

European citizens' initiative

2017/0220(COD) - 27/06/2018 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Constitutional Affairs Committee adopted the report by György SCHÖPFLIN (EPP, HU) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European citizens' initiative.

The committee recommended that the European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the Commission proposal as follows:

Right to support a European Citizens' Initiative (ECI): the proposal aims to replace Regulation 211/2011 on the citizens' initiative in order to improve the way the ECI operates, the main strategic objectives being to make the ECI more accessible, less burdensome and easier to use for organisers and supporters.

Members considered that **citizens residing in Member States other than those of their nationality** shall have the right to support an initiative either in their Member State of residence or in the Member State of which they are nationals. The Member States and the Commission shall adopt all the necessary provisions to facilitate the exercise by persons with disabilities of their right to support a citizens' initiative.

Information and assistance by the Commission and Member States: the Commission shall, upon request, provide to citizens and groups of organisers easily accessible, **clear, accurate and comprehensive information** about and appropriate expert and legal assistance in connection with the European citizens' initiative.

The Commission shall make available an online collaborative platform to support the exchange of information and best practices between stakeholders including groups of organisers, independent experts, NGOs and other institutions and bodies of the Union. The online collaborative platform shall be user-friendly and accessible to people with disabilities.

Each Member State shall establish **one or more digital and physical dedicated ECI contact points** to provide practical and legal information, advice and assistance to groups of organisers who are setting up a European citizens' initiative.

Group of organisers: the members of the group of organisers shall be citizens of the Union, of the age to be entitled to vote in elections to the European Parliament and **residents of at least one quarter of the Member States**. Throughout the organisational phase preceding the registration of a proposed citizens' initiative, the organisers may request the support of the ECI contact points, Europe Director of the Commission's ECI services.

Registration: where it refuses to register or only partially registers an initiative, the Commission shall inform the group of organisers in full detail of the **reasons for its decision**, enabling the group of organisers to make a detailed assessment of the grounds for the Commission's refusal, including the suggested legal basis or bases.

Publication and public hearing: within three months after the submission of the initiative, the group of organisers shall be given an opportunity to present the initiative at a **public hearing in the European Parliament**, in the interest of generating a Union-wide public debate on the proposed initiative.

The European Parliament shall organise the public hearing on its premises. Representatives of the Council, the Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the

Regions, representatives of civil society, the social partners and national parliaments could participate in the hearing. The presence of at least one member of the College of Commissioners shall be assured.

Commission review: within **six months** after the publication of the initiative, and after the public hearing, the Commission shall set out in a communication full details of its legal and political conclusions on the initiative, the action it intends to take, and an exhaustive and clear statement of the reasons for taking or not taking action.

In the event of a successful citizens' initiative, the Commission shall, within **12 months after the publication of the initiative, submit to the European Parliament and to the Council a proposal for a legal act** in response to the initiative.

After the 12 month period, the European Parliament shall assess the actions taken by the Commission in order to follow-up to its communication on the ECI.

Transparency: the group of organisers shall provide, for the publication in the register, and as the case may be on their campaign website, **clear, accurate and comprehensive information** on the sources of support and funding for the initiative exceeding 500 euros per sponsor. Sponsors and corresponding amounts shall be clearly identifiable. It shall also communicate the names of the organisations assisting them on a voluntary basis.

The Commission shall be entitled to perform **random checks** on the information submitted in respect of the sources of support and funding, to assess the quality of the information provided and to request additional clarifications from the groups of organisers. The Commission shall ensure full transparency of funding and sponsorship information through quality checks, alerts and complaints system so as to ensure that funding and sponsorship information provided by ECI organisers are correct.

In order to support the organisation of citizens' initiatives, an **annual appropriation** shall be allocated from the Union budget.