Citizens' initiative

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The Council held an **orientation debate** on a proposal for a regulation aimed at making operational the "citizens' initiative", one of the most visible innovations of the Treaty of Lisbon.

In the light of the debate, it asked the Permanent Representatives Committee to oversee further work on the draft regulation so as to enable a general approach to be defined at the Council's meeting on 14 June 2010.

The Treaty of Lisbon introduces a new dimension of participatory democracy, alongside that of representative democracy on which the EU is founded, with the aim of bringing the EU closer to its citizens and encouraging greater cross-border debate about EU issues.

The "citizens' initiative" will enable citizens to invite the Commission to bring forward legislative proposals on a specific issue if the signatories to such a request number at least one million and come from a significant number of Member States. The proposal sets out the procedures and conditions for how the citizens' initiative will function in practice.

The Council's debate focused on the following issues:

- registration of a proposed initiative and admissibility;
- the minimum number of signatories per member state;
- procedures and conditions for the collection of statements of support;
- online collection systems.