



# European Citizens' Initiative

A tool to carry your ideas across the EU



## Why should you take the initiative?



**Act on issues you care about** – push the EU agenda's 'start button'



**Build a network** and get support from the European Citizens' Initiative Forum



**Support in a way that works for you** – sign or campaign for an initiative

## **Taking the initiative!**

**Taking the leap and submitting a European citizens' initiative can be rewarding in so many ways. From the collection of signatures, to watching your idea spread among your fellow citizens, a European citizens' initiative campaign is marked by many special achievements and milestones. All things made possible by your leap. Why not take a look at what organisers have to say about their journeys through the ECI:**

“By launching a European citizens' initiative, we have been able to hear insights from and have fantastic discussions with people across the EU that we would never have normally gotten to speak to in the course of our work. The most positive thing has been hearing the thanks and the words of encouragement from supporters across Europe. This motivation has reminded us of why – even when it is difficult – it is so important to raise our voices.”

**Civil society initiative for a ban on biometric mass surveillance practices/'Reclaim Your Face' initiative organisers**

“Launching an ECI is a door opener! It is a way to place your demands and have a serious chance to make a difference. Our ideas have been taken into the 'housing for all' resolution of the European Parliament recently. It is important to try to collect 1M signatures, but focus mostly on the topic and the content. Place your demands and move on, even if you are not able to collect 1M! The magic happens afterwards, like we are facing with our follow-up project [housing4europe.org](https://housing4europe.org). We met a lot of people who are joining.”

**HOUSINGFORALL initiative organisers**

“Our ECI was very much in line with the objectives and measures of the European Green Deal, as well as with the UN's 2030 Agenda. Therefore, since the von der Leyen Commission, soil protection issues have been taken up and debated at the EU level. I was invited to present our ideas at the European Parliament meetings. After the European Parliament adopted a resolution on soil protection, the Commission presented the new Soil Strategy: this is exactly what we were asking for with our ECI, only it happened three years later.”

**People4Soil initiative organisers**

“When looking at the different tools of participatory democracy available in the EU we've looked at petitions and lobbying but we've seen that the ECI tool is the best tool, especially for young people to directly get involved in EU policymaking.”

**Voters without Borders initiative organisers**

## Key facts on the European Citizens' Initiative



Introduced by the **Lisbon Treaty** which entered into force on 1 December 2009.



**Became operational**  
on 1 April 2012 when the first  
ECI regulation started to apply.



**1 million  
signatures**

needed to submit  
your proposal to the  
Commission, with the  
obligation of reaching the  
minimum threshold numbers in  
at least 7 EU countries.



Organisers use the Commission-run  
**Online Collection System** free  
of charge, enabling online collection  
of signatures in full compliance with  
data protection legislation.



Several European citizens' initiatives have  
successfully reached the required number  
of support statements for the European  
Commission to take action. Some have  
resulted in **new legislation**, while others  
have had other **meaningful results**.

# Participatory democracy at EU level – a short guide

**As an EU citizen, you have the right to take part in the EU decision-making process. Here, we take a look at the vast landscape of tools that allow you to have your voice heard and get involved and shape policies at EU level.**

**1. Vote or run as a candidate in European elections.** Vote for the candidates whose political agenda best reflects your wishes for the EU. Throughout their mandate, keep in touch with your MEPs so they can represent your interests. EU nationals living in another EU country also have electoral rights. You also have the right to run as a candidate in elections. [Find out how.](#)

**2. European Citizens' Initiative** – As outlined above, the [ECI](#) allows you to propose action on an issue you care about and gather support across the EU. Once 1 million signatures are collected, you will meet with the Commission and participate in a public hearing at the European Parliament. The Commission will then examine the substance of your initiative and adopt a formal response outlining what action it will take or, if no follow up action is proposed, explain why not. If the Commission considers making a legislative proposal, the principles of subsidiarity, proportionality and better law-making will apply. In most cases, the European Parliament and Council will need to adopt the proposal for it to become EU law.

**3. The Have Your Say portal** outlines the many ways EU citizens can contribute to EU policies and the ways the European Commission works. In addition to the European Citizens' Initiative, the [Public Consultations and Feedback](#) pillar enables citizens and businesses to share their views on upcoming EU policies and existing laws. You can share their your views, by replying to questionnaires, on the Commission's initiatives and contribute to the decision-making process. You can also take part in a debate or citizens' panel through the [Citizens' Engagement Platform](#). There is a dedicated online space with real-time translation to encourage engagement in European-level discussions regarding important upcoming EU proposals. The European Commission is eager to learn about citizens' opinions at an early stage when drawing up new policy initiatives. [Learn more.](#)

**4. Submit a petition to the European Parliament** regarding the way European legislation is implemented and affects your life. Petitions relate to existing EU activities; they cannot request proposals for new EU laws; they can be submitted by a single petitioner. The Petitions Committee of the European Parliament aims to provide a response to all petitions and, when possible, a non-judicial remedy to legitimate concerns on issues related to the EU fields of activity which petitioners raise. [Find out how it works.](#)

## TAKE THE INITIATIVE

**European Citizens' Initiative**  
your tool to shape European policy



**#EUTakeTheInitiative**  
[citizens-initiative.europa.eu](https://citizens-initiative.europa.eu)



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