European Year of Citizens (2013)

2011/0217(COD) - 21/11/2012 - Final act

PURPOSE: to establish the European Year of Citizens (2013).

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Decision No 1093/2012/EU of the European Parliament and the Council on the European Year of Citizens (2013).

CONTENT: based on an agreement reached at first reading, the European Parliament and the Council adopted a decision declaring 2013 as 'European Year of Citizens'.

Objectives: the general objective of the European Year of Citizens shall be to enhance awareness and knowledge of the rights and responsibilities attached to Union citizenship, in order to enable citizens to make full use of their right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States. In this context, the European Year of Citizens shall also promote the enjoyment by Union citizens of the other rights attached to Union citizenship.

Specific objectives: in order to achieve its general objective, the specific objectives of the European Year of Citizens shall be:

- to raise Union citizens' awareness of their right to move and reside freely within the Union and, in that context, of all other rights guaranteed to Union citizens, without discrimination, **including their right to vote in local and European elections in any Member State in which they reside**;
- to raise awareness among Union citizens, **including young people**, about how they can tangibly benefit from Union rights, as well as about policies and programmes that exist to support the exercise of those rights;
- to stimulate debate about the impact and potential of the right of freedom of movement and residence, as an inalienable aspect of Union citizenship, with a view to stimulating and strengthening active civic and democratic participation of Union citizens, in particular in **civic forums on Union policies** and European Parliament elections, thereby reinforcing societal cohesion, cultural diversity, solidarity, equality between women and men, mutual respect and a sense of a common European identity among Union citizens, based on the core values of the Union, as enshrined in the TEU and the TFEU and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

Initiatives involved: the measures to be taken to achieve the objectives may include the following initiatives organised at Union, national, regional or local level: (i) information and awareness-raising campaigns; (ii) exchanging information and sharing experience and good practices with the involvement of civil society organisations; (iii) organising conferences and other events to promote debate and raise awareness of the importance and benefits of the right of freedom of movement and residence, and more generally on the concept of Union citizenship and the rights attached to it; (iv) strengthening the role and visibility of existing tools for informing citizens (Europe Direct, the 'Your Europe' web portal, or even SOLVIT); (v) providing Union citizens with information about the European Parliament's Committee on Petitions and the European Ombudsman; (v) promoting the EU Citizenship Report

An annex to the decision sets out the details of the initiatives.

In the context of initiatives organised in the framework of the European Year of Citizens, consideration shall be given to **identifying obstacles to the exercise of the rights by the Union citizens and to promoting appropriate ways and strategies to remove those obstacles**. Synergies shall therefore be

sought between those initiatives and existing tools and programmes in the field of fundamental rights, citizens' rights, employment and social affairs, education and culture.

Financial provisions: certain provisions exist to specify the types of actions that can be financed and the technical procedures that relate to the various types of financing. An annex provides details on the possible types of grants, cofinancing and support available. Existing European programmes could be used for this purpose.

Coordination and implementation at EU level: the Commission shall cooperate closely with Member States, **the European Parliament**, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions, as well as with local and regional authorities and with bodies and associations which represent local and regional interests.

Furthermore, the Commission shall endeavour to exploit possible synergies between different thematic European years, by evaluating achievements, monitoring persistent gaps. The Commission shall be responsible for implementing this Decision at Union level.

International cooperation: for the purpose of the European Year of Citizens, the Commission may cooperate with appropriate international organisations, in particular with the **Council of Europe**.

Monitoring and evaluation: with regard to the monitoring and evaluation of the Year, it is stipulated that the report that the Commission shall present by 31 December 2014 at the latest shall serve as a basis for future Union policies, measures and actions in this field. Pursuant to the experience of the European Year of Citizens, that report shall also present ideas and best practices on how better to inform citizens of their rights, even after the end of the European Year of Citizens.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 26.11.2012.