

Citizens' initiative

2010/0074(COD) - 28/03/2018 - Follow-up document

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

Towards a revised citizens' initiative (2015-2018): following the Commission's first report, adopted on 31 March 2015, and a European Parliament [resolution](#) calling for a revision of the regulation, the Commission adopted on 13 September 2017 a proposal for a [new regulation on the European Citizens' Initiative](#) (ECI) aimed at making it more accessible, less burdensome and easier to use for organisers and supporters.

The European Parliament and the Council are currently examining the proposal and the three institutions have undertaken to give it **priority treatment** in the legislative process in order to ensure substantial progress and, where possible, delivery before the 2019 European elections. The Commission requests that it be adopted by the **end of 2018**, so that it can enter into force in January 2020.

Improvements to the functioning of the ECI: within the current legal order, the Commission has already taken various non-legislative measures to introduce practical improvements in the implementation of the ECI instrument. In particular, it has:

- provided free of charge hosting servers for organisers' online collection systems,
- reinforced advice and support to (potential) organisers and communication activities,
- improved the user-friendliness of the online collection software that organisers can choose to use,
- decided where appropriate to partially register initiatives.

Another important new element of the proposal is the creation of an **online collaborative platform** to support the exchange of good practice between ECI practitioners, in particular via a discussion forum and other support and training tools and mechanisms. **The first version of the platform is planned to go public in April 2018** and the Commission will increase its communication and awareness-raising activities on the ECI instrument through a communication campaign starting in 2018.

The Commission has included a number of improvements, in particular the transmission of the initiative, when it is received, to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions, a **more inclusive public hearing** at the European Parliament to ensure balanced representation of all stakeholders concerned by the initiative, and extension of the examination phase from three to five months to allow more time for debate and allow it to feed into the Commission's response.

Overview and follow-up of ECI: since the previous report on the application of the ECI in March 2015, the Commission has received 17 requests for registration of proposed [citizens' initiatives](#), of which 15 have been accepted and two refused ('Stop Brexit' and 'British friends - stay with us in the EU'). In addition, two initiatives whose registration had initially been refused during the previous three-year period were finally registered by the Commission following court decisions ('Stop TTIP' and 'Minority SafePack').

The Commission will continue to follow up on successful initiatives wherever appropriate, and will be open about its detailed reasons where that is not the case, in line with its 10 political priorities. The Commission has committed to **follow up actions in three of the four successful initiatives** and has announced or adopted legislative proposals for two of them:

- following the initiative '**Ban glyphosate and protect people and the environment from toxic pesticides**', the Commission intends to present a legislative proposal by May 2018, in particular with a view to increasing the transparency of scientific assessments and the decision-making process. The Commission will also strengthen its efforts to continuously and measurably reduce the risks associated with pesticide use;
- as regards the '**Stop vivisection**' initiative, the Commission adopted a Communication announcing actions in four directions; i.e. accelerating progress in the Three Rs (to replace, reduce and refine animal use) through knowledge sharing; developing, validating and implementing new alternative approaches to animal testing; enforcing compliance with the Three Rs principle and aligning relevant sector legislation; engaging in a dialogue with the scientific community;
- in response to the initiative '**Water and sanitation are a human right! Water is a public good, not a commodity**', several follow-up actions have been implemented since the adoption of the Commission Communication in March 2014. On 1 February 2018, the Commission adopted a proposal for a [revision of the Drinking Water Directive](#), including an obligation for Member States to ensure that vulnerable and marginalised groups have access to water. The **European Pillar of Social Rights** proclaimed on 17 November 2017 by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission also assumes that everyone has the right to access essential quality services, including water and sanitation.

The ECI instrument, as shown by the **9 million statements of support** collected by the various initiatives so far, fosters citizen participation across the continent and contributes to the emergence of pan-European debates and involvement in the democratic life of the EU. By involving citizens directly and allowing them to put forward their ideas on issues that matter to them, the ECI adds value to the EU law-making process and contributes to bringing citizens closer to the Union.