



European Commission identification number: 4293010684-55

THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE Response to the Public Consultation

29 January 2010

Eurodiaconia believes that the European Citizen's Initiative (ECI) has potential for bringing the EU closer to its citizens by providing a method through which the real concerns of people living in the EU can be heard and taken into account. To ensure that this is the case, we propose the following.

There should also be clear rules as to the process the Commission must follow in responding to an ECI. This could include, for example, rules on the involvement of the organisers of the ECI in hearings and policy discussions, the use of additional consultations with citizens and/or stakeholders

ECIs should be registered and made public on a common, multilingual website that is easily accessible to the general public. In addition, prior to registration, the European Commission should evaluate each ECI to ensure that it does not advocate a policy in violation of the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights or is not misleading or promotes commercial interests. Only ECIs that meet these three requirements should be allowed to register.

There also needs to be full transparency in the organisation and funding of ECI campaigns. The names of the ECI organisation committee members should be made public as should the financial assistance. This can help ensure that each ECI represents the genuine interest of citizens and is not misused, for example, by business interests as marketing or indirect lobbying tools. At the same time, these transparency requirements should not present excessive administrative burdens to the ECI's organisers.

Eurodiaconia is a member of the Social Platform and as they have done we would also like to draw attention to the first part of the Lisbon Treaty article 11 on civil dialogue and call on the European Commission to launch a public consultation on how to implement this. The first part of the article requires *all* EU institutions to implement new mechanisms of *dialogue* with civil society (as opposed to consultations, run by the European Commission as it is the case now). We believe that it should also be used to assess existing mechanisms of consultation, about which we have raised concerns, relating to how responses are taken into account in the Commission's work and tight deadlines.

Given that the European Commission has not revised its procedures to dialogue with citizens for almost a decade, we believe it is time for the European Commission to discuss with civil society organisations how this new mechanisms of dialogue should take place in the future between EU institutions and organised civil

Page 1 of 2



society. Eurodiaconia and our members wish to be involved in constructive civil dialogue to contribute to better policy making and we call for concrete, accessible processes to be able to do so.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. For further information please do not hesitate to contact our office.



Heather Roy

Secretary General

Eurodiaconia