



European Citizens' Initiative Week

In January 2020, the new rules on the European citizens' initiative started to apply, making it easier for EU citizens to call upon the European Commission to propose legislation in areas that matter to them and where the Union has the power to act.

To mark the beginning of this new phase in the life of the European Citizens' Initiative and give it a new impetus, the European Commission is inviting you to a full week of online activities built around the European Citizens' Initiative.

Throughout the week, we will be joined by institutional representatives, members of the civil society and organisers of past and ongoing initiatives to discuss how to make the reformed European Citizens' Initiative a success.

We also want to hear from you! Share your ideas and suggestions to further improve the European Citizens' Initiative during the various sessions of the event. We will provide answers during the various sessions of the Week and on our online channels.

The event will be live web streamed and simultaneous interpretation will be available in the following languages: EN, FR, DE, IT, ES, PL.

PROGRAMME

16 November 2020 | 10:00 – 11:30 | LIVE WEB STREAMED

OPENING SESSION – The European Citizen' Initiative 2.0: Design, Engage, Impact!

We'll kick off the European Citizens' Initiative Week by looking back on the first year of the reform. We will discuss what improvements it has brought, assess how the new rules have been implemented and put special focus on the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our panellists will consider how to sustain citizens' engagement in the current context, as well as how national, regional and local partners, together with civil society can support the process.

The European Commission's Vice-President for Values and Transparency, **Věra Jourová** will open the Week, setting the context and the aims for the Week. A panel discussion will follow, bringing in the perspectives of key stakeholders on how to make the reformed ECI a success.

- **Panel discussion including representatives from:**
 - The European Parliament;
 - The German Presidency of the Council of the European Union;
 - The European Commission: Pascal Leardini, Deputy Secretary-General;
 - The European Economic and Social Committee;
 - The Committee of the Regions;
 - The Civil society: Assya Kavrakova, Executive Director of the European Citizen Action Service.

The names of the speakers will be added upon confirmation.

- **Q&A – reactions to suggestions from citizens received ahead of the Week and to questions asked during the session via Slido**

17 November 2020 | 10:00 – 11:30 | LIVE WEB STREAMED

What makes the European Citizens' Initiative unique?

The European Citizens' Initiative is a unique way for citizens to get involved in EU policy-making. During this session, we will focus on what makes the European citizens' initiative unique within the toolbox of participatory democracy instruments in the EU.

Our panellists will share their views and experience of strengthening citizens' engagement across the EU. They will also look into what more can be done to further improve the functioning of the European Citizens' Initiative, and address the suggestions received from citizens ahead and during the Week.

- **Panel discussion including representatives from:**

- The European Commission: Rudiger Boogert, Head of Unit, Secretariat-General and Dana Mănescu, Head of Unit, Directorate-General for Communication;
- The European Ombudsman: Koen Roovers, Case handler;
- The European Citizens' Initiative ad-hoc group, European Economic and Social Committee;
- Anita Lührs, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community of Germany, representative of Germany in the Expert Group for the European Citizens' Initiative;
- Andreas Müller, Managing Director, Democracy International.

The names of the speakers will be added upon confirmation.

- **Q&A – reactions to suggestions from citizens received ahead of the Week and to questions asked during the session via Slido**

Moderated by Assya Kavrakova, Executive Director, European Citizens Action Service (ECAS)

17 November 2020 | 12:00 – 13:00 | LIVE WEB STREAMED

Session 2 – My European Citizens' Initiative journey |

Organisers of past and ongoing initiatives will come together to share their experience with the European Citizens' Initiative. They will discuss how they got started, what challenges they faced, how they kept the momentum going throughout their campaign year and what are their hopes for the future of the European citizens' initiative.

It will be the opportunity to get advice from citizens that have gone through the European Citizens' Initiative process.

Panel discussion followed by Q&A from the audience:

Speakers will include:

- Isabelle Chopin, "We are a welcoming Europe! Let us help" initiative organiser;
- Pablo Sanchez, "Right2Water" initiative organiser;

The names of the additional organisers will be added upon confirmation.

Moderated by Yana Pargova, #EUTakeTheInitiative Campaign Manager, GOPA Com.

18 November 2020 | 10:00 – 11:30 | LIVE WEB STREAMED

Session 3 - Online campaigning in COVID-19 times |

This session will focus on how the COVID-19 outbreak has affected ongoing and future European citizens' initiatives. We will share stories of the challenges that initiatives have faced over the past year and look at how campaigns have, or how they could, overcome those challenges.

The session brings light to the successful strategies implemented by ongoing or past European citizens' initiatives, shares their best practices, and offers insights for the near future of the European Citizens' Initiative.

Panel discussion followed by Q&A from the audience

Speakers will include:

- Silvia Kersemakers, Policy officer, European Commission
- Organisers of ongoing European citizens' initiatives
- NGOs with experience in online campaigning

The names of the speakers will be added upon confirmation.

Moderated by Daniela Vancic, European Programme Manager, Democracy International

18 November 2020 | 12:00 – 13:00 | LIVE WEB STREAMED

Session 4 – My European Citizens' Initiative journey |

Different organisers of past and ongoing initiatives will come together to share their experience with the European Citizens' Initiative. They will discuss how they got started, what challenges they faced, how they kept the momentum going throughout their campaign year and what are their hopes for the future of the European citizens' initiative.

It will be the opportunity to get advice from citizens that have gone through the European Citizens' Initiative process.

Panel discussion followed by Q&A from the audience:

Speakers will include:

- Olga Kikou, "End the Cage Age" initiative organiser;
- Dénes András Nagy, "Minority Safepack" initiative organiser;
- Anthony Simpson, "Permanent European Union Citizenship" initiative organiser.

Moderated by Mélissa Capiot, #EUTakeTheInitiative Campaign Manager, GOPA Com.

19 November 2020 | 10:00 – 11:30 | LIVE WEB STREAMED

Session 5 – Launching an initiative: hints and tips to get you started |

Are you thinking of launching a European citizens' initiative or just curious at how it works? Then this session is made for you.

Our panellists will provide you with relevant tips and highlight which conditions need to be met to register an initiative. We will take you through the phase of launching an initiative, from setting up the group of organisers to concretely drafting a proposal for a citizens' initiative.

Panel discussion followed by Q&A from the audience

Speakers will include:

- Pascal Herry, Team Leader, European Commission
- Flavio Grazian, Participatory Democracy Manager at European Citizen Action Service and ECI Forum manager
- Alicja Klosok, Legal expert for the ECI Forum, Freshfield Bruckhaus Deringer
- Julie Steendam, Right2Cure initiative organiser

Moderated by Assya Kavrakova, Executive Director, ECAS

19 November 2020 | 13:00 – 14:30 | LIVE WEB STREAMED

Session 6 - Communicating locally on the European Citizens' Initiative |

The European Citizens' Initiative is a powerful tool for citizen engagement in the European Union. But it cannot reach its full potential if citizens do not know about it and about how it works in practice.

Our national and local partners are essential to bring the information close to citizens and help spread the word.

What are the challenges and opportunities? What role do the newly established national contact points play? How to ensure efficient cooperation with the Representations of the Commission in each Member State? What motivates our ECI Ambassadors? What more is needed to support the efforts on the ground? Where can you turn to if you have questions about the ECI?

Panel discussion followed by Q&A from the audience

Speakers will include:

- Charlotte Gugenheim, Acting Head of the European Commission Representation in Belgium
- Regina Quelhas Lima, Centro de Informação Europeia Jacques Delors (CIEJD) – Lisbon (European citizens' initiative Contact Point)
- A European Citizens' Initiative ambassador
- Yana Pargova, #EUTakeTheInitiative Campaign Manager, GOPA com.

Moderated by Adriana Mungiu, Policy officer, European Commission

20 November 2020 | 10:00 – 11:00 | LIVE WEB STREAMED
CLOSING SESSION – Facing the future |

We'll end the European Citizens' Initiative Week by sharing the key highlights of the Week and looking forward into the future of participatory democracy in the EU.

What are the challenges and the opportunities ahead of us? What can we all do to foster citizen engagement in the EU and to make the European Citizens' Initiative the citizens' ally in the EU?

- **Keynote speech, including interaction with the audience**
Bruno Kaufman, Director of International Cooperation, European Democracy Foundation
- **Concluding remarks**
Michael Wimmer, Director, Secretariat-General, European Commission

Moderated by Assya Kavrakova, Executive Director, ECAS