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GREEN PAPER On a European Citizens' initiative

Answers of Liga Pro Europa, Romania

1. Minimum number of Member States from which citizens must come

The option to set the threshold at one third of the Member States is reasonable. One third constitutes a “significant number of Member States” as required by the Lisbon Treaty. This threshold would match other provisions of the Treaty and would maintain a correct balance between representativity and accessibility.

2. Minimum number of signatures per Member State

An equitable option would be to set the threshold for the minimum number of signatures as a proportion of the population of each Member State.

The reasonable minimum would be in our view 0,2% of the population of each Member State where signatures are collected for a European citizen's initiative.

3. Eligibility to support a citizen's initiative - minimum age

The ideal would be to link the age to the voting age for the European Parliament. But, it seems more easy to manage a unitary minimum age, like 18, because it would avoid administrative complications in the case of citizens of a Member State residing in Austria or Austrians residing in an other Member State.

4. Form and wording of a citizens' initiative

It would be appropriate and sufficient to require that an initiative clearly state the subject-matter and objectives of the proposal on which the Commission is invited to act. Additional requirements are not necessary, because the clarity is also in the highest interest of the initiators.

5. Requirements for the collection, verification and authentication of signatures

A rational option would be to set a number of common basic provisions at EU level, including requirements for the verification and authentication of signatures and the obligation for Member States to facilitate the collection process and remove restrictive administrative procedures. No specific procedures should be needed for EU citizens residing in an other Member State.

European citizens should be able to support online a European citizens initiative in those Member States where online voting for the EU Parliament is possible, according to the same procedure, including security and authentication features.

6. Time limit for the collection of signatures

There is no need to set a time limit for the collection of the signatures. The initiators should take the entire responsibility and the risk of the timing of their initiative.

At the contrary, the national authorities in each Member State where signatures are collected should respect a commonly agreed time limit at EU level for the verification of the validity of the signatures, that should not exceed one month.

7. Registration of proposed initiatives

The essence of the European citizens' initiative is its total autonomy and independence from both Member States and the EU Commission. The Member States should assist only with the technical procedures of verifying the authenticity of the signatures.

The initiative should be the result of the self-organising of the citizens. To be credible and legitimate, it should be the result of the cooperation of citizens from various Member States, without any involvement, be it technical, of the European institutions.

Therefore, the registration moment should be considered the moment when the initiative and the signatures are formally submitted to the Commission.

The Commission's role should start only after receiving officially and *de facto* the European citizens' initiative.

Any earlier involvement of the Commission (i.e. providing a specific website for registration of the initiatives) could be interpreted.

8. Requirements for organisers - transparency and funding

In the interest of transparency and democratic accountability, the organisers of the initiative should be required to provide a list of all the funders of the process and procedures related to the citizens' initiative. This document should be submitted officially to the Commission simultaneously with the official submission of the citizens' initiative. Submitting such a document should be obligatory and conditional for the acceptance by the Commission of the initiative.

There is no need to impose any limitations with regard as to who may act as an initiator or organiser of a European citizens' initiative. Any natural, juridical or private person, individuals, organizations and groups, should be free to launch and support such initiatives, as long as signatures remain individual.

9. Examination of citizens' initiatives by the Commission

In line with good administrative practice and in the interest of the efficiency, it should be set a time limit for the Commission's response to a citizens' initiative.

Six months from the formal submission of the initiative seems to be a reasonable time limit for the Commission's response. The Commission's response should be made available on the Commission's website and notified to the European Council and Parliament.

10 . Initiatives on the same issue

There is no need for specific rules from the part of the Commission as to prevent the situation when the same initiative would be submitted repeatedly. It is most probable that initiators will refrain from taking such a risk.

The Commission should only list on its website all the citizens' initiatives submitted along the years and its responses. It is up to the citizens to decide if they should or not take the risk to submit again to the Commission an initiative that has been rejected or solved in the past and that would be most probably rejected in accordance with the principle of *res judicata*.

In any case, the Commission should refrain from intervening to limit citizens' initiatives.
