

Procedure file

Basic information	
<p>COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure) Regulation 2020/0099(COD)</p>	Procedure completed
<p>European citizens? initiative: temporary measures concerning the time limits for the collection, verification and examination stages in view of the COVID-19 outbreak</p> <p>See also Regulation 2019/788 2017/0220(COD)</p> <p>Subject</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 European citizenship 1.20 Citizen's rights 4.20 Public health 4.20.01 Medicine, diseases <p>Legislative priorities</p> <p>The EU's response to the Covid-19 pandemic</p>	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	 Constitutional Affairs	 VINCZE Loránt	26/05/2020
		Shadow rapporteur	
		 GRAPINI Maria	
		 DURAND Pascal	
		 ALFONSI François	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	 Culture and Education	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	 Petitions		
Council of the European Union			

Key events			
20/05/2020	Legislative proposal published	COM(2020)0221	Summary
17/06/2020	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 1st reading		
19/06/2020	Decision by Parliament, 1st reading	T9-0172/2020	Summary

19/06/2020	Matter referred back to the committee responsible		
02/07/2020	Approval in committee of the text agreed at 1st reading interinstitutional negotiations	PE654.018 GEDA/A/(2020)004136	
09/07/2020	Decision by Parliament, 1st reading	T9-0188/2020	Summary
10/07/2020	Results of vote in Parliament		
15/07/2020	Act adopted by Council after Parliament's 1st reading		
15/07/2020	Final act signed		
15/07/2020	End of procedure in Parliament		
17/07/2020	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2020/0099(COD)
Procedure type	COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure)
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legislative instrument	Regulation
	See also Regulation 2019/788 2017/0220(COD)
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 170; Treaty on the Functioning of the EU TFEU 024-p1
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFCO/9/03061

Documentation gateway

Legislative proposal	COM(2020)0221	20/05/2020	EC	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading	T9-0172/2020	19/06/2020	EP	Summary
Coreper letter confirming interinstitutional agreement	GEDA/A/(2020)004136	30/06/2020	CSL	
Text agreed during interinstitutional negotiations	PE654.018	30/06/2020	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading	T9-0188/2020	09/07/2020	EP	Summary
Draft final act	00023/2020/LEX	15/07/2020	CSL	
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2020)367	07/08/2020	EC	

Final act

[Regulation 2020/1042](#)
[OJ L 231 17.07.2020, p. 0007](#)

PURPOSE: to lay 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.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: Member States have been affected in a dramatic and exceptional way by the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. A series of restrictive measures were taken to stop or slow down the transmission of COVID-19, including lockdown measures to restrict the free movement of their citizens, the prohibition of public events, and the closure of shops, restaurants and schools. These measures have inevitably also had a serious impact on European citizens initiatives (ECIs), a participative democracy instrument that depends on the engagement of citizens across the EU. The national confinement measures and more generally the omnipresence of the pandemic make it currently nearly impossible for organisers to successfully continue their local campaigning activities and the collection of paper statements of support to help them gather the required statements within the set period of 12 months.

Member States and the European institutions have also certain obligations as regards the verification (including certification) of the validity of the collected statements of support and the examination of a successful initiative. These obligations are equally time-bound. Due to the exceptional circumstances, these obligations may not be able to be respected within the set legal time limits.

CONTENT: this proposal lays 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.

Collection period

In order to preserve the efficacy of the European citizens initiative instrument during this pandemic and to provide reassurance and legal clarity to organisers of initiatives the collection, verification or examination of which is ongoing, the Commission proposes to adopt temporary measures to extend by 6 months the current 12-month period for initiatives whose signature collection was ongoing on 11 March 2020, the date on which the COVID-19 epidemic was qualified as a pandemic by the WHO.

That extension is based on the assumption that at least in the first six months since 11 March 2020 a majority of Member States or a number of Member States representing more than 35% of the Union population will have measures in place that will substantially hamper the organisers possibilities to carry out local campaigning and collect paper statements of support. Where the collection period of an initiative started after 11 March, that period should be extended proportionately.

Verification period

Similar temporary measures should be taken to allow Member States to request the European Commission for an extension of the verification period in case their competent authorities due to the measures taken to combat the pandemic cannot complete the verification in time. The measures are temporary in nature, as these only apply until end 2022.

Examination period

The examination period is also subject to specific time limits. The European institutions are required to organise a meeting with the organisers (to be organised by the Commission within one month after submission of a successful initiative) and a public hearing (to be organised by the European Parliament within three months after submission). The organisation of such events may be difficult within the time limits set by Regulation (EU) 2019/788. In such a case, the European institutions should be allowed to organise such events as soon as the public health situation in that country again allows for organising such events. In such cases, the European Commission shall adopt its Communication in response to a valid initiative within three months after the public hearing in the European Parliament.

Lastly, this proposed Regulation should be adopted as a matter of urgency, so that situations of legal uncertainty affecting citizens, organisers, national administrations and the Union institutions, in particular where the relevant time periods for the collection of statements of support, verification and examination in respect of a number of initiatives have already ended or are about to end, remain as short as possible. It should enter into force as a matter of urgency on the day following that of its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union.

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

The European Parliament adopted amendments to 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 matter was referred back to the committee responsible for inter-institutional negotiations.

The proposal lays 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 main amendments adopted in plenary concern the following points:

Extension of the deadlines for the collection of statements of support

The Commission shall inform the organisers and Member States of the extension granted for each initiative concerned and publish its decision in the online register referred to in the ECI Regulation. It shall publish the list of all such initiatives and the new collection period for each initiative in the Official Journal of the European Union.

The Commission may adopt implementing acts to extend the maximum duration of the collection periods for ECIs where at least one quarter of the Member States or a number of Member States representing more than 35 % of the population of the Union continue to apply measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic after 11 September 2020.

The Commission may adopt implementing acts to prolong the maximum collection period of initiatives for which the collection is ongoing at the moment of a new COVID-19 outbreak where at least a quarter of Member States or a number of Member States representing more than 35 % of the Union population apply measures that affect organisers of those initiatives to the same extent.

Implementing acts shall identify the initiatives in respect of which the collection period is prolonged along with the new end date of their collection period and the results of the assessment.

Hearings and meetings with organisers

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 shall 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.

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

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.