

Very short (uncomplete) report from Klaus Sambor of the  
**European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)**  
(3. - 4. June 2021)

The 10th edition of the **ECI Day** exceptionally took place online and over two days. The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) is a welcome instrument for participatory democracy at European level. Introduced by the Lisbon Treaty, it came into force in 2012 and allows Europeans to make legislative proposals and participate in decision-making by connecting directly with EU institutions.

High-level institutional representatives took part in the following discussions: Christa Schweng (Präsident of EESC), Pedro Silva Pereira (Vice-Cair of the EU Parliament), Lorént Vincze (EMP), Carmen Preising („Water“ regulation), Silvia Kersemakers (ECI team leader, Secretariate-General, EU-Commission), Jérôme Quéré (Diector of European Movement – France), Freya Clausen (legal secretary at the Court of justice of the EU), Dolores Montserrat (MEP, Cair of the Committee on Petitions), Bruno Kaufmann (Global Democracy Correspondent), Maaïke Geuens (lecturer at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam).

Debates on the ECI instrument, focusing on aspects key to making the ECI more powerful and strengthening participatory democracy at EU level. While 2021 saw the first two pieces of legislation inspired by European citizens' initiatives took effect, it will be now focusing on how to ensure that the ECI achieves the greatest impact.

10 Organizers reported about their problems, some positive results, but also of different frustrating situations. Each organiser had 1 minute time to mention their ECI.

Start with a session with journalists interested in ECIs:  
Introduction by Bruno Kaufmann

In order to split up in different break-out sessions, each organiser got now 3 minutes to make additional statements about their ECI. Then the journalists (12 from different countries) were invited to detailed discussion (Input by organiser and discussion 45 minutes for each ECI).

1. Right to cure (Julie Streedom)
2. Ban on biometric mass surveillance practices (Ella ..)
3. Save bees and farmers / Towards a bee-friendly agriculture for a healthy environment (Helmuth Burtscher-Schaden)
4. Voters without borders, Full Political Rights for EU citizens (Rosalie van den Brink)

5. Start Unconditional Basic Incomes (UBI) throughout the EU (Klaus Sambor)
6. Civil servant Exchange Program (Johan Goncalves Procek)
7. StopGlobalWarming – A price for carbon to fight climate change / Actions on Climate Emergency (Virginia Fuime)
8. Stop Finning – Stop the trade (Nils Kluger)
9. Green Garden Roof Tops (Almog Yoana Sade)
10. Freedom to share (Gregory Engels)

At the end the conclusion was drawn by Bruno Kaufmann:

- Problems that the ECIs are not well know (see survey 2,4%)
- Described the situation of „direct democracy“ in Switzerland (100.000 signatures in 18 months collected on the streets, not online) For 1 million signatures for a successful ECI we should try to achieve much more (e.g. 10 millions).
- EU referendum would be a further step (not only agenda setting with ECIs)

It was also explored the role played by the ECI in the EU's is wider set-up for public participation, including with a view to the Conference on the **Future of Europe**.

Matters such as online campaigning and fundraising were discussed.

**EESC very well organized** (Charlotte Rive, Camilla Lombardi, Flavio Grazian, Hendrik Nahr), first day about 100 participants (translation English, France, German, Polish)