

The European Citizen's Initiative (ECI) Celebrates 10 Years of Promoting Democratic Participation in the European Union

The 9 May 2022 will be an opportunity to commemorate not only Europe Day, a celebration of peace, unity and solidarity throughout the European Union, but also to mark 10 years of the European Citizen's Initiative (ECI) and the registration of the first initiative 10 years ago.

What is the ECI?

The ECI aims to engage EU citizens across borders on issues of common concern and create a sense of togetherness, participation, and partnership, strengthening transnational civil society and democracy. The ECI was introduced by the 2009 Lisbon Treaty, which entered into force on 1 December 2009. The ECI became operational on 1 April 2012 when the first ECI regulation started to apply, enabling the first initiative to be registered on 9 May, Europe Day, in 2012. One of the initiatives that followed soon after - Water and sanitation are a human right! Water is a public good, not a commodity! - became the first to reach the required target of 1 million signatures coming from EU citizens from at least 7 EU countries.

The ECI is the first tool enabling citizens from across all EU Countries to come together and to call for legislative change at the European level on issues they find important. [Initiative detail | European Citizens' Initiative \(europa.eu\)](#)

The scope of the ECI covers policy areas where the European Commission has the power to propose legal action. This includes the environment, agriculture, transport, and also consumer protection, social rights and other areas that impact people's daily lives.

European citizens' initiatives can be launched by a core group of organisers from at least seven Member States. The European Commission first checks the legal viability of the initiative before allowing the organisers to start collecting signatures. Once one million signatures have been collected and then verified by national authorities, the College of Commissioners adopts an official reply to the initiative deciding what action to take or not and why.

During its 10 years' existence, more than 800 people have started close to 90 European citizens' initiatives, collecting more than 16 million signatures in 27 Member States. The most recent initiative that has been registered by the European Commission on 27 April 2022 is '[End the Slaughter Age](#)'. The initiative calls on the Commission to exclude livestock farming from activities eligible for agricultural subsidies and to include ethical and ecological alternatives, such as cell farming and plant proteins, and to introduce incentives for the production and sale of plant-based and cellular agricultural products.

There are currently [16 European citizens' initiatives](#) in the process of collecting signatures, on a variety of topics, calling for new rules to reduce impacts on climate change, rules on animal protection, sports, data protection, EU trade policy or introducing universal basic incomes.

Successful ECI initiatives

Initiatives that have successfully reached one million signatures and received an official response from the Commission include:

- [**Water and sanitation are a human right! Water is a public good, not a commodity!**](#): The first ECI initiative to have collected one million signatures and which led to the revision of the EU drinking water Directive, which includes an obligation for Member States to improve access to water and ensure access for vulnerable and marginalised groups.
- [**Ban glyphosate and protect people and the environment from toxic pesticides**](#): An initiative calling on Member States to ban glyphosate, reform the pesticide approval procedure, and to set EU-wide mandatory reduction targets for pesticide use. In response to this initiative, the Commission revised the General Food Law Regulation, increasing the transparency of the EU risk assessment in the food chain. In addition, the '**Farm to Fork Strategy**' strategy includes ambitious targets for pesticides, notably a reduction by 50% of the use and risk of chemical and most hazardous pesticides.
- [**End the Cage Age**](#): An initiative calling for legislation to prohibit the use of cages for certain farmed animals. In its response, the Commission commits to table, by the end of 2023, a legislative proposal to phase out, and ultimately prohibit, the use of cage systems for all animals mentioned in the initiative.

Learn more about the ECI

To learn more about the ECI, you can listen to the [CitizenCentral podcast](#) (also available on [Apple Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#), [Google Podcasts](#), and [Soundcloud](#)).

The latest episode of the podcast features interviews with organisers from the past, present and (potentially) future initiatives. The podcast closes with Simona Pronckutė, representative of the [first ever registered initiative, reflecting](#) on how the ECI has influenced her life over the last 10 years.

On 7 May, at the EU Open Day, people can visit the ECI stand at the European Commission headquarters in Brussels, where they can receive detailed information. [european-commission-2022 \(europa.eu\)](#)

[The European Citizens' Initiative in key figures \(europa.eu\)](#)

Initiatives collecting signatures now: [Home | European Citizens' Initiative \(europa.eu\)](#)

Discover and engage with the [European Citizens' Initiative Ambassadors \(europa.eu\)](#)

About Europe Day

The 9th of May marks the anniversary of the historic '[Schuman declaration](#),' which set out the idea for a new form of political cooperation in Europe, making the idea of war between European nations unthinkable. Schuman's proposal is often cited as the beginning of what is now the European Union.