



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Brussels, 14 February 2011
6469/11
PRESSE 24

Go-ahead given to the European citizens' initiative

The Council today¹ adopted a regulation that will make it possible for EU citizens to call for legislative proposals on a specific issue ([65/10](#) + [5769/11 ADD 1](#)).

The so-called *European citizens' initiative*, one of the main innovations under the Treaty of Lisbon, will enable citizens to ask the Commission to bring forward legislative proposals if the supporters of an initiative number at least one million and come from a significant number of member states.

The Treaty of Lisbon² introduced a new dimension of participatory democracy, alongside that of representative democracy on which the EU is founded, with the aim of bringing the EU closer to its citizens by encouraging more cross-border debate about EU issues.

The regulation sets out the procedures and conditions for implementing the citizens' initiative. In particular, a proposed initiative must fall within an area of EU competence and be consistent with the Union's values.

The required "significant number" of member states is defined as at least one quarter of EU members, and a key is established for calculating the number of supporters necessary from each member state³. Support for a proposed initiative can be expressed in either paper form or electronically. The regulation contains provisions on the verification of signatures and in order to prevent potential abuses.

¹ The decision was taken without discussion at a meeting of the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council in Brussels.

² The Treaty of Lisbon entered into force on 1 December 2009.

³ The required minimum numbers amount to the number of Members of the European Parliament elected in each member state multiplied by 750.

P R E S S

Once an initiative is registered, the organisers will have 12 months during which to collect the required one million signatures. They will also be required to submit information on funding and support.

Adoption of the regulation by the Council follows an agreement with the European Parliament in first reading. The regulation will be applicable one year after entry into force in order to allow member states and the Commission to take the necessary measures to implement it.
