

Comments from Disabled Peoples Organizations Denmark (DPOD): Green Paper on a European Citizens' Initiative

In Disabled Peoples Organization Denmark (DPOD), we have the following comments to the hearing on the Green Paper on a European Citizens' Initiative - COM (2009) 622 final.

Question 2:

We find it inappropriate to set a minimum percentage of citizens that are required to support an initiative in each of the Member States involved. Minorities across Europe must have the opportunity to bring attention to a certain issues and might not have the resources or attention in each and every country to raise awareness and support.

Question 3:

It is important that young people also have the opportunity to raise issues to the European Commissions attention. For people with disability there is a gap between generations and the barriers they are dealing with in their daily lives. A minimum age at 16 is therefore in our opinion the better choice.

Question 4:

Every initiative must be formulated in a way that places no doubt on the intention or scope of an initiative.

Question 5:

It is important to allow for different opportunities and ways to participate in and support a citizen initiative.

Before a certain mechanism for collection, verification and authentication of signatures is chosen it is important to take into consideration special needs of people with disabilities (for example people who suffer from blindness or severe visual impairment, cognitive impairment or dyslexia). Common procedures must take this issue into account.

An internet based solution will also have to take into accessibility for people with disabilities into account.

Question 6:

Problems can still be highly relevant after 18 or 24 months and we therefore suggest the limit for the collection of signatures is longer than one year.

Question 7:

We support a mandatory system of registration of proposed initiatives that is open to the public and regularly updated. First of all to set a fixed time frame. Secondly make the process more formal and binding. Thirdly to give all citizens an overview of the initiatives.

Question 8:

The European Citizens' Initiative is in its nature a bottom up approach to democracy and it is therefore important to give all stakeholders the opportunity to start a collection of signatures.

As long as every initiative is open and transparent with regard who is responsible for the formulation and proposal of an initiative.

We find it appropriate that organizers are required to provide information on the support and funding that they have received for an initiative.

Question 9:

We find it necessary to implement a time frame for the Commissions examination of citizen's initiatives. For example one year time frame.

Question 10:

We support the opportunity to reformulate or raise a citizen initiative again after a certain period of time. We suggest a two year limit could be introduced.

We hope our comments are useful.

On behalf of Chairman Stig Langvad,

Jesper Foenss

Disabled Peoples Organizations Denmark
Kloeverprisvej 10.B, DK-2650 Hvidovre, Denmark
Direct # +45 24 25 63 53
E-mail: jef@handicap.dk
Web: www.handicap.dk