

THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE (UN)SUCCESSFUL TOOL OF DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY; PRESENT STATE AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT: This article analyses the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) as a unique instrument for transnational deliberative democracy. The ECI represents one of the key outcomes of the Treaty of Lisbon in the area of public participation. The period of three years since its introduction gives us enough data based on which we can evaluate the efficiency and shortcomings of this instrument. The main emphasis of this article is on analysis of the present state of deficiencies and poor results of the ECI, as well as on new tools and proposals which could optimise, adjust and make ECIs more user-friendly.

KEYWORDS: European Citizens' Initiative; e-ID; European Commission; Treaty of Lisbon; Member States; Regulation (EU) No 211/2011.

INTRODUCTION

On 1 December 2009, the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force and has since brought about important changes¹. One of the key advances in the area of European citizens' rights was the European Citizens' Initiative as a first transnational instrument of deliberative² democracy. Generally we define citizens' initiative as an action which does not flow from or require any action by the government or other

¹ The Treaty of Lisbon is in fact two treaties. The Treaty on European Union (TEU) and Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

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² We are inclined to use in this case the term of deliberative or discursive democracy rather than the term of direct democracy, despite the fact that the great majority of authors consider ECI as a directive tool. Deliberative democracy according to the proceduralistic model which is represented by e.g. J. Habermas who assumes that the "*model of deliberative democracy calls for a public sphere of informal political communication whose institutional basis is provided by the voluntary associations of civil society*". See in: HABERMAS, J.: The inclusion of the other: studies in political theory, MIT Press: Cambridge. 1998. We have to stress that citizens initiatives as such, may take a direct or indirect form. In the case of the ECI we tend to label it as an indirect form of initiative. Citizens draft a proposed law and present it to the Commission, which has to decide whether it would propose that the EU acts by adopting legislation, acts in some other way to achieve the goals of the ECI, or not act at all.

political institutions. Their use rests solely in the hands of citizens, generally determined by the number of signatures obtained in support of a proposal³. The very idea of the ECI itself is not new. There have been plenty of proposals for more EU democracy over time.⁴ The legal framework of the initiative is laid out in Article 11 of the TEU: *“Not less than one million citizens who are nationals of a significant number of Member States may take the initiative of inviting the European Commission, within the framework of its powers, to submit any appropriate proposal on matters where citizens consider that a legal act of the Union is required for the purpose of implementing the Treaties”*⁵; and in Article 24 of the TFEU: *“The European Parliament and the Council, acting by means of regulations in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, shall adopt the provisions for the procedures and conditions required for a citizens' initiative within the meaning of Article 11 of the Treaty on European Union, including the minimum number of Member States from which such citizens must come”*⁶. On the basis of Article 24, Regulation (EU) No 2111/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council was adopted on 1 April 2011 and came into force a year later. The final form of the regulation is the result of a long negotiation process. In the beginning there were more restrictions produced by the European Commission and Council⁷.

Three years after the European Citizens' Initiative came into effect, on 1 April 2012, we can analyse the first data and also the deficiencies of this agenda-setting instrument of discursive democracy. It is necessary to stress that the ECI has

³ See in: BERAMENDI, V.; ELLIS, A.; KAUFMAN, B.; et al: Direct democracy (The international IDEA handbook), International IDEA, Stockholm, 2008.

⁴ Proposal of the EU constitution, which would have to be ratified by people directly (ALTIERO SPINELLI, 1964); European legislative referendum (EP, 1994); The paper “More democracy in Europe” (2005); Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, Article I-47 (4), (EU 2004) See in: KAUFFMAN, B.: Transnational „Babystep“ The European Citizens' Initiative; In: (eds.) SETÄLÄ, M; SCHILLER, T.: Citizens' Initiatives in Europe Procedures and Consequences of Agenda-Setting by Citizens, Palgrave Macmillan: New York. 2012., p. 229-233.

⁵ THE LISBON TREATY (2008/C 115/01), Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), Article 11 (4).

⁶ THE LISBON TREATY (2008/C115/01), Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), Article 24.

⁷ For example: the issue about the threshold. Article 11 (4) dealing with “Significant number of member states“ Commission and Council interpreted it as 1/3 of Member States, lobbyists demanded 1/5. Finally a proposal of the Committee of the Regions was adopted which represents 1/4 of Member States. *“(CoR) considers that it would be more appropriate that the minimum threshold be equal to a quarter of Member States, which would moreover be in line with the Treaty's other provisions, such as Article 76 TFEU.”* See in: OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS on European Citizens Initiative 2010/C 267/12, point 21, (09-10/06/2010); available on:< <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2010:267:FULL&from=EN>>. [15/05/2015].

several shortcomings which it would be desirable to remedy. This requirement is evident and for that reason the ECI was from the beginning a subject of contentious debate. On the other hand, this tool of deliberative democracy with great potential gives EU citizens a unique opportunity to participate in the policy-making process. As the German professor and MP of the German Bundestag Jürgen Meyer⁸ said: “*the ECI aimed to bring Europe closer to people*”. There are plenty of recommendations for better functioning and revision of the Regulation coming from NGOs and from European institutions, too⁹. We need to stress low public awareness of the ECI. There is a huge lack of knowledge on the side of citizens¹⁰. The statistics for ECIs shows us the following: out of 53 proposed initiatives, 33 were registered which represents 62% and from that there have only been three successful ECIs which have passed the one million signature threshold. The low percentage of successful initiatives raises the question of how well the Regulation is working¹¹.

The main purpose of this article is to analyse the present state of deficiencies and poor results of the ECI and describe new tools and proposals which could be used to optimise, adjust and make this instrument more user-friendly.

1. ECI IN THE REGULATION (EU) NO 211/2011. SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE PROCESS.

“(Initiative) is the safeguard of politics. It takes power from the boss and places it in the hands of the people.”

(Woodrow Wilson)

⁸ Jürgen Meyer and Alain Lamassoure were the main proponents of the ECI in the Convention on the Future of Europe. The subject of a transnational citizens’ initiative was established in the Article I – 47 (4) of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe. See in: TREATY ESTABLISHING A CONSTITUTION FOR EUROPE, December 2004 (C series, No 310) (TCE).

⁹ See i.e.: ANGLMAYE, I.: Implementation of the European Citizens’ Initiative: The experience of the first three years, EPRS: Brussels. 2015., p. 28-30. The European Citizens’ Initiative registration falling at the first hurdle? ECAS Brussels, December 2014.

¹⁰ Standard Eurobarometer 80 from autumn 2013 shows, that just one in five Europeans said that they would probably use it: 21%. See in: STANDARD EUROBAROMETER 80 AUTUMN 2013, p. 59, available on: < http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb80/eb80_citizen_en.pdf>. [12/04/2015].

¹¹ For statistics, see: <<http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/>>. [12/04/2015].

Regulation (EU) No 211/2011 specifies the conditions and requirements, and the process of the European Citizens' Initiative. All key institutions and bodies of the EU¹² somehow participated in the process of establishing the regulation, which represents a wide range of compromise among them. For example there was a lot of discussion about the proposal from the European Commission that 300,000 signatures should be gathered by the organisers before an admissibility check can be undertaken as well as the issue of 1/3 of Member States, etc.

The main purpose of the ECI we can consider is to enhance the efficiency and the democratic legitimacy of the Union, pursuant to the Treaty of Lisbon¹³. Initial fears that the ECI could become a new tool in the hands of lobby groups has not been confirmed until now. In principle we agree with the authors who take the opposite position and believe that lobbyist group trade associations have other, more efficient, cheaper and faster tools to influence EU policy. "Powerful corporate and political interests shunned the ECI, but citizens' groups adopted it"¹⁴. The main reason why the ECI is not really "attractive" to these groups is an issue of time. We can consider the ECI as a tool with effects in the long term. According to Fishkin: "*Decisions often have to be made quickly without involving large numbers of people. There may not be time for large-group deliberations*"¹⁵. Another possible interpretation is the issue that the ECI is an agenda-setting device which is explicitly not binding on the Commission.

The Regulation itself consists of 23 articles and 7 technical annexes. We can also identify seven different stages for an ECI:

- a. Preparation and forming a citizens' committee – Article 3
- b. Registration of the proposed initiative – Article 4, Annex II

¹² European Commission, European Council, European Economical and Social Committee, European Ombudsman, European Parliament, Committee of the Regions as well as Member States.

¹³ See: Preamble of The Lisbon Treaty

¹⁴ THOMSON, J.: What didn't happen with the European Citizens' Initiative...and what did; available on: <<http://www.janicethomson.net/what-didnt-happen-with-the-european-citizens-initiativeand-what-did-2>>. [12/04/2015].

¹⁵ FISHKIN, J. S.: Voice of the people: Public opinion and democracy, Yale University Press: New Haven, CT. 1997.

- Certification of online collection system (OCS)¹⁶
- c. Collection of signatures on paper or online - Articles 5, 6, Annexes III, IV, V
- d. Verification of signatures - Article 8, Annex VI
- e. Submitting the ECI to the European Commission - Article 9, Annex VII
- f. Examination and public hearing in the European Parliament Articles - 10, 11
- g. Answer given by the European Commission

After these stages the Commission may draw up the legislative proposal under the normal legislative process. We can add several other further points or questions. For example:

- h. What action does the Commission intend to take?
- i. What will happen with ECI committees after successful initiatives?
- j. How much time does the Commission have to draw up a concrete legal act?

Before these stages, in a preliminary phase, organisers have to focus on other possibilities which might help to achieve their goal. Potential organisers must bear in mind that organising an ECI is a long distance run which requires plenty of preparation, analysis, funding and voluntary support. The subject of the ECI must be topical and must reach a wide audience. Is the ECI the best way to achieve a change in the given area?¹⁷ An important issue is to define the target Member States, etc. There are many formulas for a successful citizens' initiative involving different factors. It is hard to give emphasis to just a few determinants e.g.: communication with the media, support from political parties or the topical nature of the theme. For example Jacob Kristof sees the success of the citizens' initiative as: *"[Political issue] + [Support of a political party] + [Popular media support] =*

¹⁶ This step is mandatory only if organisers plan to collect statements of support online. Nowadays it is a cornerstone for success of the ECI. For comparison, according to Carsten Berg and Pawel Glogowski: Of all the signatures collected by all ECIs, 37% were collected on paper. The One of Us ECI collected 65% of their almost 1.9 million signatures on paper. The Stop Vivisection ECI collected 44% and the ECI Right to Water collected 18% of their signatures on paper. Smaller ECIs have also collected signatures on paper: 18% of signatures for 30 km/h ECI and 7% for End Ecocide. See in: BERG, C.; THOMSON, J.: An ECI that works! Learning from the first two years of the European Citizens' Initiative, The ECI Campaign: Alfter. 2014., p.17.

¹⁷ There are other (less costly) alternative ways of approaching or influencing the EU, e.g.: Petitioning the EP, Complaining to the European Ombudsman about maladministration in EU Institutions and bodies, Participating in EU-wide debates, etc.

*Success*¹⁸. Organisers need to lay out a concrete campaign strategy including how to communicate with the media in an effective and creative way¹⁹.

The first stage of the ECI focuses on the organizers and the citizens' committee. Organisers of the ECI need to set up a committee which must be composed according to Article 3 (1-2) of at least seven EU citizens old enough to vote in European Parliament elections²⁰ from different Member States²¹. Two of them (representative and substitute) have a status of contact person who will liaise between the EU Institutions and the citizens' committee throughout the whole process. The contact person has a competence to speak and act on behalf of the committee. Article 2 (3) deals with the character of the organisers. According to this: "*organisers' means natural persons forming a citizens' ...*"²², but organisations are entitled to promote and sponsor an initiative. There is one more restriction on the committee members. A member of the European Parliament can be a member of the committee, but shall not be counted for the purpose of reaching the minimal number required. Committee members must state their full name, postal address, nationality and date of birth, and for the contact person, supply an email address as well²³.

The challenge in this phase is not to establish the committee as such but to establish efficient teams with full-time national coordinators able to cooperate in different Member States. Launching the debates across the different Member States could also be a difficult challenge; the issue should at least be introduced to the public domain before the registration stage. Creating a good and functional network, doing the necessary public research and polls may take at least one year of preparation. Organisers cannot forget the costs and financial support required for the collection of statements of support. Experts estimate that one signature costs

¹⁸ KRISTOF, J.: The promises and pitfalls of the European Citizens Initiative; available on: < <http://www.rethinkingbelgium.eu/rebel-initiative-files/events/seventh-public-event-g1000-european-citizens-initiative-malaise-democracy/Jacobs.pdf>>; [18/05/2015].

¹⁹ See e.g.: WUNDER, CH.: Communication and Campaigning on European Citizens Initiatives, Centre for European Integration Studies: Bonn. 2014.

²⁰ The voting age in the European elections is 18 in all Member States except in Austria where it is 16.

²¹ They do not have to be citizens of the different Member States.

²² REGULATION (EU) No 211/2011; Article 2 (3); available on:< <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:065:0001:0022:en:PDF>>; [12/04/2015].

²³ See in Annex II, point 5.

approximately one euro²⁴. Many initiatives have been struggling with lack of sponsorship because the organisers do not have enough experience in fundraising.

The next step is to register the ECI. Organisers of an ECI must register their proposed initiative which the Commission will publish on its own website, before they start collecting statements of support from citizens. The proposed initiative has to indicate the following information (in one of the official EU languages) which is stated in Annex II:

- Title of the proposed initiative (maximum 100 characters)
- The subject-matter (maximum 200 characters)
- The objectives of the proposed initiative on which the Commission is invited to act (maximum 500 characters)
- The provisions of the Treaties considered relevant by the organisers for the proposed action
- Personal details of the 7 required committee members
- Documents that prove the full names, postal addresses, nationalities and dates of birth of each of the 7 members of the citizens' committee
- All sources of funding and support for the proposed initiative (known at the time of registration) worth more than €500 per year and per sponsor.

Within two months from receiving this information the Commission shall register the proposed citizens' initiative provided that the four conditions pursuant to Article 4 (2 a-d) are fulfilled; one formal condition in terms of establishment of the citizens' committee and three other substantive conditions:

- a) The citizens' committee has been formed in accordance with Article 3.
- b) The proposed initiative does not manifestly fall outside the framework of the Commission's powers to submit a proposal for a legal act of the Union for the purpose of implementing the Treaties.
- c) The proposed citizens' initiative is not manifestly abusive, frivolous or vexatious.

²⁴ See in: SANGSARI, M; PELLETIER, M.; VENABLES, T.: Bringing Transnational Participatory Democracy to Life: Tips for Would-be Organisers of a European Citizens' Initiative, ECAS: Brussels. 2012.

- d) The proposed citizens' initiative is not manifestly contrary to the values of the Union as set out in Article 2 TEU.

Once the Commission has confirmed a proposal, organisers can start collecting signatures from citizens. From this moment, organisers have one year to obtain one million statements of support in at least seven Member States. Each Member State has its own threshold based on the population²⁵. Organisers can collect signatures on paper or online. So far the more successful organisers have decided to collect in both ways. For online collection, organisers must build an online collection system (OCS) and ensure that the system used for the collection of statements of support complies with the criteria listed in Regulation (EU) No 1179/2011. *“The organisers shall request the competent authority of the relevant Member State to certify that the online collection system used for that purpose”*²⁶. The competent authority has one month to verify the technical specifications of the OCS. The certificate issued by the one competent national authority is valid in other Member States. ECI organisers can choose to use their own OCS or open source software supplied by the Commission and in practice most have chosen the latter. Throughout the procedure, all parties involved must comply with the legislation in force on protection of personal data resulting from Directive 95/46/EC. During the collection process, organisers have to use a specific form which complies with the models set out in Annex III. Signatories of an initiative must be EU citizens old enough to vote in the European Parliament elections. This phase is the cornerstone of every ECI. In practice all other steps have mainly a character of legal regulation but the real burden lies in the collection of the signatures.

When organisers in specific Member States have collected the necessary statements of support, they need to ask the national authority to certify the number of valid signatures. They have to separately send the statements collected on paper

²⁵ The minimum number of signatures per Member State is calculated by the number of Members of the European Parliament elected, multiplied by 750, within the range of 74 250 for Germany to 3750 for Malta. The figure obtained does not penalise the big or small Member States. See in: REGULATION (EU) No 211/2011; Annex I.

From 1 July 2015 new thresholds for Member States will enter into force, which include 18 changes (9 Member States increased the minimum number of signatures and 9 States reduced it). See: ANNEX to the Commission delegated Regulation amending Annex I of Regulation (EU) No 211/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the citizens' initiative; C (2014) 1571; available on: <http://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/EU/XXV/EU/01/84/EU_18403/imfname_10451856.pdf>; [12/06/2015].

²⁶ REGULATION (EU) No 211/2011; Article 6(2)

and those collected online. National authorities have three months to certify the number of valid statements. In the fifth stage organisers submit certificates from at least 7 Member States demonstrating that they have collected the required number of signatures and in total that they have collected over one million statements. The threshold of one million signatures represents approximately 0.2% of the Union population. An interesting fact is that in countries where the threshold has been not reached, the collected signatures will also be counted to reach the one million statements.

In a period of three months following the submission of the initiative, European Commission representatives will meet the organisers so they can explain in detail the issues raised in their initiative (Article 10). Organisers will also have an opportunity to present the initiative at a public hearing in the European Parliament (Article 11). The Commission is not obliged to give a legal result to a successful ECI. The European Commission will adopt a formal response spelling out what action it will propose in response to the citizens' initiative, if any, and the reasons for doing or not doing so (Article 10 (1c)).

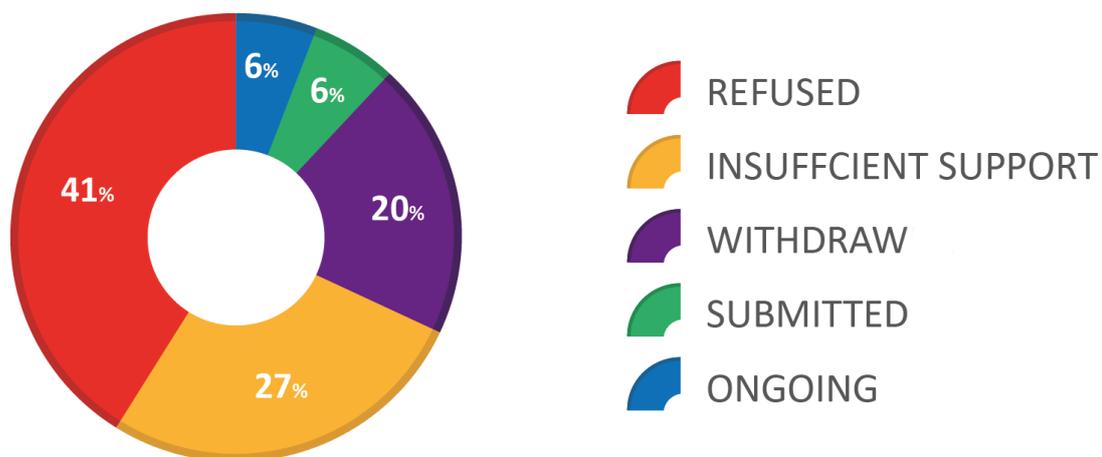
The fate of the ECI committees after a successful initiative is for now unclear. Could the committee be an advisory or control body during the legislative procedure? Reform proposals by Democracy International include among others the requirement of the co-rapporteur to be nominated by the ECI citizens' committee. *"The relevant Parliament committee must write a report on the subject of each successful ECI, with a co-rapporteur nominated by the ECI citizens' committee. The report should be debated in full plenary followed by a vote."*²⁷ On 19 May 2015 the European Commission published the New Better Regulation package, within which we can find the definition of stakeholder consultation. *"The term 'stakeholder consultation' applies to all consultations with stakeholders in the process of preparation of a policy initiative or the implementation of an existing intervention.* It does not apply to (among other points). *Input from citizens in the context of the 'European Citizen*

²⁷ Democracy International: ECI Reforms.; available on: < <http://www.democracy-international.org/european-citizens-initiative-reform> >. [15/05/2015].

Initiative' (Article 11 [4] of the TEU).²⁸ On the other hand, the Better Regulation communication proposes more consultation throughout the process.

The current state of the ECI can be summarised as follow: 3 ECIs were submitted to the European Commission, 13 were accepted, but they did not reach the threshold, 10 were withdrawn, 21 refused and 3 of them are still ongoing.

Status of the ECIs



2. THE MAIN SHORTCOMINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOW TO MAKE ECIs WORK MORE EFFECTIVELY

“It seems “easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle” than to register an ECI”²⁹.

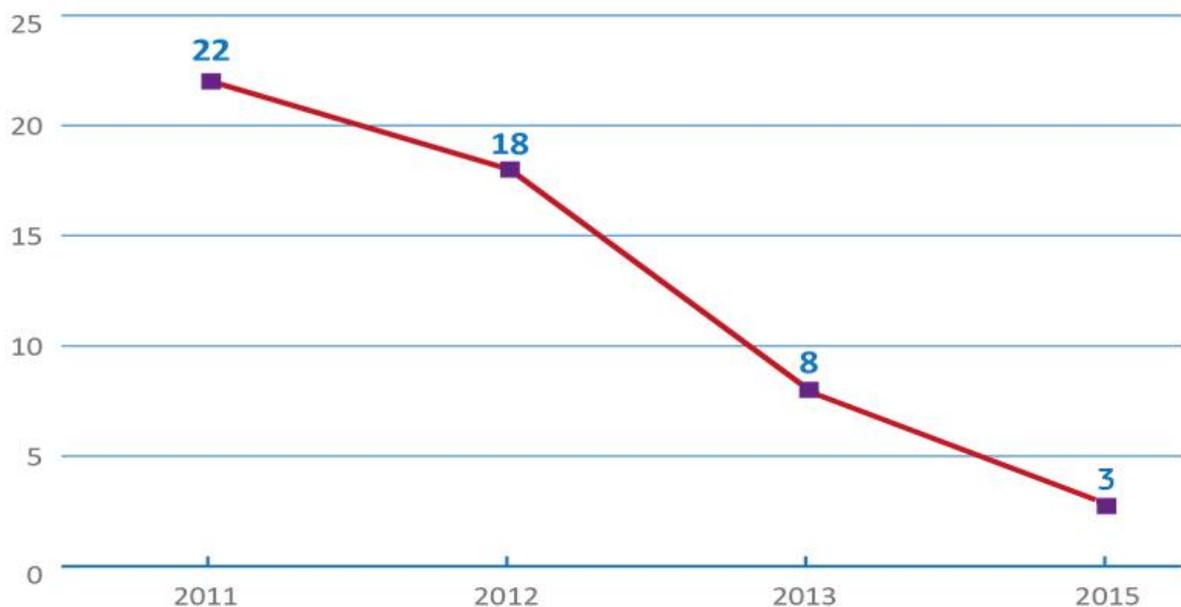
(Assya Kavrakova)

²⁸ BETTER REGULATION GUIDELINES, Commission staffworking document, Strasbourg, (19/05/2015), p.64-65. Available on:< http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/index_en.htm>; [25/05/2015].

²⁹ KAVRAKOVA, A.: Reforming the ECI is vital for European democracy; Published: (13/04/2015); available on:< <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/trade-society/reforming-eci-vital-european-democracy-313695>>; [14/04/2015].

The last three years have given us enough evidence to summarise the ECI as an agenda-setting tool of deliberative democracy. It was a big step for transnational deliberative democracy to lay down a solid basis for this innovation. However after three years we have to say that this tool in its current form is cumbersome and not really user-friendly. In most cases the scenario is the same, as organisers, activists and NGOs blame the European Commission for unsuccessful initiatives. Stakeholders are calling for substantial revision of the current structure. *“What was originally intended to be a simple and user-friendly tool for all EU citizens has turned out to be cumbersome and challenging in its use”*³⁰. Data shows that the ECI tool is loosing its popularity. While in 2012, 43% of all initiatives were registered, in 2013, it was 35%, the year after that 20%, and this year only three ECIs were registered.

Decrease of the registered ECIs (2012-2015)



For sure, some changes in regulation 211/2011 are needed. The question is which articles could be reformed. In principle the discussions are oscillating around ways of simplifying the procedure. We have decided to focus on the main conditions, which, according to most experts, need to be revised.

³⁰ ANGLMAYER, I.: Implementation of the European Citizens’ Initiative (The experience of the first three years); European Parliamentary Research Service: Brussels. 2015., p.3.

2.1 Hurdles in the process of registration

The registration of an ECI is the first test of potential success. This stage consists of one formal and three substantial conditions, as mentioned above. If these conditions are not met the Commission must refuse registration. The main challenge for organisers is to meet requirement b of Article 4(2): *"the proposed citizens' initiative does not **manifestly fall outside the framework** of the Commission's powers to submit a proposal for a legal act of the Union for the purpose of implementing the Treaties"*. From a total of 53 initiatives, 21 were denied registration by the Commission, because they failed the "legal admissibility test"³¹. This is a key obstacle in the current regulatory framework. The most precise definition of this issue can be found in a case study of the European Citizens' Initiative – First lessons of implementation: ***"Obstacles: lack of legal expertise and costly legal services; unclear legal basis for the ECIs; unclear scope (Treaty changes or not) of the ECI; uncertainty on legal analysis by the Commission due to the 'two step' legal examination system"***³². Organisers in most cases do not possess enough resources for deep legal expertise and full analysis of their proposed initiative. For that reason, to formulate an ECI in a way to respect the competence of the EU seems to be a labour of Sisyphus. Unclear, partial and contradictory answers from the Commission have led some organisers appeal to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU)³³. Some initiatives were manifestly outside in partial aspects only, but the Commission rejected the proposal to register, while the Regulation does not explicitly forbid the Commission to analyse different aspects of the proposed ECI³⁴. Some proposals rejected by the Commission raised mixed opinions from legal

³¹ "Placing an admissibility test at this early stage in the ECI process is driven by the logic that campaigning is costly and resource-intensive. This is meant to avoid situations whereby the Commission rejects an ECI after significant efforts have been invested into it and after it has gained the support of at least one million citizens. Such late rejection would lead to considerable frustration, and it could also have substantial negative repercussions for the public image of EU democracy". See in: ANGLMAYER, I.: Implementation of the European Citizens' Initiative (The experience of the first three years); European Parliamentary Research Service: Brussels. 2015., p.13.

³² BALLESTEROS, M.; CANETTA, E.; ZACIU, A.: European Citizens' Initiative – First lessons of implementation; DG INTERNAL POLICIES: Policy Department, AFCE & PETI; Brussels: 2015., p. 28.

³³ Namely: The ECI 'One million signatures for a Europe of solidarity'; The ECI 'Right to Lifelong Care: Leading a life of dignity and independence is a fundamental right!'; The ECI 'Cohesion policy for the equality of the regions and the preservation of regional cultures'; The ECI 'Minority Safe Pack – one million signatures for diversity in Europe'.

³⁴ i.e.: *"the legal admissibility was too strictly/narrowly applied (e.g. because the proposed initiative correctly identified a legal basis in the Treaties, and the subject matter of the initiative fell within the scope of the of the EU's competence)"*. In: The European Citizens' Initiative registration falling at the first hurdle?; ECAS: Brussels. 2014., p. 12.

experts and scholars, e.g. ECI: Stop TTIP³⁵. We agree with point 5 of Gy. Schöpflin's report for the European Parliament about the possibility to register only that part of the ECI, which is not manifestly outside of the European Commission's competency. *"Invites the Commission to consider the possibility of registering only part of an initiative in the event that the entire ECI does not fall within the Commission's powers and to give the organizers, at the time of registration, an indication as to which part they could register"*³⁶. The European Ombudsman stated in her own-initiative inquiry that (points 14-16): *"The Ombudsman suggests that the Commission endeavours to provide reasoning for rejecting ECIs that is more robust, consistent and comprehensible to the citizen"*³⁷.

As we can see the European Commission is facing widespread criticism from different authorities. We expect that there will be a revision, in the future of Article 4(2) point b or that the Commission will change the approach to the practice in this area.

Another long standing issue in this field is the need for a qualified and independent civil society helpdesk, which would provide not only legal assistance but also training courses on the ECI. One could argue that the Commission already has a help desk through the Europe Direct Contact Centre providing informal support and information for citizens' initiatives. This type of helpdesk is, however, insufficient. This could also be a case of conflict of interests. It is undesirable that the Commission simultaneously acts as a support service and decision maker on the ECI registration process. The European Commission offers the most precise advice in this field through its own website in each official EU language³⁸. A helpdesk is also provided for by some CSOs as well e.g. ECAS, Democracy International or The ECI

³⁵ Commission's reply stating the reasons for refusal of registration (10/09/2014); available on: <<http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/non-registered/details/2041?lg=en>>; [11/03/2015].

³⁶ DRAFT REPORT on the European Citizens' Initiative (2014/2257(INI)) (19/03/2015); available on: <<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PE-552.021+01+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=DE>>; [29/04/2015]. The report was approved by the European Parliament on 28 October 2015 as Report 2014/2257.

*Activists and NGOs also maintain this position, for example: The ECI Campaign; ECAS, etc.

³⁷ Decision of the European Ombudsman closing her own-initiative inquiry OI/9/2013/TN concerning the European Commission; (04/03/2015); available on: <<http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/cases/decision.faces/en/59205/html.bookmark>>; [21/04/2015].

³⁸ Commission's ECI website - European Citizens' Initiative (Official register) provides information about past and ongoing initiatives and guidance about the ECI; available on: <<http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/welcome>>. [29/04/2015].

Campaign. It would be very desirable to establish a Citizens' Initiative Centre as a one-stop-shop not only for the initiative, but also for other related issues based on Article 11 of the Treaty of Lisbon. In our opinion this Centre should not be provided for by one Union Institution³⁹. The participation of civil society organisations as an organic component of the Centre would ensure plurality and objectivity. The view that CSOs are not stable enough and therefore should be limited to collaboration would lead to imbalances. The main task of the Centre would be to offer a tool that would help users benefit from each other's experience, share best practice, provide legal, IT and linguistic support and at the same time it could be the initiative ideas "hub". The online Civil Society Helpdesk (CiSoCH) provided by EuropeAid and other CSOs⁴⁰ is really inspirational in this area. On 12 April 2015 the EESC President, Henri Malosse, pledged to provide ECI organisers with free translations of their texts in all official EU languages. The idea to create a system operating jointly by multiple institutions appears as an effective solution, e.g. on the lines of the "Transparency register" managed jointly by the European Commission and European Parliament.

2.2. Online Collection System (OCS)

The main aim of the online collection system is to take some of the burden off organisers and speed up the stage of collecting statements of support. The problem is finding a service provider that will host the OCS for the online collection. There are difficulties identifying appropriate hosting providers on the market. For that reason the Commission for now is offering to host online collection systems on its own servers. Organisers have a choice to either develop their own system or to use the open source system supplied by the Commission, which is free of charge and already complies with relevant technical specifications (as mentioned above). For the organisers, choosing the Commission system means avoiding obstacles in order to obtain the certification by the competent national authority, as well as saving a significant amount of money. Most organisers have opted to use the system offered by the Commission. Another big challenge for organisers is the complexity of the

³⁹ For example: EESC, CoR, EP or European Ombudsman

⁴⁰ *"The helpdesk is a one-stop shop for all questions on cooperation between EuropeAid and civil society – making procedures, vocabulary, work methods, etc. easier to understand. With a powerful search tool based on the Mediawiki software (Wikipedia), CiSoCH gives direct access to existing information currently spread across different websites, through keywords directly linked to your daily work".* Visit the website of CiSoCH; available on: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/index.php/Main_Page>. [25/05/2015].

system. The requirement to simplify the system is logical, but we have to say that these kinds of system unfortunately almost always need time to develop and improve⁴¹. The deficiency of the system resulted in a significant loss of time and frustration on the organisers' side. The Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Affairs proposed in its report to extend the period for Member States to certify the online collection system from one month to two as well as to extend the timespan for the collection of statements of support for organisers to 18 months (instead of 12 months).

2.3. Unification and simplification of the requirements in ANNEX III

In this part we focus our attention primarily on Annex III of the Regulation. A change in Annex III was also one of the main points of the expert group meeting on the citizens' initiative on 2 December 2014 where "*The Commission intends to launch in early 2015 the procedure aiming to modify through a delegated act, Annexes III, V and VII of the Regulation*"⁴². The main problems are the significant differences in the national law of the Member States, which regulate the ECI. There are differences between the forms used in the different Member States as they can contain the following fields: Family name; Permanent residence; Date and Place of birth and Personal identification document. A combination of these five fields in this case makes 26 different types of statements⁴³. For organisers, it is too complicated to provide different personal data in support of ECIs in all Member States⁴⁴. A wide consensus among NGOs exists for the elimination of ID personal number requirements. At present the ID number is required by eighteen Member States. The question is: how to eliminate differences and create an optimal form?

⁴¹ The actual one from 10/04/2015 is the version OCS 1.6.0. which brought improvements in the area of Social media integration; Optional validation and Security tool.

⁴² In this meeting Sweden and Latvia undertook to remove several items from their data requirements. Concretely: "Sweden asked to remove the date and place of birth of the signatories from their data requirements; Latvia requested to remove the name at birth, date and place of the signatories from their data requirements". See in: Meeting of the expert group on the citizens' initiative on December 2 2014. These requirements were accepted. On the other hand Spain and France requested to add extra data: the date of birth.

⁴³ From the simplest form in Finland to the more complex i.e. in Italy

⁴⁴ Sophie von Hatzfeldt from Democracy International considers that: "*The process itself is very burdensome, a lot of legal requirements. Every member state requires different information from their nationals to sign the ECI so it's like running 28 parallel campaigns rather than one European campaign*". See in: Do EU petitions work? ; Euronews; (13/04/2015); available on:< <http://www.euronews.com/2015/04/13/do-eu-petitions-work/>>. ; [20/04/2015]

Unification of the forms - issue of the e-ID

In the original proposal for the regulation, the Commission set out a uniform personal data requirement for the statements of support but Member States did not agree on one “EU-wide” form. However it would be helpful to reconsider the option of one universal form in the case of European discursive democracy tools. In a mid-term perspective, we can think about a universal form which would include the following data: full name, permanent residence address, nationality, date of birth and signature. It might be easier to adjust the form according to the majority of Member States and add the requirement of ID (18 Member States⁴⁵) but most ECI activists stressed that the citizens are usually reluctant to provide their ID numbers. Also the proposal for the regulation in its first stage did not envisage the ID number. The European Data Protection Supervisor concluded that ID numbers were not needed for ECIs. *“ECI campaigns have noted significantly more incomplete, inaccurate or aborted support statements in countries that require ID numbers vs. those that do not. This is worst in countries with identity theft problems or histories of state surveillance, such as Bulgaria and Poland. Citizens of some countries are being frightened away from the ECI”*⁴⁶.

A very practical requirement by organisers is the possibility to save the e-mail contacts details of the signatories. In its present form, the Regulation does not allow for collection of emails of the people who support the campaign. Stanislas Jourdan from the ECI Campaign said: *“it is very annoying, because we want to update them and allow them to take part in our movement”*⁴⁷. It could be just one extra item in case of OCS to tick the statement by which a supporter wants to be kept informed. For the verification and certification of the statements of support, it should be easier to establish one EU-wide authority. Currently when organisers have collected the necessary statements of support, they must ask the competent national authorities in each Member State, i.e. 28 different centres. In the long-term perspective, using an e-ID not only as a tool for e-election but also in petitions and initiatives would be a

⁴⁵ From 2012 Luxembourg alone provide the revision in this and dropped ID requirements

⁴⁶ See in: 12 RECOMMENDATIONS IN-DEPTH: #5 ELIMINATE ID NUMBER REQUIREMENTS; (04/05/2015); available on: <<http://www.citizens-initiative.eu/12-recommendations-in-depth/>>; [06/04/2015].

⁴⁷ European Citizens’ Initiative in limbo (15/04/2015); available on: <http://euranetplus-inside.eu/european-citizens-initiative-in-limbo/>; [17/04/2015].

significant simplification. One of the pioneer countries in the subject of e-voting is Estonia, where the number of voters has been increasing since e-voting was introduced⁴⁸. Other Baltic countries like Latvia and Lithuania only require the personal identification number for signing an ECI. There are many sceptics and defendants of e-ID in Europe, but according to the JRC scientific and policy report: *Electronic Identity in Europe: "It is important to note that the technology necessary to enable an interoperable eID across Europe already exists. What is missing, in reality, is legal interoperability. It is the lack of legal harmonization that most inhibits cross-border deployment of services based on electronic identity"*⁴⁹.

One of the relevant activist requirements is to lower the minimum age limit for participation in an ECI. Except for Austria where the minimum age is 16 it is 18 according to age limits for voting in European elections. But there is a big difference between the initiative and elections to the European Parliament. *"The ECI is only advisory. It does not directly change law"*⁵⁰, whereas the European Parliament has legislative power. The initiative proposes the policy without any direct effect. Furthermore, the target group of many ECIs is young people: for example the ECI: *Fraternité 2020 - Mobility. Progress. Europe; Teach for Youth – Upgrade to Erasmus 2.0* or *High Quality European Education for All*. There are many ECIs which are popular primarily among young people, for example with topics like: ecology, animal protection, etc. A transnational initiative is one of the best tools for improving and enhancing European identity and public participation among the younger generation. For that it is necessary to give them a practical opportunity to become supporters

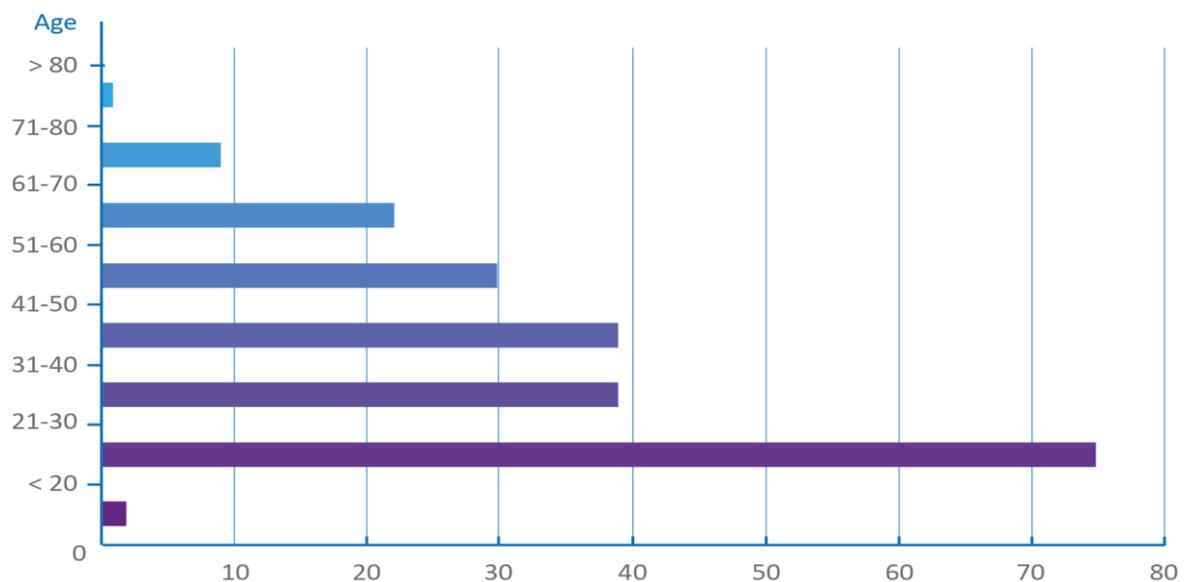
⁴⁸ Compare the statistics about Internet voting in Estonia between years 2005-2015; available on: <<http://www.vvk.ee/voting-methods-in-estonia/engindex/statistics>>. [10/05/2015].

⁴⁹ De ANDRADE, N.; MONTELEONE, S.; MARTIN, A.: *Electronic Identity in Europe: Legal challenges and future perspectives (e-ID 2020)*; Luxemburg: 2013., p. 5. In following authors on p. 18 point out : A brief survey of the different areas and categories of competence immediately confronts one with the considerable difficulty of assigning an eID regulatory initiative to a specific area of competence. This has to do with the fact that the regulation of (personal) identity covers a very wide field, cutting across a broad range of different EU areas and policies. Looking, on the one hand, at the distribution of competences between the Union and the Member States and, on the other hand, at regulating eID at the EU level, it is easy to see that the latter may involve different categories of competence at the same time (such as shared competences and competence to support, co-ordinate or supplement) or different areas within the same category of competence. Therefore boundary problems may arise between the categories of competence to support and shared competences when inserting eID into the EU legal framework. For example, eID could come under the internal market, which is shared power, or it could be regarded as falling within administrative co-operation, where only supporting action is allowed.

⁵⁰ See in: 12 RECOMMENDATIONS IN-DEPTH: # 9 LOWER THE AGE OF ECI SUPPORT TO 16; (29/04/2015); available on: <<http://www.citizens-initiative.eu/12-recommendations-in-depth/>>; [09/05/2015].

and organisers as well. Therefore the ECI could be an excellent tool in the process of building a new generation of active EU citizens. Participation in the citizens' initiative could also increase citizenship-related activities outside the school. In several Member States (e.g. Czech Republic, Denmark, Spain and Sweden) existing programmes aim to encourage students in secondary schools to become active citizens and to take part in society by influencing public policy through petitioning and voting⁵¹. The fact that citizens' initiatives are popular among the young is also shown by the statistical data.

Age of committee members for the registered initiatives⁵²



Some opponents⁵³ to lowering the age limit argue that the category of citizens between 16 - 18 years is demographically insignificant. The aim in this case is not to rely on the quantity of people but on investment in the future generation. Jean Jacques Rousseau and John Stuart Mill believed that democracy has to be learned and it can only be learned through practice⁵⁴. At the end of September 2015, the Constitutional Affairs Committee of the European Parliament unanimously approved

⁵¹ See in: CITIZENSHIP Education in Europe; EURYDICE: Brussels. 2012. p. 67 - 68

⁵² Data taken from: REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL: Report on the application of Regulation (EU) No 211/2011 on the citizens' initiative. (COM2015 145) (31/03/2015); available on: <<http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2015/EN/1-2015-145-EN-F1-1.PDF>>; [25/05/2015].

⁵³ for example above-mentioned MEP György Schöpflin.

⁵⁴ ROBERTS, N.: Public deliberation in an age of direct citizen participation; available on: <<http://hubert.hhh.umn.edu/Stuck/Asset5PublicDeliberationInAgeOfDirectCitizenParticipation.pdf>>; [11/05/2015].

the final report on the ECI by MEP György Schöpflin and on 28 October 2015 the Plenary of the European Parliament approved it as Report 2014/2257⁵⁵. The report dealt with how the ECI should be revised. Among others, one of the main points which will be included in the reform is the harmonisation of the age requirement for supporting the ECI in all Member States at 16 years. *“(The European Parliament) Calls on the Commission to amend Article 3 of Regulation (EU) No 211/2011 and to recommend to the Member States that they lower the age for supporting and participating in an ECI from 18 to 16 and that it not to be tied to the right to vote in elections to the European Parliament, thus giving young people, in particular, the possibility of becoming actively involved in taking the European project forward”*⁵⁶.

Apparently, a certain measure of unification will be demanded in the field of the signature collection process as well. The final result will be known after the negotiations between the European Institutions in January 2016.

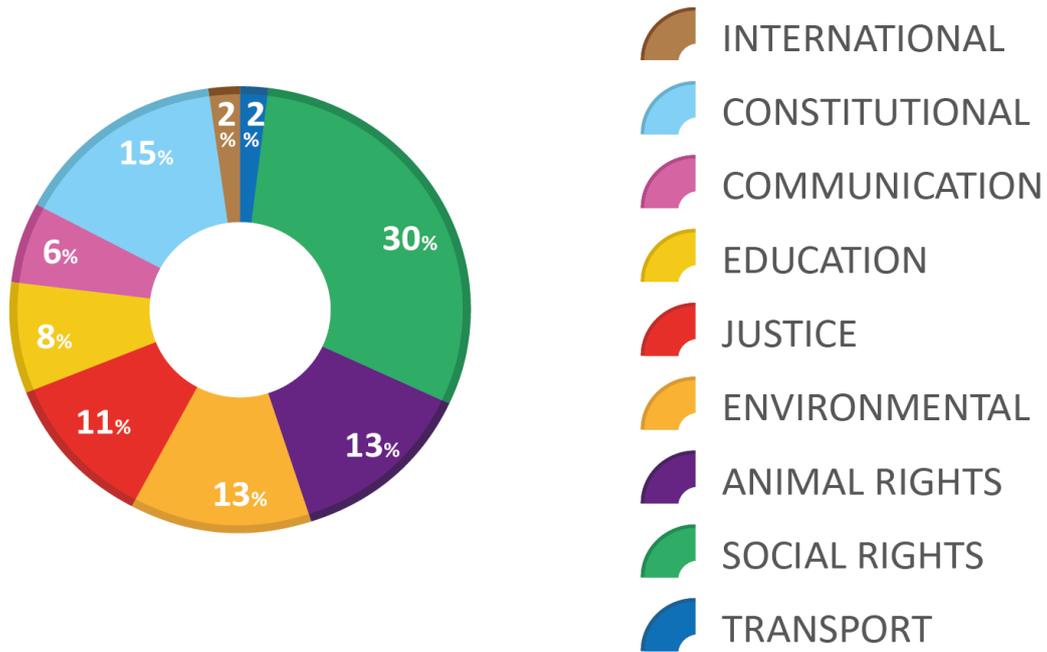
3. MAIN THEMES OF THE ECIs

The very first step of the ECI is to identify and develop an idea, which should be interesting for a wide range of the population and at the same time fill an existing gap, reflecting pan-European issues. By theme we could sort existing ECIs in the following categories: mobility, environment, education, communication, social rights, constitution, justice, animal rights and so on. Some of them have a broad-spectrum character.

⁵⁵ 527 Members of the European Parliament voted for the report, 103 abstained and 33 voted against it.

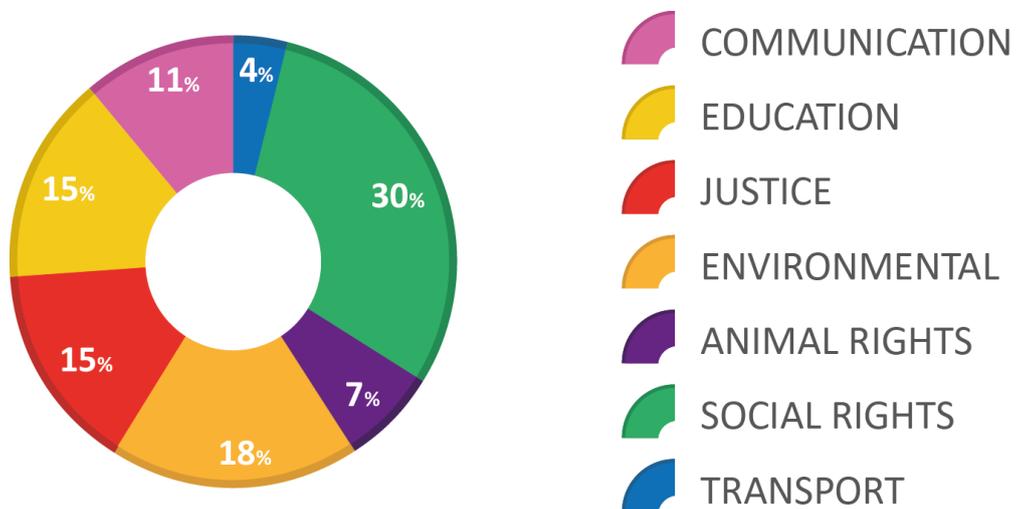
⁵⁶ European Parliament resolution of 28 October 2015 on the European Citizens' Initiative (2014/2257(INI)); point 26; available on: < <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P8-TA-2015-0382+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>>; [31/10/2015].

ECIs by theme



The most popular category of the ECIs is connecting with the themes of social, environmental and animal rights. Three ECIs which were submitted to the Commission after they reached the threshold of one million signatures come from these areas: *Water and sanitation are a human right!* (Env.); *One of us* (Soc.); *Stop vivisection* (Anim.). The European Commission has up to now accepted 29 proposals for an ECI, the most successful theme by these criteria being the ECIs on social rights.

Accepted ECIs by theme



Unfortunately we do not possess the exact numbers of all signatures; and therefore cannot compare the popularity of the ECI themes.

CONCLUSION

The main aim of this paper was to describe and show the shortcomings of the European Citizens' Initiative in its present state and analyse the possible tools, which could improve this tool of deliberative democracy and make it more user-friendly for potential ECI organisers in the future. We have come to the following conclusion: ECI in its present state has several imperfections, which are rooted mainly in Regulation 211/2011 (EU) and its interpretation. The most significant obstacles in our opinion are the vague definition of Article 4 (2) about the legal admissibility test of the ECIs proposals and the wide diversity of regulations for the process of collection of statements of support. These shortcomings are resulting in loss of popularity of the ECI as a new tool of discursive democracy after its first three years of existence.

We are proposing the revision of Annex III, towards unification and simplification. In the mid-term perspective, abolishing the ID requirement appears to be the most effective solution for increasing the support for ECIs. One extra item should be introduced in the OCS form to tick at statement by which a supporter agrees to be kept informed. The age should be lowered to 16 in order to improve and enhance European identity and public participation among the younger generation.

The ECI provides a potentially effective remedy for the democratic deficit by enabling EU citizens to become directly involved in the policy-making process, but for this it must be itself a remedy. At the same time, we have to stress that the first aim of this instrument is to create and strengthen a European public sphere which admittedly takes root slowly. The ECIs contribute in this process, having so far collected 6 million signatures.

In summary here is a list of the main recommendations for a better ECI from different sources⁵⁷.

- Secure adequate legal advice and translation for ECI organisers with regard to the legal basis of initiatives.
- Provide a definition of “manifestly outside” that is clear, easy to understand and is not subject to arbitrary interpretation.
- Propose simpler and uniform data requirements across all Member States to facilitate EU citizens wishing to sign an ECI, irrespective of their country of residence, through a voluntary EU registry.
- Establish the Civil Society Helpdesk Centre. Such a Centre could consist of an office and an online platform.
- Lower the minimal age limit for ECI support to 16.
- Allow for collection of e-mail addresses within the main ECI support form.
- Organisers should be allowed to freely choose the date to start collecting signatures within a clearly defined time-limit following registration.
- Eliminate ID number requirements.
- Increase public and media awareness of the ECI.
- Revise Article 11(4) TEU to clarify (a), if the ECI can propose EU primary law amendments and (b), if the ECI is a citizens’ right of initiative requesting the proposal of a specific legal act or an agenda-setting tool to raise issues of concern for citizens.
- Clarify the procedure for the legal admissibility test and ensure transparency of the decision-making process.
- A co-rapporteur in the European Parliament should be nominated by the ECI citizens' committee.

⁵⁷ ECI Campaign: 12 Ways to Build a European Citizens’ Initiative That Works!; available on: <<http://www.citizens-initiative.eu/12-ways-to-build-a-european-citizens-initiative-that-works/>>. [15/05/2015].

ECAS: The European Citizens Initiative registration falling at the first hurdle?; available on: <http://www.ecas.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/ECI-report_ECAS-2014_1.pdf>. [15/05/2015].

Democracy International: ECI Reforms.; available on: < <http://www.democracy-international.org/european-citizens-initiative-reform> >. [15/05/2015].

ANGLMAYE, I.: Implementation of the European Citizens’ Initiative: The experience of the first three years, EPRS: Brussels. 2015.

The European Parliament's report, approved on 28 October 2015, calling for revision of the ECI regulation, was an important step forward. The Plenary of the European Parliament requested of the European Commission to urgently revise the regulation governing the ECI. The report includes recommendations which could make ECIs easier to use. *“This includes harmonising and reducing personal data requirements, simplifying the technical rules governing the online signature collection system, allowing the collection of emails, dropping the age of support to 16 and letting campaigns choose their own start date”*⁵⁸. On the other hand, we have to stress, that the Report absolutely rejected the idea that ECIs could propose changes to the Treaty of Lisbon ⁵⁹. The expected negotiation about the new features of the ECI regulation between the Commission, Parliament and Council is planned for the beginning of the year 2016.

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⁵⁸ ECI Campaign: MEPs vote to make the ECI easier to use, but leave it toothless; (28/10/2015); available on: < <http://www.citizens-initiative.eu/meps-vote-to-make-the-eci-easier/> >. [31/10/2015].

⁵⁹ The European Parliament supported most of the changes to the ECI regime advocated by organisers and civil society organisations.

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Table of the ECIs (2012-2015)

Name	Subject	Category	Status	Signature
Water and sanitation are a human right! Water is a public good, not a commodity (2012)	Right to clean drinking water and sanitation.	ENVIRONMENTAL	Accepted/ Submitted to the EC	1,840,486 (ONLINE/ON PAPER)
One of Us (2012)	Juridical protection of the dignity and the right to life of every human being.	SOCIAL RIGHTS	Accepted/ Submitted to the EC	1,897,588 (ONLINE/ON PAPER)
Stop Vivisection (2012)	Phasing out animal experiments	ANIMAL RIGHTS	Accepted/ Submitted to the EC	1,326,807 (ONLINE/ON PAPER)
Fraternité 2020 – Mobility. Progress. Europe (2012)	Enhancement of EU youth exchange programmes.	EDUCATION	Accepted/ End of Campaign	71,412 (ONLINE)
High Quality European Education for All (2012)	Adoption of common education goals reflecting EU basic values	EDUCATION	Accepted/ End of Campaign	No data
Pour une gestion responsable des déchets, contre les incinérateurs (2012)	Harmonisation of laws in terms of waste neutralization.	ENVIRONMENTAL	Accepted/ End of Campaign	754 (ONLINE/ON PAPER)
Suspension of the EU Climate & Energy Package (2012)	Suspension of the 2009 EU Climate & Energy Package.	ENVIRONMENTAL	Accepted/ End of Campaign	No data
Central public online collection platform for the European Citizens' Initiative (2012)	Creating an Online European Initiatives Platform.	JUSTICE	Accepted/ End of Campaign	No data
30 km/h – making streets liveable! (2012)	A 30km/h (20mph) EUwide default speed limit for urban/residential areas.	ENVIRONMENTAL	Accepted/ End of Campaign	46,449

				(ONLINE/ON PAPER)
ACT 4 Growth (2013)	Development of female entrepreneurship as a strategy for sustainable economic growth in Europe	SOCIAL RIGHTS	Accepted/ End of Campaign	1052 (ONLINE)
Let me vote (2013)	EU citizens' right to vote in all political elections in the country of residence.	JUSTICE	Accepted/ End of Campaign	3,500 (ONLINE/ON PAPER)
Unconditional Basic Income (UBI) – Exploring a pathway towards emancipatory welfare conditions in the EU (2013)	Better cooperation between the member states aiming to explore the UBI as a tool to improve their respective social security systems.	SOCIAL RIGHTS	Accepted/ End of Campaign	294,578 (ONLINE/ON PAPER)
Single Communication Tariff Act (2012)	One unique all inclusive, monthly flat rate communication tariff within the boundaries of the EU.	COMMUNICATION	Accepted/ End of Campaign	No data
End Ecocide in Europe: A Citizens' Initiative to give the Earth Right (2013)	Adoption of legislation to prohibit, prevent and pre-empt Ecocide.	ENVIRONMENTAL	Accepted/ End of Campaign	114,842 (ONLINE/ON PAPER)
Do not count education spending as part of the deficit! Education is an investment! (2013)	Combat inequality by providing equal opportunities for education and training to all young people in Europe.	EDUCATION	Accepted/ End of Campaign	No data
European Initiative for Media Pluralism (2013)	Protection of European media pluralism.	COMMUNICATION	Accepted/ End of Campaign	200,000 (ONLINE)
Weed like to talk (2013)	Adoption of a common EU policy on the control and regulation of cannabis	SOCIAL RIGHTS	Accepted/ End of Campaign	169,791 (ONLINE)
European Free Vaping Initiative (2013)	Classification of electronic cigarettes as general purpose recreational products	SOCIAL RIGHTS	Accepted/ End of Campaign	181,555 (ONLINE)
Let me vote (2012)	EU citizens' right to vote in all political elections in the country of residence.	JUSTICE	Accepted/ Withdrawn	No data (ONLINE/ON PAPER)
Single Communication Tariff Act (2012)	One unique all inclusive, monthly flat rate communication tariff within the boundaries of the EU.	COMMUNICATION	Accepted/ Withdrawn	No data
Teach for Youth – Upgrade to Erasmus 2.0 (2013)	Eliminating educational inequity within the EU.	EDUCATION	Accepted/ Withdrawn	563 (ONLINE)
European Initiative for Media Pluralism (2012)	Protection of European media pluralism.	COMMUNICATION	Accepted/ Withdrawn	200,000 (ONLINE)
End Ecocide in Europe: A Citizens' Initiative to give the Earth Right (2013)	Adoption of legislation to prohibit, prevent and pre-empt Ecocide.	ENVIRONMENTAL	Accepted/ Withdrawn	114,842 (ONLINE/ON PAPER)
Turn me Off!	To prohibit the practice of leaving the lights on in shops	ENVIRONMENTAL	Accepted/	

(2014)	and offices when unoccupied.		Withdrawn	No data
New Deal 4 Europe – For a European Special Plan for Sustainable Development and Employment (2014)	A public investment plan to help Europe get out of the crisis through the development of the knowledge society and the creation of new jobs	SOCIAL RIGHTS	Accepted/ Withdrawn	No data
Moveurope (2014)	Creation of MOVEUROPE CARD. A card reducing transport and accommodation	TRANSPORT	Accepted/ Withdrawn	No data
EU Directive on Dairy Cow Welfare (2012)	An EU Directive to improve welfare of the EU's 23m dairy cows, create a level playing field and guarantee minimum standards enable improvements as seen with legislation for pigs and poultry	ANIMAL RIGHT	Accepted/ Withdrawn	293,561 (ONLINE/ON PAPER)
Kündigung Personenfreizügigkeit Schweiz (2012)	Termination of the Free Movement of Persons with Switzerland by the Council and the Member States	JUSTICE	Accepted/ Withdrawn	
On The Wire (2015)	Strengthening communication privacy between private individuals by law and namely wiretapping of lawyer-client communications. A pre-requisite for the rights of defence.	JUSTICE	Accepted/ Withdrawn	
An End to Front Companies in order to secure a fairer Europe (2014).	Introduction in a legal instrument in the company law area, of measures to ensure the transparency of legal persons and legal arrangements.	SOCIAL RIGHTS	Accepted/Collecti on of statements support	
For a socially fair Europe! Encouraging a stronger cooperation between EU Member States to fight poverty in Europe (2014)	Encouraging cooperation between Member States in fighting social exclusion through the common aim of insuring that less than 3% of people live below the poverty line in the EU.	SOCIAL RIGHTS	Accepted/Collecti on of statements support	
Stop plastic in the sea (2015)	Given the disturbing impact of plastic on the marine environment, ask to develop more ambitious waste regulations to avoid their presence at sea.	ENVIRONMENTAL	Accepted/Collecti on of statements support	
Fair Transport Europe – equal treatment for all transport workers (2015)	Legislative and non-legislative proposals for ensuring fair competition and equal treatment of workers in the different transport modes.	SOCIAL	Accepted/Collecti on of statements support	
My voice against nuclear power (2012)	Future without nuclear power and with a sustainable energy system.	ENVIRONMENTAL	Refusal	27,528
Recommend singing the European Anthem in	European Anthem to be sung using specially adapted lyrics in the neutral pan-European	CONSTITUTIONAL	Refusal	

Esperanto (2012)	language, Esperanto			No data
Strengthening citizens' participation in decision-making on the collective sovereignty (2012)	To ensure European citizens' sovereignty in the recognition of a new EU member state, which democratically separated from another EU member state	CONSTITUTIONAL	Refusal	No data
Abolition of bullfighting in Europe and the use of bulls in celebrations of cruelty and torture for fun (2012)	Development of an act that sets and develops the scope of Article 13 TFEU.	ANIMAL RIGHTS	Refusal	No data
One million signatures for a "Europe of Solidarity" (2012)	To establish the principle of the "state of necessity" to prevent austerity measures from threatening the existence and wellbeing of a country.	SOCIAL RIGHTS	Refusal	No data
Creation of a European Public Bank focused on social and ecological development and solidarity (2012)	States should be able to borrow at very low rates necessary funds for investments to create jobs, develop public services and resolve imbalances	SOCIAL RIGHTS	Refusal	No data
Unconditional Basic Income (2012)	Gain support for the introduction of a universal, individual, unconditional basic income to ensure a life in dignity and participation in society within all member states of the EU	SOCIAL RIGHTS	Refusal	No data
Enforcing self-determination Human Right in the EU (2013)	Proposal for an EU accommodation of the self-determination human right.	CONSTITUTIONAL	Refusal	No data
Together for a Europe without legalised prostitution (2013)	To remove the legalisation of prostitution.	SOCIAL RIGHTS	Refusal	No data
Cohesion policy for the equality of the regions and sustainability of the regional cultures (2013)	The cohesion policy of the EU should pay special attention to regions with national, ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic characteristics that are different from those of the surrounding regions.	CONSTITUTIONAL	Refusal	No data
Stop cruelty to animals (2013)	To obtain a uniform treatment of animals, by introducing their subjective rights.	ANIMAL RIGHTS	Refusal	No data
Minority Safe Pack – one million signatures for diversity in Europe (2013)	To improve the protection of persons belonging to national and linguistic minorities .	SOCIAL RIGHTS	Refusal	No data
To hold an immediate EU Referendum on public confidence in European Government's (EG) competence (2013)	To organise an EU referendum asking: "Should the current failing form of EG be replaced by one without a democratic deficit?"	CONSTITUTIONAL	Refusal	No data
Right to Lifelong Care:	the fundamental right to			

Leading a life of dignity and independence is a fundamental right! (2013)	human dignity by guaranteeing on a lifelong basis adequate social	SOCIAL RIGHTS	Refusal	No data
Our concern for insufficient help for pet and stray animals in the European Union (2013)	The residents, workers and tourists in the EU shall be able to live and travel in Europe, without fear.	ANIMAL RIGHTS	Refusal	No data
The Supreme Legislative & Executive Power in the EU must be the EU Referendum as an expression of direct democracy (2014)	The EU legal system must immediately provide the legal basis for a referendum mechanism independent of member countries' current constitutions.	CONSTITUTIONAL	Refusal	No data
A new EU legal norm, self-abolition of the European Parliament and its structures, must be immediately adopted. (2014)	The EU legal system must immediately provide a legal basis for selfabolition of the European Parliament and its structures if it does not fulfill key EU Treaty regulations	CONSTITUTIONAL	Refusal	No data
Ethics for animals and kids (2014)		ANIMAL RIGHTS	Refusal	No data
Vite l'Europe sociale ! Pour un nouveau critère européen contre la pauvreté (2014)	Quick social Europe! A new European criterion against poverty	SOCIAL RIGHTS	Refusal	No data
STOP TTIP (2014)	Request EU Commission to recommend to the EU Council of Ministers to repeal the negotiating mandate for the TTIP.	INTERNATIONAL	Refusal	2,144,996