

Brussels, 23/05/18

**INFORMAL BRAINSTORMING MEETING ABOUT THE LAUNCH OF AN ECI ON FULL POLITICAL RIGHTS FOR EUROPEAN CITIZENS' ON THE MOVE**

**12.30-14.00, 23 MAY 2018 AT MAISON DES ASSOCIATIONS INTERNATIONALES, BRUSSELS**

People attending the meeting:

- Tony Venables (ECIT Director)
- Alicia Cleary-Venables (PhD in Linguistics at Oxford)
- Maarten de Groot (The ECI Campaign)
- Kristiana Kuneva (New Europeans)
- Suzanna Carp (New Europeans)
- Pier Virgilio Dastoli (European Movement – Italy)
- Petar Markovic (ACT4FreeMovement; PhD at ULB)
- Agnese Pantaleoni (ECIT intern)
- Francesco Tosi (ECIT intern)

Apologies for absence: Philippe Mazuel and Quentin Loiez (PACE); Maria Ballasteros Melero (AEGEE) ; Dominika Rutkowska-Falorni (Mouvement Européen-France) ;

The outline agenda for this brainstorming meeting was:

- 1) Roundtable discussion and introduction of participants
- 2) Consideration of the aims and chances of success with such an ECI
- 3) Building a partnership to launch the ECI and a wider coalition

1) Roundtable discussion and introduction of participants

Participants introduced themselves and their organisations. Mr Venables quickly summarized the purpose of the meeting and the ECI.

Pier Virgilio Dastoli opened the meeting, discussing the conclusions of the European networking meeting at the initiative of the European movement-Italy "Empower citizens for the future of Europe", held in Sesto San Giovanni (MI) on May 11-12 2018.

In particular, three priorities were highlighted as the outcome of the event:

-The Respect of the Rule of Law. For this reason, two different, but parallel actions, will be put forward: a European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) based on the art. 70 of the TFEU and a petition to the European Parliament, in order to have the opportunity to write a more political text. The idea is to start collecting the signatures before the summer, with the aim to demonstrate that a lot of people, in different countries, are willing to fight for the respect of the rule of law.

The seven different people, from seven different countries, are yet to be found. They should come from countries such as Italy, Poland, Hungary and Austria most concerned with the issue

- The Multiannual Financial Perspectives, stating that the public budget should be founded on a double principle of "no taxation without representation" and "no representation without taxation" with the consent of citizens.

- The citizens' consultations and different proposals in the run -up to the European elections in May 2019

## 2) Consideration of the aims and chances of success

Tony Venables asked whether the justification for this ECI would be strong enough. The idea came from the Summer University 2017 which considered that with Brexit, EU citizenship has become more political; furthermore, a good way to get European citizenship more popular is to give citizens full political rights.

The other participants agreed and they also suggested that there is a basic no taxation without representation argument to be added. The idea was raised that there is a need to act transnationally and to connect the local, regional or national campaigns with the European one.

The 2019 report of the Commission will be most likely presented after the European Parliament elections of next year (as stated from M.H. Boulanger in a previous meeting with Mr. Venables). However, in this way, it would not have much political weight. Mr. Dastoli proposed to push the Commission to do the consultations before the elections.

Maarten De Groot also proposed to launch a similar format of "Humans of New York" Facebook page, in order to highlight stories about Europeans who moved in other countries and their willingness to exercise their rights to vote where they reside. He also said that AEGEE had a similar project called "Faces of EU" with which we can try to connect. European Alternatives also had the project of Transeuropean caravans which will be re-proposed in the run for next European Parliament elections and that can be a chance to show stories and to load the caravan with this initiative.

Tony Venables then illustrated some ideas on how to manage the process:

- Launch a consortium of organisations to manage the ECI. This can lead to two main advantages: have more funds and collect more signatures.
- A pre-launch test drive of the ECI to build up support suggested by Democracy International. There would be the need for the partners to coordinate a campaign on their own websites, collect the materials, crowdfunding etc.
- Put high-profile people in the Committee of 7 who have a connection with the topic and ECIs

Furthermore, it was assessed that the countries which should be targeted, for the collection of signatures, are the ones where there would be more practical support and also where people are more touched by the topic. Some suggestions were:

- Italy – European Movement
- France – Philippe Cayla, "let me vote" and European Movement France and PACE
- Germany – because of the many projects and initiatives ongoing
- Smaller countries where there is a high level of intra-EU migration (e.g. Belgium)
- The UK- New Europeans (it was agreed to launch a petition against the Commission's cut-off date for signatures)

The participants agreed on launching a survey – through an umbrella of CSOs etc. – for better understanding if there are already other organisations, individuals etc. working on the subject and try to connect with them. The results of the survey should be presented to an event inviting people and groups involved that should take place in the morning before the ECIT Summer University 2018 on 6 September.

## 3) Building a partnership to launch the ECI and a wider coalition.

-The organisations willing to collaborate:

- New Europeans
- European Alternatives as a whole + specific project of ECItizens – Mr. Markovic has to check with the board
- European Movement Italy

-The ones that expressed an interest in the meeting but finally could not come:

- AEGEE
- JEF



- PACE
- European Movement France
- Delphine Bourgeois, European citizen platform

The ECI Campaign said that since they promote the ECI as a tool, they not explicitly support any ECI but they would be willing to provide assistance and spread information.

Tony Venables thanked participants for a very useful discussion. A brief report together with a revised strategy note taking into account the points made and a proposal for the survey would be sent to them and those who had been unable to come.