



TAKE THE INITIATIVE

European Citizens' Initiative

Your tool to shape European policy



EUROPEAN UNION



European Citizens' Initiative at a glance

The European Citizens' Initiative is an opportunity to become directly involved in the European democratic process, allowing you to have a greater say in EU policies that affect your life.

The European Citizens' Initiative is unique. It is the first tool that allows citizens from several EU countries to join together and propose concrete legal changes on a common cause. As an EU citizen, you can either join a group of organisers to launch an initiative, or lend your support to an existing initiative.

To launch an initiative, it takes **7 EU citizens**, living in at least **7 different Member States** who are old enough to vote. Once an initiative gathers **1 million signatures**, the Commission decides on what follow-up action to take.

A citizens' initiative is possible in any field where the European Commission has power to propose legislation, such as the environment, consumer protection, agriculture, fisheries, energy, transport or trade.



The power to act on issues you care about

Perhaps you have an idea about how to tackle a social or environmental challenge facing Europe, but you feel that your voice alone is not loud enough to be heard? This is where the European Citizens' Initiative can help. The European Citizens' Initiative makes it possible for you to connect to causes that you believe in and express your proposals in a very concrete way.

Thanks to this tool, you can influence the European agenda and make positive change on issues that you care about. The European Citizens' Initiative amplifies your voice and empowers you to “push the start button” on EU policy-making.



Creating networks and fostering debate

As European citizens we share common values and, even if we live in different countries, we can be passionate about the same issues. Through the European Citizens' Initiative, you can join with other people from across the EU to rally around an issue close to your heart, foster debate around it and initiate reforms.

By enabling citizens from different countries to exchange ideas and come together, the European Citizens' Initiative is one of the main tools offered by the European Union to encourage greater participatory democracy.

Speaking directly to decision-makers

Through the European Citizens' Initiative, people across the EU can jointly bring their concerns to the attention of decision-makers.

While it is always good to exchange ideas, the goal of the European Citizens' Initiative is more concrete. The ultimate aim is to influence policy and promote change. Once the 1 million signatures are collected, the organisers present their demands directly, first to the European Commission, then publicly in the European Parliament, ensuring that their message is widely heard and discussed with their representatives and other interested parties.

Running an initiative creates networks, at regional, national and EU level, of people who are passionate about the same issue. This, in turn, serves to raise awareness and foster debate, including in the media, putting the subject firmly on the political agenda, even in cases where an initiative does not result in EU legislation.

The key steps of a citizens' initiative

1. Preparation of the initiative and setting-up of a group of organisers;
2. Registration of the initiative by the Commission with free translation into all official EU languages. In case of proposals (partly) outside the Commission's powers, revision by the organisers and partial registration are also possible;
3. Publication on the European Citizens' Initiative website;
4. Collection of statements of support, on paper and/or online;
5. Verification of statements of support by national authorities;
6. Submission of the initiative to the European Commission;
7. Meeting with Commission representatives;
8. Public hearing and assessment of the political support by the European Parliament;
9. Official response from the European Commission;
10. Follow-up by the Commission on proposed actions.

For more information on the European Citizens' Initiative, including the list of initiatives currently open for support, go to:

europa.eu/citizens-initiative

#EUTakeTheInitiative

© European Union, 2019
Reuse is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.
The reuse policy of European Commission documents is regulated by Decision 2011/833/EU (OJ L 330, 14.12.2011, p. 39).