



European Youth Parliament Azores

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**CONTRIBUTION OF THE EUROPEAN YOUTH PARLIAMENT
TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION CONSULTATION ON THE
GREEN PAPER OF EUROPEAN CITIZEN'S INITIATIVE**

The European Youth Parliament Azores welcomes the initiative of the European Commission to promote a wide consultation on the white paper: European Citizen's Initiative, once such act which is suppose to promote the full right of citizens to initiate a legislative initiative must be widely discussed and debated among European citizens, the ones who are the central core of such political innovation which makes once again that the European union political system is most original in world political arrangements.

We also state that this entails the European institutions and more specifically the European Commission of a real democratic sense, being the European citizens responsible for initiating legislative acts.

Taking into consideration that the Treaty of Lisbon introduces the European Citizens Initiative with the following requirements: “ not less than one million citizens who are nationals of a significant number of Member States may take the initiative of inviting the Commission, within the framework of its powers, to submit any appropriate proposal on matters where citizens consider that a legal act of the Union is required for the purpose of implementing the Treaties”, and also taking into consideration that the procedures and conditions required for such a citizen’s initiative, including a minimum number of Member States from which citizens come, shall be determined in a Regulation to be adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on a proposal to the European Commission shows the maximum involvement of all European institutions and suggests the minimum of member states necessary once such matters that affects a minority of states may also be considered.

We intend with such a suggestion that the Member States and citizens must have another way of proposing their positions in specific measures that affects them, promoting in this sense another institutional arrangement of Member States to promote their specificities, who are shared with other Member States to the highest level, especially when citizens concerns are in matter.

We welcome the initiative of the Commission to push the approval by the European Parliament and by the Council of the Regulation that establishes

the requirements for the European Citizen's Initiative as quickly as possible after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, namely before the end of the first year of its entry into force.

In what respects the minimum of signatories from "a significant Member States" is understood, once it must ensure that an initiative is sufficiently representative of a Union interest, but on the other hand specific problems and constraints of European citizens must also be taken into consideration.

In our view the most important fact is the one million signatories than the number of Member States, since if we want a truly democratic and representative process it must take into consideration a small group of Member States.

Its important to notice that is important to deliver the Commission the concerns of citizens and this must be independently of the number of Member States.

We don't opt with the first option that it should be required a majority of the Member States (14 Member States), considering that this is a high number of member states and being against our conviction that all concerns of citizens must be taken into consideration and we also consider that one third of the Member States is too high.

In this sense we don't agree with the Commission's opinion to not consider the proposal of the European Parliament, which states that the minimum should be a quarter of the Member States.

We strongly believe that the minimum should be as low as possible in order to assure correct representative level of specific concerns of citizens.

In what concerns the threshold of minimum signatures to initiate a European Citizens Initiative the Treaty of Lisbon establishes no less than 1 million citizens and we agree in principle with this number.

In what respects the minimum population of each Member State that signs the Initiative, we agree that there should be a minimum of population from each Member State in order to assure the appropriate European sense, and we also agree with the calculation proposed by the Commission of 0.2 % of the population of each Member State, considering that is a reasonable number and that can address specific problems that in the other hand also have the European sense.

We agree that there should be a minimum age for starting an European Initiative and yes we do agree that should be accordingly to the voting age stated by the European elections from each member state in order to avoid conflict and excessive burden.

In what respects the form of the European Citizens Initiative we think it should be as simple as possible in order not to fall in too complex legal domains that would not be susceptible of a major interest of initiating such an act by the majority of European citizens.

Therefore we don't agree that it should have the form of a legal draft but yes of a simple format of subject-matter and objectives once is simpler and would convince more citizens to do so and the other hand the Commission could have a specific form that enables it to respond on an efficient manner.

In what concerns the verification and eligibility of signatories we agree with the Commission that a basic EU standard should be developed in order not to provoke unbalanced right to the European citizens to speak their mind. This means that a European standard would allow the same requisitions in all Member States.

And in what concerns the collecting os signatories we strongly believe that we must take advantage of the new technologies and provide that the European Citizens Initiative should be done as easy as possible.

Therefore we agree that an Internet submission and collection of signatories should be allowed.

In what concerns the time limit for the submission of a European Citizens Initiative we fully agree with the Commission that a time limit should be imposed, but it must be reasonable and sufficiently long so as to allow a campaign reflecting the additional complexity of working throughout the European Union and that this could be achieved by providing for a period of, for instance, one year.

We agree with the proposal of the European Commission that it would be necessary to require a form of registration of the proposed initiative before the collection of signatures begins. Such registration could be done by the

organisers of an initiative on a specific website provided by the Commission for this purpose. They would be required to upload all relevant information on the proposed initiative (e.g. title, subject-matter, objectives, background etc.) on the website, which would then be publicly available. The system would then provide the organiser with confirmation of the registration, the date and a registration number, on the basis of which the collection campaign could be launched.

We also agree that the approval by the Commission of such Initiative should be after the collection of signatories once without the requirements set above it cannot be considered an European Citizens Initiative.

We also agree that the organizers of a European Citizens Initiative should be dully informed if such a proposed action falls under the powers of the Commission in order to avoid unnecessary burden. All the information must be clear and available on the same website for all citizens.

We agree with the Commission that the organisers of initiatives should be required to provide certain basic information in particular in relation to the organisations that support an initiative and how the initiatives are or will be funded. This would be in the interest of the citizens considering signing up to an initiative; this would also be in line with the Commission's European Transparency Initiative.

We also agree with the Commission that there shouldn't be an imposed restrictions on the organizer, this can be individual citizens or organisations.

Without this consideration we think that all legitimacy of the European Citizens Initiative would be doubtful and it wouldn't comply with the intended objective of such citizen's initiative.

We also agree that there should be a time limit for the approval of a European Citizen's Initiative by the Commission, although its not specific on the Treaty, and the time limit of six months is considered reasonable taking into consideration that the European Commission should evaluate such policy initiative would have the background it needs to have.

We don't agree that there should be any limit upon the number of initiatives of the same subject. Many citizens may have different points of views and all of them must be considered.