



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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PRESSE 178

## **Agreement on draft regulation implementing the European citizens' initiative**

The Council today reached agreement on a general approach<sup>1</sup> on a draft regulation aimed at making it possible for EU citizens to call for legislative proposals to be made on a specific issue.

It asked the presidency to start negotiations with the European Parliament, on the basis of the general approach, so as to enable the regulation to be adopted at first reading.

The initiative, one of the main innovations of the Treaty of Lisbon, will enable citizens to ask the Commission to bring forward legislative proposals if the signatories to such a demand number at least one million and come from a "significant number" (see below) of member states.

The so-called *European citizens' initiative* is part of a new dimension of participatory democracy introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon, alongside that of representative democracy on which the EU is founded. The aim is to bring the EU closer to its citizens by encouraging more cross-border debate on EU issues, recognising the right of every citizen to participate in the democratic life of the Union.

The draft regulation sets out the procedures and conditions for implementing the citizens' initiative. Under the Council's general approach, a "significant number" of member states is defined in the following manner:

- a significant number is considered as at least one third of EU members.
- a key is established for calculating the number of supporters necessary from each member state.

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<sup>1</sup> The agreement was reached at a meeting of the General Affairs Council.

# **P R E S S**

According to the Council's text, a proposed initiative must fall within an area of EU competence and be consistent with the Union's values. The also text contains provisions on the verification of signatures and to prevent potential abuses.

The Council's general approach would allow for support to be expressed in either paper form or online. When an initiative is registered, the organisers would have a year during which to collect the required one million signatures. They would also be required to submit information on funding and support. And the Commission would be required to decide on admissibility of an initiative once 100 000 signatures have been collected.

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