



YEPP Resolution: In support of a further developed European Citizens Initiative

Adopted at IXth YEPP Congress in Sofia, Bulgaria on the 11th May 2013

Recognising:

1. That the European Parliament called on the European Commission to make 2013 the European Year of Citizenship;
2. That euroscepticism, populism and a broadly decreasing participation, especially among young people, has led to low turnouts in European elections and to the rise of anti-European parties across the European Union;
3. That in time of crisis, the need to empower European citizens and to strengthen the citizen dimension is more important than ever;
4. That the legitimacy of the EU will only be enjoyed if citizens participate actively in the democratic procedures;
5. That it is in the political parties interests to encourage citizens to participate in EU issues.

Acknowledging:

1. That since April 2012, citizens across Europe have had the right to transmit their ideas towards decision makers on the European level in a bottom-up process. A citizens' initiative is possible in any field where the Commission has the power to propose legislation, for example environment, agriculture, transport or public health;
2. That the Commission is not obliged to propose legislation as a result of an initiative. Only if the Commission decides to put forward a legislative proposal, the normal legislative procedure kicks off: the Commission proposal is submitted to the legislator (generally the European Parliament and the Council or in some cases only the Council) and, if adopted, it becomes law;
3. That petitions in the European Parliament and the European Citizens' Initiative is the only direct democracy tool for European Citizens to take part in the legislation process of the EU;
4. That the ECI has been in use now for one entire year but its potential has not yet been unfolded;
5. That the ECI has the potential to be a major step towards a more democratic EU. It could foster truly transnational debates, contribute to the emergence of a European public space and strengthen the sense of ownership for EU policy making among Europeans.

YEPP calls on:

1. The EU and its member states to keep the promise for more democratic participation made by the Lisbon Treaty;

2. The EU and its member states to strengthen direct democracy by an expansion of the European Citizens' Initiative, in order to unfold its potential as a direct democracy tool. As part of an extended European Citizens' Initiative, Union citizens should be able to launch legislative initiatives directly by themselves and thus be able to co-determine political developments in Europe themselves. If an initiative meets all the requirements, the Commission should be obliged to submit the European Citizens Initiative proposal to the legislator (generally the European Parliament and the Council or in some cases only the Council) together with its opinion;
3. The EU and its member states to better promote the European Citizens Initiative through existing European Union organisations and institutions and national campaigns;
4. The EU and its member states to harmonise the national criteria and to sign a European Citizens Initiative and to further develop the online infrastructure to launch and promote a European Citizens Initiative reinforcing the transnational integration and cooperation between the members of the European civil society.