



European Commission

Secretariat General

Directorate E "Better Regulation and Institutional Issues"

Unit E.1 "Institutional Issues"

European Commission

1049 Brussels

Email: ECI-consultation@ec.europa.eu

Strasbourg, 28 January 2010

Subject: Reply to the Commission's Green Paper on a European Citizens' Initiative

Dear Sir or Madam,

The Assembly of European Regions (AER) greatly welcomes the initiative of the European Commission to invite stakeholders and citizens to comment on the Green Paper on a European Citizens' Initiative.

AER is the largest network of regions in the wider Europe, bringing together regions and thus citizens from diverse countries such as Georgia or Portugal. It is one of the main goals of AER to promote a more democratic and transparent Europe which takes into consideration the interests and values of regions and their citizens. We do so through various tools, such as:

- The [AER Training Academy](#) aims at **informing** and **training** regional officers on European affairs so that they can make better informed decisions in the interest of their citizens
- The [AER Communicating Europe Award](#) and the [AER Communication Atelier](#) provide a platform where **best practices** on how to best to communicate Europe

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AER also brings MEPs, regional elected representatives as well as citizens together in order to discuss European integration through its [European Citizens' Forums](#).

AER therefore:

welcomes all initiatives which make the European project more comprehensible, transparent and democratic and considers the European Citizens' Initiative to be a good instrument to achieve these goals by enriching the political discussions on Europe,

calls upon the European Commission to make this new instrument as flexible as possible so that no administrative burdens will prevent citizens from expressing their opinions,

Attached you will find further comments by three AER member regions (Salzburg, Vorarlberg, Hampshire) providing more detailed answers to the specific questions raised in the consultation.

I would like to suggest that we discuss those slightly different opinions at the occasion of our seminar on the Citizens Initiative '[Making Europe more democratic? The European Citizens' Initiative](#)', to be held on 11 February at the Steiermark Office in Brussels. This seminar will be an important part of our 'Communication Atelier' organised on the same day. As you can see on the attached agenda for this event, participants will discuss the proposals in more detail, and benefit from the contribution of Mr Kurpas, representative of the European Commission, on the outcome of the consultation on the European Citizens' Initiative. We invite you and everybody interested to this event.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Klaus Klipp', written in a cursive style.

Klaus Klipp

AER Secretary General