

Citizens' summary

Public consultation – How should the new European citizens' initiative work?

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

- The Lisbon treaty introduces a new form of public participation in EU politics – the **European citizens' initiative** enables the **public to call on the European Commission to bring forward new legislation**.
- Before the public can start exercising this new right, a few **ground rules and procedures** have to be laid down – in an EU regulation.
- Those rules and procedures **must first be discussed with the people** who will be using the initiative.

WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION?

- It's an opportunity for individuals, groups, businesses and public authorities to **say how they think** the citizens' initiative should work in practice.
- The **Green Paper** introducing the consultation provides some background and asks some key questions about legal, administrative and practical issues.
- The Commission will **take account of comments** from the consultation when it drafts the regulation governing citizens' initiatives.

WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES IN THE CONSULTATION?

The **broad features** of citizens' initiatives are already laid down in the Lisbon treaty - namely that they must:

- have at least **1 million signatories**, from a **significant number of EU countries**
- concern a policy area **where the Commission has powers** to act...
- and an issue for which people think an **EU law is needed to implement the EU Treaties**.

This **consultation is about how to make these features operational and how to deal with a number of additional questions** not covered in the treaty:

- minimum number of EU countries signatories must come from
- minimum number of signatories per country
- minimum age of signatories
- form and wording of a citizens' initiative
- rules on collecting, verifying and authenticating signatures
- time limit for collecting signatures
- how to officially register initiatives
- rules on transparency and funding (applicable to organisers)
- possible time limit for Commission response

- what to do when there are several initiatives on a single issue

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- **31 January 2010 - deadline for comments**
- **2010** - Commission to study the comments and draft a new citizens' initiative **regulation**
- **early 2011** – citizens' initiative system should be **operational**