Citizens' initiative

2010/0074(COD) - 31/03/2015 - Follow-up document

The Commission presents a report on the application of Regulation (EU) No 211/2011 on the citizens' initiative.

The Commission's analysis is supported by the ongoing feedback received from stakeholders, including organisers of citizens' initiatives (ECI), directly or via the Ombudsman's own-initiative inquiry, and the European Parliament's study.

State of play: since April 2012, the Commission has received 51 requests for registration of proposed citizens' initiatives. 31 of them were registered. Three initiatives are currently collecting statements of support.

18 initiatives have reached the end of their collection period. Among those 18, **three initiatives have reached the required number of statements of support** and were submitted to the Commission:

- **'Right2Water'** called on the Commission for "legislation implementing the human right to water and sanitation as recognised by the United Nations and promoting the provision of water and sanitation as essential public services for all".
- **'One of us'** called for "the EU to end the financing of activities which presuppose the destruction of human embryos, in particular in the areas of research, development aid and public health".
- The third initiative, **'Stop vivisection'**, called for the Commission to "abrogate directive 2010/63 /EU on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes and to present a new proposal that does away with animal experimentation and instead makes compulsory the use - in biomedical and toxicological research - of data directly relevant for the human species." It was submitted on 3 March 2015 and is awaiting a reply by the Commission by 3 June 2015.

Assessment of implementation: the fact that two initiatives have managed to complete the full lifecycle of an ECI, and that a third one is now awaiting a formal reply, confirms that the necessary procedures and mechanisms are in place to ensure that the ECI is operational.

The Commission considers that **improvements are possible** regarding the following points:

- **the lack of legal personality of the citizens' committees**: several committees have reported concerns about liability and obstacles e.g. to raising funds and managing data protection, especially in view of the fact that they reside in at least seven different countries.
- **registration**: a large number of proposed ECIs are manifestly outside the scope of the Commission's competences.
- **requirements for signatories**: divergences between the personal data required from signatories by different Member States remain an issue of concern, and there is need to make the ECI tool more accessible;
- **the timeline of an ECI's lifecycle**: organisers have less than 12 months to collect on line and there is the lack of a specific time limit for the submission of a successful initiative to the Commission;
- **the verification of translations** of the proposed initiatives provided by its organisers has proved to be a cumbersome process;
- **online collection**: stakeholders remain critical with regard to the complexity of the current certification procedure and are not fully satisfied with the features offered by the Commission software. Moreover, the Commission hosting has been offered as a temporary and exceptional service;

- both **public hearings organised at the European Parliament**, no stakeholders or experts other than the ECI organisers themselves were invited to actively participate;
- some ECI organisers consider that there is **insufficient dialogue** and interaction with the Commission at different stages of the ECI's lifecycle.

In conclusion, the Commission considers it still too early to assess the long-term impacts of the ECI on the EU institutional and legislative process. It is committed to continue monitoring and discussing a range of ECI issues identified in the report, in close cooperation with the various stakeholders and institutions, with a view to improving the legislation.

The outcome of the on-going Commission's study on the issue of online collection will further guide the Commission position on this important matter, but it will continue to provide its exceptional hosting service to organisers free of charge as long as needed.