



Commission registers European Citizens' Initiative calling for European Free Movement Instrument

Brussels, 21 December 2016

The European Commission has today registered a European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) inviting the Commission to guarantee the right of free movement for "Europeans of good standing" within the EU through a 'Universal Instrument'.

The ECI calls on the Commission to identify an appropriate method of granting such an instrument, suggesting a unified *laissez-passer* document as an option.

The College of Commissioners discussed the legal admissibility of the proposed ECI and agreed that it meets all the conditions necessary for registration under the ECI Regulation. This registration starts a one-year process of collection of signatures in support of the proposed ECI by its organisers.

The Commission's decision to register concerns only the legal admissibility of the proposal. The substance of the initiative has not been discussed or assessed. The conditions for admissibility, as foreseen by the ECI Regulation, are that the proposed action does not manifestly fall outside the framework of the Commission's powers to submit a proposal for a legal act, that it is not manifestly abusive, frivolous or vexatious and that it is not manifestly contrary to the values of the Union.

Should the ECI receive one million statements of support within one year, from at least seven different Member States, the Commission will have to react within three months. The Commission can decide either to follow the request or not follow the request and in both instances would be required to explain its reasoning.

Background

ECIs were introduced with the Lisbon Treaty and launched as an agenda-setting tool in the hands of citizens in April 2012, upon the entry into force of the ECI Regulation which implements the Treaty provisions. The commitment of empowering citizens to deliver a better Europe was reiterated by President Juncker in his [State of the Union](#) address in September 2016.

Once formally registered, an ECI allows one million citizens from at least one quarter of EU Member States to invite the European Commission to propose a legal act in areas where the Commission has the power to do so.

If – and only if – a registered ECI receives the signatures of one million validated statements of support from at least seven Member States, the Commission must decide whether or not it would act, and explain the reasons for that choice.

For More Information

[Full text of the proposed "European Free Movement Instrument" ECI](#) (available from 11 January 2017)

[Other ECIs currently collecting signatures](#)

[ECI website](#)

[ECI Regulation](#)

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