

Brussels, 26/08/2010  
C/2010/5375

Dear Ms Zissi,

*The European Commission welcomes the interest of the Hellenic Parliament in the European citizens' initiative and thanks you for having transmitted the opinion of the Committee for European Affairs on the proposal for a Regulation on the citizens' initiative adopted on 31 March 2010.*

*The Commission takes note of the comments made on different points of the proposal and would like to emphasize that, in its proposal, it tried to find a good balance between the need for appropriate and proportionate rules and procedures and the need to keep the instrument simple and user-friendly, taking into account the many contributions received during the public consultation as well as the outcome of the Stakeholder Hearing organised on 22 February 2010.*

*In particular, in relation to the minimum number of Member States from which citizens must come, the proposal fixes it at one third since it would be in line with other provisions of the Treaty ("enhanced cooperation", subsidiarity procedure) and reflects the outcome of the public consultation.*

*As regards your comments on the first filter of initiatives at the time of registration and on the decision on admissibility, we would like to ensure you that these checks will be carried out in accordance with the general principles of good administration. Moreover, Article 263 first subparagraph of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union foresees that legal acts of the Union which have legal effects vis-à-vis third parties are subject to review by the Court. Concerning your suggestion that the Commission should provide support, organisers would always have the possibility to ask the Commission for advice at the outset and for this purpose the Commission would be ready to provide a form of "help-desk".*

*In your opinion, you also suggest to establish a definite deadline for legislative action following a successful initiative. It is important to underline that the citizens' initiative is an agenda-setting initiative, which means that the Commission is not obliged to adopt a legislative proposal. However, the Commission is committed to give serious consideration to the requests made by citizens' initiatives. Moreover, where the Commission would consider that a proposed citizens' initiative could be the subject of a legislative proposal, it could provide a timeframe for its work.*

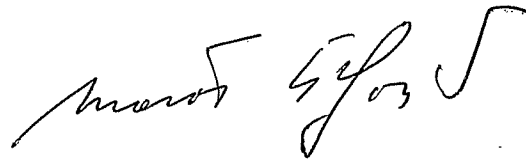
Ms Rodoula Zissi  
Chair of the Committee for European Affairs  
of the Hellenic Parliament  
11, Av. Vassillissis Sofias  
G-10021 Athens

*As regards the translation of the proposed citizens' initiatives in all EU official languages, we believe that it would not be appropriate for the Commission to carry out this task. The citizens' initiative needs to be citizen-driven. The organiser of the initiative should therefore remain wholly responsible for the content of his or her initiative and for the language versions that he or she would like to provide. Moreover, if the Commission were required to provide translations in all languages of all possible initiatives that are simply registered on its website, there would be a serious risk of overload of the system.*

*The proposal is now being discussed in the European Parliament and the Council. In the Parliament, a draft report of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs is expected in September. As for the Council, it reached an agreement on a general approach on 14 June.*

*The Commission hopes that the Regulation will be adopted by the end of this year.*

*Yours faithfully,*



*Ms Rodoula Zissi  
Chair of the Committee for European Affairs  
of the Hellenic Parliament  
11, Av. Vassillissis Sofias  
G-10021 Athens*