European citizens’ initiative

2017/0220(COD) - 12/03/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 535 votes to 90 with 41 abstentions a legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Citizens' Initiative.

The position of the European Parliament adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure has amended the Commission proposal as follows:

Right to support a European Citizens' Initiative (ECI)

EU citizens have the right to address the Commission directly with a request to submit a proposal for a legal act of the Union for the purpose of implementing the Treaties. In this way, the ECI contributes to strengthening the EU’s democratic functioning through the participation of citizens in its democratic and political life.

The amended text specifies that any EU citizen who is at least of voting age in elections to the European Parliament would have the right to support an initiative by signing a declaration of support. Member States that set the minimum age for supporting an ECI at 16 years should inform the Commission accordingly.

People with disabilities should be able to exercise their right to support initiatives and access all relevant sources of information on initiatives on an equal footing with other citizens.

Information and assistance by the Commission and Member States

The Commission should:

- provide citizens and organising groups with easily accessible and comprehensive information and assistance concerning the ECI, including redirecting them to relevant sources of information and assistance;

- make available to the public, online and in paper format and in all the official languages of the Union institutions, a guide to the ECI;

- provide a free online collaborative platform dedicated to the ECI.

The platform would provide practical and legal advice, as well as a forum for discussion on the ECI for the exchange of information and good practice between citizens, organising groups, stakeholders, non-governmental organisations, experts and other EU institutions and bodies wishing to participate.

The Commission would ensure that information on the application for registration and the translations submitted are published in the register and on the ECI public website, the latter being the responsibility of the organising group.

Each Member State would establish one or more contact points to inform and assist groups of organisers free of charge.

Registration

The group of organisers should submit the application for registration to the Commission via the register. When it refuses to register an initiative or registers it only partially, the Commission should give reasons for its decision and inform the group of organisers. It should also inform the organizing group of all judicial and extrajudicial remedies available to it. It should make available to the public, in the register and on the public website of the ECI, all decisions relating to requests for registration of proposals for citizens' initiatives that it has adopted.

Publication and public hearing

When the Commission receives a valid initiative, it should without delay publish an opinion to this effect in the register and forward the initiative to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and national parliaments.

Within three months of the presentation of the initiative, the group of organisers would be given the opportunity to present the initiative at a public hearing organised by the European Parliament.

Following the public hearing to be held on its premises, the European Parliament would assess the political support for this initiative.

Examination by the Commission

Within six months of the publication of the initiative and following the public hearing in the European Parliament, the Commission should present, in a communication, its legal and political conclusions on the initiative and the action it intends to take.

Where the Commission intends to follow up the initiative, including, where appropriate, by adopting one or more proposals for a Union legal act, the communication would also set out the timetable for their implementation. The Commission should provide, in the register and on the public website of the ECI, updated information on the implementation of the measures set out in the Communication that are adopted as a follow-up to the initiative.

The European Parliament would evaluate the measures taken by the Commission following the Commission's communication.