

European Citizens' Initiative Green Paper - Consultation

Do you consider that one third of the total number of Member States would constitute a "significant number of Member States" as required by the Treaty?

No

If not, what threshold would you consider appropriate, and why?

The term „significant“ does occur in several Council Directives and is thus a long standing part of EU legislation. By the interpretation by the ECJ (e.g. in environmental impact assessment), it does not at all mean at least one quarter or one third. In fact, the threshold for the application of the term „significant“ is rather low.

Furthermore, the threshold proposed in the Green Paper would mean that topics concerning not all of the EU but large regions could not be subject to a citizens' initiative: e.g., based on the Green Paper not even several million people of all Mediterranean Member States together could initiate such an action but would be considered an insignificant part of the inhabitants of the EU. This will not promote the feeling that the institutions of the EU are in touch with the needs of its citizens. For these two reasons about 10 % or 3 member states would seem more appropriate. The easier access for merely regional topics is counterbalanced by the need to gain the support of a much higher percentage of the total population in the Member States concerned. It is thus limited to matters considered pressing by a considerably higher percentage than would be necessary for a more general problem.

Do you consider that 0.2% of the total population of each Member State is an appropriate threshold?

Yes

Should the minimum age required to support a European citizens' initiative be linked to the voting age for the European Parliament elections in each Member State?

Yes

Would it be sufficient and appropriate to require that an initiative clearly state the subjectmatter and objectives of the proposal on which the Commission is invited to act?

Yes

Do you think that there should be a common set of procedural requirements for the collection, verification and authentication of signatures by Member States' authorities at EU level?

Yes

To what extent should Member States be able to put in place specific provisions at national level?

I do not have special knowledge about the differences of the national provisions.

Are specific procedures needed in order to ensure that EU citizens can support a citizens' initiative regardless of their country of residence?

Yes

Should citizens be able to support a citizens' initiative online?

Yes

If so, what security and authentication features should be foreseen?

I do not have special knowledge about security and authentication features.

Should a time limit for the collection of signatures be fixed?

Yes

If so, would you consider that one year would be an appropriate time-limit?

Yes

Do you think that a mandatory system of registration of proposed initiatives is necessary?

Yes

If so, do you agree that this could be done through a specific website provided by the European Commission?

Yes

What specific requirements should be imposed upon the organisers of an initiative in order to ensure transparency and democratic accountability?

It is crucial that all political and economic interdependancies are laid open.

Do you agree that organisers should be required to provide information on the support and funding that they have received for an initiative?

Yes – but this may not be enough. What if the organisers have received substantial funding not expressly dedicated to support the specific initiative but under more general terms? It is too easy to circumvent provisions focussing at the specific initiative only.

Should a time limit be foreseen for the Commission to examine a citizens' initiative?

Yes

Is it appropriate to introduce rules to prevent the successive presentation of citizens' initiatives on the same issue?

Yes

If so, would this best be done by introducing some sort of disincentives - or time limits?

Time limit

Georg Bieringer
January 26th 2010