

European citizens' initiative: temporary measures concerning the time limits for the collection, verification and examination stages in view of the COVID-19 outbreak

2020/0099(COD) - 09/07/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 684 votes to 7, with 3 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down temporary measures concerning the time limits for the collection, verification and examination stages provided for in Regulation (EU) 2019/788 on the European citizens' initiative in view of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The proposal lays down temporary measures concerning the deadlines for the collection, verification and examination phases provided for in [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/788](#) on the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) in view of the emergence of COVID-19.

The European Parliament's position adopted at first reading in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure amended the Commission proposal as follows:

Extension of the time limits for the collection of statements of support

The amending regulation provides that where the collection of statements of support for an initiative started between 11 March 2020 and 11 September 2020, the duration of the collection period should be extended until 11 September 2021 in respect of that initiative.

Parliament specified that the Commission should (i) inform the organisers of the initiatives concerned and the Member States of any extension of the collection period and of the new time limit for the collection period, for each initiative concerned and (ii) indicate the new end dates for the collection period for each initiative in the online register.

The Commission may adopt implementing acts in order to:

- further extend the collection period for initiatives for which the collection period is still in progress on 11 September 2020 where measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic continue to exist after that date in at least a quarter of the Member States or a number of Member States representing more than 35 % of the Union population;
- extend the collection period in the event of a new public health crisis linked to a new outbreak of COVID-19, provided that at least a quarter of the Member States or a number of Member States representing more than 35 % of the Union population have taken measures that are likely to have the same effect.

When adopting those implementing acts, the Commission should indicate the initiatives concerned with the new deadline for their collection periods following any extension granted and the factual circumstances justifying the granting of such extensions.

Extension of time limits for the examination of valid initiatives

In the event of difficulties in arranging a meeting or hearing with the organisers due to measures taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic by a Member State, hearings or meetings should be organised as soon as the public health situation in the Member State concerned makes it possible to do so, or, in the event that the organisers agree to participate remotely in the hearing or meeting, as soon as they are able to agree with the institutions on a date for it.

Retroactive application

Due to the unforeseeable and sudden nature of the COVID-19 outbreak, and the resulting measures taken by the Member States, which have been repeatedly extended, as well as the length of time required by the legislative procedures for the adoption of relevant measures, it has not been possible to adopt the temporary measures provided for in this Regulation in time as regards some individual initiatives. For that reason, it is proposed that the temporary measures should also cover the period before the entry into force of this Regulation.