are also collecting statements of support on paper.

"**Right to water**" confirmed they are collecting on paper and online, using the software developed by the Commission. They have encountered several small issues with the online collection system, namely because of the validation of ID and postal code formats included in the software. In this regard and as already raised at previous occasions, they suggested transforming these blocking validation rules into a warning system, informing the signatories of the invalid format, but not preventing them from giving their support.

"Right to water" also raised some usability issues in particular in relation to the privacy statement, the audio captcha and the link between the collection system and the organisers' website. Finally, the open-source aspect of the software and the cooperation in JoinUp between the Commission and the users were discussed.

The **Commission** again confirmed that it would check with national authorities the exactness of ID and postal code formats used, whenever necessary. In this respect, organisers were advised to provide the most precise information possible on the issue faced by signatories to facilitate as much as possible the verification by the national authorities.

The Commission clarified that suggestions are always welcome and duly taken into account, including the ones raised on JoinUp. However, the Commission always needs to carefully assess the relevance of the issues raised and the compliance with the Regulation on the citizens' initiative before implementing new features or modifying the existing ones.

The Commission stated that this analysis will be carried out for the suggested modification of the validation rules. Moreover, the Commission could already reassure organisers that most of the mentioned usability issues should be solved in next version of the software, to be released early 2013 – organisers and users will be further informed about the roadmap.

The same approach applies to contributions to the software that users could develop: the Commission fully supports the development of an open-source community that would contribute to the improvement of the software. In this perspective, it was organising an open workshop around the software (29 November 2012), where participants will be able to discuss about contributions and further suggestions, including on the cooperation in JoinUp. The Commission highlighted that it will monitor users' contributions to clearly indicate which versions are compliant with the Regulation on the citizens' initiative.

5. NEXT STEPS AND CLOSING REMARKS

The Commission informed organisers that all subsequent support and guidance to the first citizens' initiatives will be provided on a **bilateral basis**. Thus there would be no further general meeting. Organisers may address general questions to the Secretariat-General staff, while DIGIT staff is the point of contact for technical issues. Organisers were invited to participate in the open source community **workshop** on the software (29 November).

The Commission thanked the organisers and the Luxemburgish authority for the cooperative spirit and closed the meeting underlining the importance of the citizens' initiative as a new instrument of participatory democracy.

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Meeting with ECI organisers, 13/06/2012

<https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/software/ocs/issue/minutes-meeting-eci-organisers-13/06/2012-1500-1700>

- Meeting on the Hosting of ECI Online Collection Systems by the European Commission, 08/08/2012

<https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/software/ocs/news/meeting-hosting-eci-online-collection-systems-european-commission>

- Meeting on the Hosting of ECI Online Collection Systems by the European Commission, 07/09/2012

<https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/software/ocs/news/new-meeting-hosting-eci-online-collection-systems-european-commission>

- Meeting on the Hosting of ECI Online Collection Systems by the European Commission, 28/09/2012

<https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/software/ocs/news/meeting-between-eci-organisers-and-european-commission-september-28th>