

# Questionnaire for ECI organisers

Fields marked with \* are mandatory.

## Survey on the functioning of the European Citizens' Initiative

The rules underpinning the functioning of the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) have been reformed with application from 1 January 2020. The ECI Regulation requires the European Commission to 'periodically review the functioning of the European citizens' initiative and present a report to the European Parliament and the Council on the application of this Regulation no later than 1 January 2024, and every four years thereafter.'

To feed into the preparation of the review report, the European Commission is conducting a number of consultations to assess the effectiveness of the rules that started to apply in 2020.

**This survey is addressed to representatives of all European citizens' initiatives ongoing at 1 January 2020 at various stages of the ECI process or started since then.**

The deadline for responding to the survey is **14 October 2022**.

Thank you for your valuable feedback.

The ECI Team

## 1 Motivations and overall experience

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### 1.1 What inspired you to start an ECI?

- ☐ Personal interest in a cause that, in my view, should be addressed at EU level
- ☐ Professional interest
- ☐ Academic interest
- ☐ Stories of past ECI organisers
- ☐ ECI promotional campaign
- ☒ Other

### 1.2 Please explain

*1000 character(s) maximum*

The ECI mechanism seems to be an interesting direct democracy tool available in today's World addressing to such a big population. As UBI advocates, we thought that, it might be a very strong tool which may allow us to proceed in the legislative direction in all EU countries. We also think that, it might be an pioneering example for other countries, too.

1.3 Before starting an ECI, did you explore other tools available to citizens to express their views in the EU?

☐ Yes ☒ No

1.5 How did you find out about the European Citizens' Initiative?

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We have already executed our first ECI campaign for UBI in 2013 and 2014.

\* 1.6 What was your main goal when deciding to launch an ECI?

- ☐ Raise awareness about the cause I care about
- ☐ Start a debate on the topic of the initiative
- ☐ Establish a network of partners with a view to long-term cooperation
- ☐ Influence EU policies in the area of my/ my organisation's initiative
- ☐ Introducing new EU laws or changes to existing laws
- ☐ Promote EU citizenship
- ☐ Personal and professional development
- ☒ Other

1.7 Please explain

1000 character(s) maximum

Influence EU policies and the policies of each member state in the area of our organisation's initiative. And also to raise awareness about the cause we care about.

How close to your initial goals did you get (so far) on the following accounts?

(rate each from 1-very far to 10 – very close)

1.8 \* Raised awareness about the cause I care about

3

1.9 \* Started a debate on the topic of the initiative

2

1.10 \* Established a network of partners with a view to long-term cooperation

7

1.11 \* Influenced EU policies in the area of my initiative

1

1.12 \* Introducing new EU laws or changes to existing laws were/will be proposed

1.13 \* Promoted EU citizenship

1.14 \* Personal and professional development

1.15 \* How accessible do you consider the ECI to be as a tool for allowing citizens to participate in the democratic life of the European Union?

1.16 \* How impactful is the ECI compared to other tools of public participation?

1.17 \* Was being involved in an ECI a worthwhile experience?

1.18 \* How much has the COVID-19 outbreak had an impact on the success of your initiative?

1.19 What helped you most in facing the challenges posed by the pandemic when running your ECI?

- ☒ the extensions of deadlines for signature collection
- ☐ targeted guidance from the ECI Forum
- ☐ sharing experiences with other organisers
- ☐ support offered at national level in different countries
- ☒ availability of an online infrastructure for running an ECI
- ☐ shift to online activities made it easier to promote the ECI
- ☐ other
- ☐ Not applicable

1.21 What should be kept/continued/reinforced in the future?

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The availability of the online infrastructure for running an ECI by the improved COCS from the EU-IT-Team. During our campaign, we requested a survey from a professional company and tried to figure out the level of awareness in EU countries, regarding the ECI mechanism.

The survey has pointed to both very important and interesting results; the level of awareness regarding the ECI mechanism was about 2.4 % of the EU population.

Under these conditions, we believe, important efforts should be allocated in order to increase the level of awareness regarding the ECI mechanism, by the the ECI authorities.

If possible; we would like to have a meeting with ECI authorities to present the results of the survey in detail, and also to have an interactive discussion.

## 2 Preparatory phase

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2.1 Was the information about starting an initiative easy to find?

☒ Yes ☐ No

2.2 What source of information did you use?

- ☒ ECI Website
- ☐ ECI Forum
- ☐ National Contact Point
- ☐ Other

2.3 \* How do you rate the quality of the information on the ECI website?

9

\* 2.7 Did you use the services offered by the ECI Forum?

☒ Yes ☐ No

\* 2.8 Which services did you use and how useful did you find them?

- ☒ Checking the learning materials published on the Forum (guidance notes, videos, recordings)
- ☐ Watching webinars
- ☐ Getting legal advice
- ☐ Finding other members to form the organisers' group
- ☐ Discussing your ideas with other Forum users
- ☐ Taking the online course
- ☐ Reading blog articles
- ☐ Other

2.9 \* Please rate: Checking the learning materials published on the Forum (guidance notes, videos, recordings)

2.18 How did you find the other members of your organisers' group?

- ☒ I knew them already, from work or studies

- ☒ Through searches on the Internet
- ☒ Via social media
- ☐ Through the ECI Forum
- ☐ Other

2.20 Did you set up a legal entity to manage the initiative?

- ☐ Yes ☒ No

2.22 Why not?

*1000 character(s) maximum*

Due to high expenditures that are necessary to start and execute a legal entity.

\* 2.23 What were the biggest challenges you faced in the preparatory phase?

- ☒ Setting up the organisers' group, finding other members
- ☐ Finding information
- ☐ Finding specialised support e.g. (legal)
- ☐ Raising funds to get started
- ☒ Drafting the initiative to make sure that it can be registered
- ☐ Other

### 3 Registration phase

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\* 3.1 When was your initiative registered or will be if it meets all requirements?

- ☐ Before 1/01/2020 (under Regulation 211/2011)
- ☒ After 1/01/2020 (under Regulation 2019/788)

\* 3.2 Were the requirements for registering an ECI clear to you?

- ☐ Very clear
- ☐ Rather clear
- ☒ Neutral
- ☐ Quite unclear
- ☐ Very unclear

3.5 Are the requirements for registering an ECI easy to meet?

- ☐ Very easy to meet
- ☐ Rather easy to meet
- ☐ Neutral
- ☒ Quite difficult to meet
- ☐ Very difficult to meet

3.6 Please explain

*1000 character(s) maximum*

We are completely forced only to use the situation of the current treaties and we think they should be amended as it was proposed on 9th of June 2022 by the EU-Parliament. Reopening the discussions regarding the constitution will help us align better with our EU values. EU have to take steps to ensure that social rights have priority in case of a conflict with economic freedoms, including the introduction of a social progress in the treaties.

3.8 How easy was it to submit your registration request via the 'Organiser account'?

- ☒ Very easy
- ☐ Rather easy
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Quite difficult
- ☐ Very difficult

3.9 Was your initiative:

- ☐ Registered in one go
- ☒ Registered following a 2-stage procedure
- ☐ Refused
- ☐ Received an initial assessment from the Commission but hasn't yet been registered

3.10 Was the information provided following the initial assessment by the Commission clear?

- ☒ Yes ☐ Not fully

3.12 Were the steps you had to take to revise the initiative clear?

- ☒ Yes ☐ Not fully

3.14 Did you use the ECI Forum in the process of reviewing your initiative?

- ☒ Yes ☐ No

3.15 How essential was the support you received from the ECI Forum?

- ☐ Irrelevant
- ☐ Not that important
- ☐ Neutral
- ☒ Important
- ☐ Critical

\* 3.18 What is your overall assessment of the effectiveness of the ECI procedure for registration?

- ☐ Very effective and straightforward
- ☒ Mostly effective
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat complicated
- ☐ Very difficult

\* 3.19 What were the biggest challenges you faced during the registration phase?

- ☒ Insufficient legal expertise

- ☐ Technical: setting up/using the Organisers' Account
- ☐ Finding agreement with the other organisers
- ☐ Resources: time, funding
- ☐ Communication (language)
- ☐ Other

## 4 Signature collection phase

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\* 4.1 Which system did you use/are you using for collecting statements of support online?

- ☒ Central Online Collection System (COCS) offered by the European Commission
- ☐ Own collection system (iOCS)

4.2 \* What is your overall satisfaction with the system?

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\* 4.3 What are the top 3 main advantages/strengths for using COCS for you as an organiser?

*at most 3 choice(s)*

- ☒ Free of charge for organisers
- ☐ Ease to set-up and use
- ☐ Ease to keep track of collection
- ☐ Ease of supporting an initiative, including with e-ID
- ☐ Compliance with data protection rules
- ☒ Multilingualism
- ☐ Accessibility to people with disabilities
- ☐ IT security
- ☐ Access to users' (signatories') insights (web analytics)
- ☒ Possibility to send communications to signatories
- ☐ IT support from the Commission
- ☐ Facility to securely transfer scanned paper statements of support
- ☐ Facility to securely transfer online statements of support
- ☐ Other

\* 4.5 Have you faced any challenges when using the Central Online Collection System?

- ☐ Yes ☒ No

4.8 Which feature should be improved as a matter of priority in your view?

*Use drag&drop or the up/down buttons to change the order or [accept the initial order](#).*

- ⋮ Communication with signatories
- ⋮ Facility to set-up and use
- ⋮ Multilingualism
- ⋮ Users' (signatories') insights (web analytics)

⋮ Ease of supporting an initiative, including with e-ID

⋮ Accessibility to people with disabilities

⋮ Facility to keep track of collection

⋮ IT support from the Commission

⋮ IT security

⋮ Compliance with data protection rules

⋮ Facility to securely transfer paper statements of support

⋮ Facility to securely transfer online statements of support

#### 4.9 What is the COCS lacking?

It will be very worthy if it will be possible to make the COCS easily embeddable to other web sites, too. Also, cooperation with other petition platforms might be very worthy.

#### \* 4.10 How useful is sharing the responsibility for the protection of personal data with the European Commission by signing the Joint Controllership Agreement?

- ☐ Very useful
- ☐ Quite useful
- ☒ Neutral
- ☐ Not that useful
- ☐ Not useful at all

#### 4.13 What are for you the top 3 main advantages for using your own collection system?

*at most 3 choice(s)*

- ☐ Cost
- ☐ Ease to set-up and use
- ☐ Ease to keep track of collection
- ☐ Ease of supporting an initiative
- ☐ Compliance with data protection rules
- ☐ Multilingualism
- ☐ Accessibility to people with disabilities
- ☐ IT security
- ☐ Users' (signatories') insights (web analytics)
- ☐ Communication with signatories
- ☐ IT support services
- ☒ Other

#### 4.14 Please explain

*1000 character(s) maximum*

We didn't use a separate signature collection system.

4.17 Did you ask for advice to the ECI Forum during the collection phase?

☐ Yes ☒ No

4.20 Why not?

*1000 character(s) maximum*

We didn't need to ask. Should we?

\* 4.21 How important is it to allow the use of the new solutions for electronic identification such as eID or electronic signature for supporting initiatives?

- ☒ Very important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Not that important
- ☐ Irrelevant

\* 4.22 How important is reducing the minimum age for supporting ECIs to 16 in all Member States for the success of citizens' initiatives?

- ☒ Very important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Not that important
- ☐ Irrelevant

4.23 Were there other enablers that helped you in the process of collecting signatures? (e.g. support from NGOs, influencers, media, local authorities etc.)

*1000 character(s) maximum*

Yes. Cooperation with UBI Networks at national level, very limited number of social media platforms, limited number NGO's and the UBI4ALL Raffle also enabled us to collect additional signatures.

\* 4.24 What was the biggest challenge you faced/are facing during the collection of signatures phase?

*at most 2 choice(s)*

- ☐ Citizens' reluctance to provide the required personal data
- ☐ Finding partners for promoting the initiative in at least 7 Member States
- ☒ Attracting media interest
- ☒ Citizens' lack of awareness about the ECI
- ☐ Raising funds
- ☐ Finding the time to dedicate to the initiative
- ☐ Communicating across different countries
- ☐ Different national contexts
- ☐ Other

4.27 How useful are the 6 months available after registration (under the new rules) to prepare the signature collection?

- ☒ Essential  
☐ Quite important  
☐ Neutral  
☐ Not that useful  
☐ Irrelevant

4.28 \* What is your overall assessment of the effectiveness of the procedures and tools available for the signature collection phase?

8

4.29 Did you reach 1 million signatures?

- ☐ Yes ☐ Not yet ☒ No

5.1 How do you assess the effectiveness of the verification procedure, including the compulsory deadlines to be met?

- ☐ Very effective  
☐ Effective  
☐ Neutral  
☐ Rather difficult  
☐ Very difficult

5.2 Have you used the File Exchange Service provided by the European Commission to transfer statements of support to national authorities?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

5.5 Have you encountered any difficulties during the verification process? How did you solve them?

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5.6 How was the interaction with national authorities?

- ☐ Smooth/efficient ☐ Neutral ☐ Difficult

5.8 Have you completed the verification phase successfully?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ Not yet  
☐ No

6.1 Were the steps and purpose of the examination procedure clear to you?

- ☐ Very clear ☐ Neutral ☐ Not that clear

How satisfied are you with the opportunities provided to organisers of successful initiatives to present their objectives?

6.2 During the meeting with the Commission

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Rather satisfied
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Not that satisfied
- ☐ Extremely unhappy
- ☐ Not applicable

6.3 Please explain

*1000 character(s) maximum*

6.4 During the public hearing at the European Parliament

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Rather satisfied
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Not that satisfied
- ☐ Extremely unhappy
- ☐ Not applicable

6.5 Please explain

*1000 character(s) maximum*

6.6 Has the Commission already replied to your initiative?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

6.9 What have been the key success factors for your initiative?

*1000 character(s) maximum*

## 7 Transparency and awareness-raising

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7.1 From your experience of reaching out to citizens, which are the most cost-effective tools for increasing citizens' awareness about the European Citizens' Initiative? Please include examples if you have

*1000 character(s) maximum*

It's very important and necessary to hear more about the ECI from the public media. Video recordings should be prepared and shared regarding the ECI mechanism. MEPs should mention about the ECI mechanism during their activities and show their support to this valuable direct democracy tool. EU offices in the member states should participate/contribute to the ECI campaigns in a very active manner. Considering that they are aware of the tool and trying to utilize it; at certain intervals the ECI authorities should send messages to the signaturers of the on-going/past ECI campaigns regarding the on-going ECI campaigns.

7.2 Do you consider you have sufficient opportunities to promote your initiative at EU and/or national level? Which did you find the most useful?

*1000 character(s) maximum*

It was much easier to promote the idea of UBI in the national environment. (For example; in Austria we have reached to 170,000 signatures at the national campaign, compared with the 4,000 signatures for ECI-UBI.) On the other hand, in some countries there were no similar tools/opportunities. (For example; Spain.) However, during the last ECI-UBI campaign we have received 296,365 signatures, which is more than the number of signatures received during the ECI-UBI campaign in 2013/2014. During the last ECI-UBI campaign, we were only able to reach the ECI quota expectations in four member states, namely; Spain, Slovenia, Italy and Germany.

## 8 Horizontal issues

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\* 8.1 Are the rules for reporting funding clear?

- ☒ Very clear
- ☐ Not that clear
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Rather unclear
- ☐ Very unclear

\* 8.2 Are the data protection rules clear?

- ☒ Very clear
- ☐ Not that clear
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Rather unclear
- ☐ Very unclear

8.3 How useful is the guidance provided by the Commission on data protection matters?

- ☐ Very useful
- ☐ Somewhat useful
- ☒ Neutral
- ☐ Not that useful
- ☐ Not useful at all

\* 8.4 Is the division of responsibilities for data protection compliance between the different actors (organisers, Commission, national authorities) clear and effective?

- ☒ Very clear and effective

- ☐ No opinion
- ☐ Not that clear and/or effective

8.6 Have you faced/are you facing any difficulties or challenges as regards compliance with data protection rules?

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No

## 9 Final

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\* 9.1 The rules underpinning the functioning of the ECI have been simplified as of 1/1/2020. Which of the changes introduced do you consider helped you most as an organiser?

*at most 3 choice(s)*

- ☐ Possibility to set up a legal entity to run the initiative
- ☐ The support offered by the ECI Forum
- ☐ Two-stage procedure for registration
- ☐ 6 months available to organisers after registration to prepare their campaign
- ☐ Possibility for EU citizens to sign ECIs no matter where they live in the world
- ☐ Less personal data required for supporting ECIs
- ☒ Availability of a secure tool for collecting signatures online, free of charge for organisers
- ☐ Clearer timelines for the verification phase
- ☒ Extension of the time for the examination phase, more opportunities to present your initiative
- ☒ The obligation to inform citizens about the ECI existence
- ☐ The creation of National Contact Points

\* 9.2 How was the communication and interaction with the European Commission during your whole ECI journey?

- ☒ Smooth/efficient
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Difficult

9.4 Which communication action carried out or facilitated by the European Commission do you find most valuable for you as an organiser?

- ☒ Easy access to our initiative from the ECI website
- ☐ Possibility to share the initiative on social media from the ECI website
- ☒ Contacting signatories of our initiative via the mailing system of the Central Online Collection System
- ☐ General promotion of all initiatives by the Commission
- ☒ Mentions of our initiative in the ECI newsletter
- ☐ Participation as speakers at physical events
- ☐ Participation as speakers in online events/webinars
- ☐ Featuring our experience in videos
- ☐ Showcasing the initiative in the CitizenCentral podcasts
- ☐ Other

9.6 Would you like to share any particular achievements, stories and/or highlights of your ECI journey?

1000 character(s) maximum

Our ECI-UBI campaign was supported/executed by National Coordinators and substitutes of 25 EU Member States. All of them could write stories for their national and EU wide activities. In case of Austria, the most important story was that, we have also started a national level signature collection campaign for the introduction, in parallel to the ECI-UBI campaign.

Despite it have not been asked, we would like to make a suggestion based on an interesting experience of us in Austria. In Austria, in accordance with the legislation, we received financial support after our success during the "Volksbegehren" (Referendum). We believe, similar financial support mechanism should be considered also for ECI campaigns. (For example; after the receival of 100,000 signatures at a specific ECI campaign, a financial support may be allocated to the corresponding ECI campaign.)

9.7 Have you encountered any other difficulties or challenges that were not mentioned under the previous sections?

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In our opinion, the findings of the 'Conference of the Future of Europe' should be taken very seriously and the modifications regarding the current treaties to come to a more 'Social EU' should be supported; which will be reinforcing/improving the competences of the EU in social policies and ensuring equality of rights, including especially health and education.

Conceiving an EU wide referendum, to be triggered by the EU parliament, regarding exceptional cases on matters particularity important to all European citizens might be very important for the future of EU Citizen's and member states. (For example; a referendum regarding the introduction of an UBI would be an important issue.)

\* 9.8 If you agree with the Commission using (parts of) your replies in communication materials, please consider giving us your consent.

- ☒ I give my consent  
☐ I don't agree

## Contact

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