

Invitation to support the European citizens' initiative (ECI) on

Permanent European Citizenship

Dear friends and colleagues,

[This ECI](#) demands that once EU citizenship is granted it cannot be taken away simply by government decree. The European Court of Justice has laid down that EU citizenship is a “fundamental status” – in a civilised society deprivation of citizenship should never occur. If Brexit happens 29 March 2019, 65 million people in the UK will suffer mass citizenship deprivation on an unprecedented scale. If this can happen to one group of European citizens today, it can happen to other groups of individuals tomorrow. Furthermore, UK citizens will be stripped of their European status and democratic European rights whilst over the transitional period, which could be extended according to the negotiators, they will be subjected to the full force of European law.

But this ECI is not just about protest. It is about showing public support to get this first transnational citizenship of the modern era out of the shadows. The freedom to learn, live, love and work anywhere in Europe is the core of the dream we follow for ourselves and our children. What else can curb the threats to the rule of law, democracy and Europe's future stemming from the rising tide of nationalism and xenophobia? To silently acquiesce to the mass loss of EU citizenship allows those forces to continue attacking the European dimension of our identity. Rather than a shrinking European citizenry with Brexit, we want an open and expanding one based as much on residence as on nationality. The demand for a more inclusive citizenship beyond the nation state is not new. When Union citizenship was added to the Maastricht Treaty 25 years ago, intended as an evolutionary status, human rights and migrant organisations, supported by civil society as a whole and the European Parliament, demanded nothing less.

Together with the organiser of the ECI Tony Simpson and the ECIT Foundation (www.ecit-foundation.eu) we are asking for your help for this genuinely citizens' initiative which does not have the support of large organisations or vested interests. When you [click to support this ECI](#), you will find a table showing the number of signatures in each country and their percentage of the threshold required. There are already some 100,000 signatures in a short period or 10% of the total mostly from the UK but also from every EU Member State.

There is no readymade network of national/European organisations to campaign for this ECI. You know best what it takes to reach the threshold in your country. Here are some preliminary suggestions from our side:

- **sign this ECI in case you have not done so yet;**
- **send e-mails to family and friends (feel free to use this letter as a template for your call to action);**
- **post messages on social media and retweet support for the EC;**
- **take the ECI to the office or lecture theatre and above all circulate a request to sign to your professional network;**
- **raise this issue at public meetings whenever there is an opportunity;**
- **alert your networks to events and news items to which the ECI can be connected to give it publicity;**
- **consider putting together a task force to review progress whilst keeping a wider audience involved;**
- **ask the European associations and networks of which you are a member to support the ECI.**

Please keep us informed. Your feedback about the ECI will be very valuable for the European campaign as a whole.

We much look forward to hearing back from you shortly. The clock is ticking to achieve 1million signatures, especially in the UK well before 30 March 2019 and by 27 July in the rest of the EU.¹ Please do not hesitate to come back to us with any questions. We attach a background discussion paper prepared by ECIT for this ECI and our draft manifesto for the European elections arguing the case for a European citizens' legislature.

¹ ECI organisers have 12 months to collect signatures. The Commission has however issued a notice to stakeholders ruling that signatures in the UK have to be verified by the government before the date of withdrawal from the EU. Since this process can take up to 3 months, according to the regulation on ECIs, UK citizens could be deprived of this European right to set the agenda by end 2018.