

4. Form and wording of a citizens' initiative.

The EU hopes the Citizens' Initiative will spur European citizens to greater engagement with the European political process. In this context, I believe clarification is required on exactly what form a citizens' initiative should take, and also on some of the practical problems this might present.

As the Commission points out, requiring citizens to draft a legal text with clearly recognisable legal provisions is unreasonable and inappropriate as many citizens will not have the knowledge or experience to do so, which could have the unfortunate consequence of alienating citizens from an initiative designed to bring them closer to EU law-making process.

Instead the Commission suggests that a simplified process is preferable in which citizens would only be required to present a text which clearly states i) the subject matter and ii) the objectives of a proposal on which the Commission is invited.

Under such rules the Commission would then presumably draw up a legal text.

I think there is room for clarification on what this process might entail, and in particular on some of the problems it could present. In particular:

- Does the Commission intend to maintain a continuous dialogue with the citizen during the drafting process to ensure their views are being accurately reflected and interpreted as the drafting takes place?
- If not, and instead the Commission plans to simply present a completed text, what recourse will the organisers have if they are not satisfied with the content and wording of the completed text? What rights, if any, will the organisers have to request modifications of, or amendments to, the prepared draft?
- If the organisers deem that the Commission's text has substantively deviated from or diluted the original purpose of the proposal, will this necessitate the re-collection of signatures, on the basis that signatories may not consent to supporting a text which they feel does not address or reflect their original concerns?

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