

Updated Rules on European Citizens' Initiatives



Thomas Wahl

News

At the end of March 2019, the Council and the European Parliament passed a [Regulation that reforms the European citizens' initiative](#). The European citizens' initiative is a democratic participation tool by which citizens may influence EU policy. If the Commission has the power to propose legislation, e.g., on the environment, transport, agriculture, energy, or trade, a successful initiative may demand the Commission to take legislative action. Supporters of an initiative must total at least one million and come from at least one quarter of EU Member States. The basic rules are laid down in a Regulation of 2011.

The new Regulation aims at making the European citizens' initiative more accessible, less burdensome, and easier to use. It introduces a central online system available to organisers free of charge. Support for an initiative can be provided electronically.

Assistance for organisers has been improved and the translation of all initiatives into all EU languages ensured. Support requirements have also been lowered, e.g., supporters can back initiatives regardless of their country of residence and fewer personal data need to be provided. Member States are encouraged to give young supporters more possibilities to participate, i.e., in accordance with their national laws, the minimum age for supporting an initiative may be set at 16 years.

In addition, the follow-up process for initiatives has been improved. One example is the extension of the examination period from 3 to 6 months, which ensures that there is enough time for EP hearings, Commission analyses, and other debates.

The new rules will apply as of 1 January 2020.

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