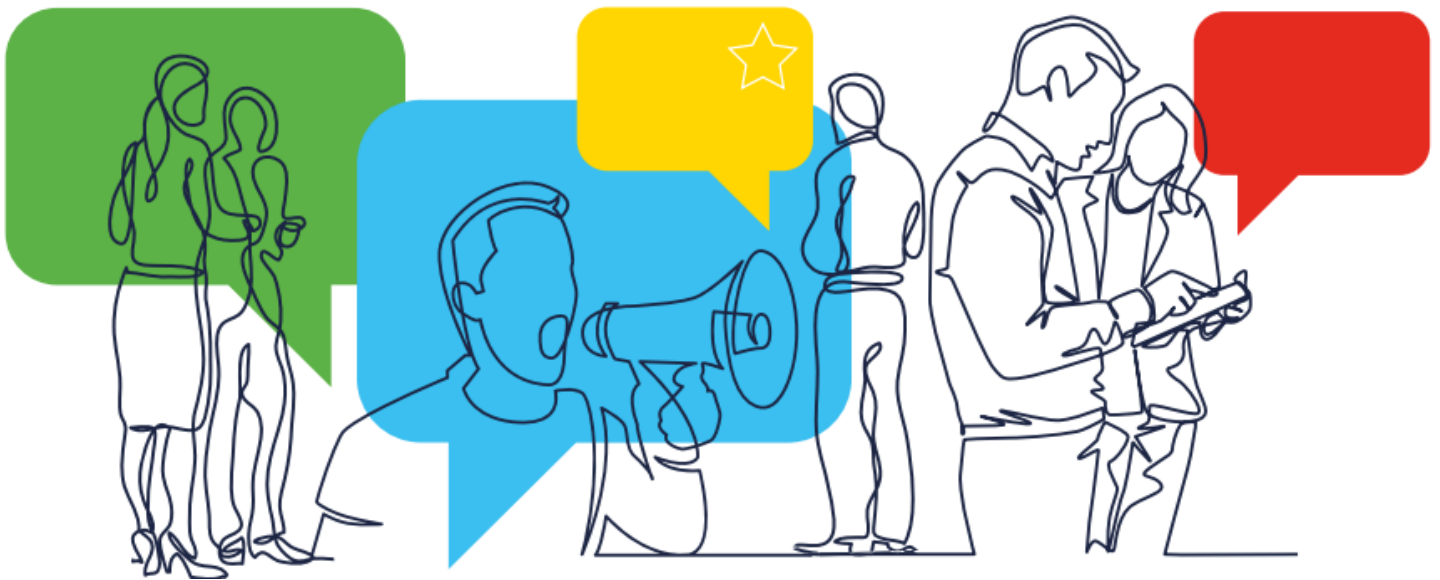


## EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE FORUM

How to draft an initiative: legal requirements and practical advice



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## Why this guidance note is relevant to you

As an organiser, getting your initiative registered is the crucial first step toward making an impact. This guidance note provides practical tips on how to clearly define your objectives, choose the right legal basis, and effectively communicate your cause to gather the support you need. By following this guidance, you will be well-equipped to navigate the complexities of the ECI process and bring your vision to the heart of EU policy-making.

## Registering your European citizens' initiative

The European citizens' initiative (ECI) gives EU citizens the unique opportunity to directly place their interests at the heart of European policy-making by asking the European Commission to propose legislation on a matter within its competence. If the initiative is successful in gathering at least 1 million statements of support, the Commission may decide to propose a legal act. Then, a legislative procedure may start, in which the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, in most cases, co-decide (in some cases, only the Council decides).

As an initiative organiser, the first step will be to get your proposed initiative registered by the Commission.

## Conditions for registration

According to [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/788 on the European citizens' initiative \(ECI Regulation\)](#), your initiative can only be registered if you satisfy the following four conditions:

- The group of organisers has been formed and the contact persons designated (1 representative and 1 substitute). You also have the option to create a legal entity specifically for the purpose of managing the initiative. In this case, the representative of the group of organisers must have a mandate to act on behalf of the legal entity;
- None of the parts of the proposed initiative manifestly fall outside the scope of the [European Commission's powers](#) to propose a legal act of the Union for the purpose of implementing the Treaties.

- The proposed initiative is not manifestly abusive, frivolous or vexatious;
- The proposed initiative is not manifestly contrary to the EU values as set out in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities as well as pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men) and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU.

Ask our experts if you have any doubts about your initiative! ([https://citizens-initiative-forum.europa.eu/seek-advice\\_en#](https://citizens-initiative-forum.europa.eu/seek-advice_en#))

## Creating an organiser account

To request the registration of your initiative, you must create an organiser account. This account enables you to submit your registration request and, following registration, to manage the subsequent steps of your initiative.

**Remember!** *The organiser account must be created by the representative of your initiative.*

Steps to create an organiser account:

1. **If you do not already have one, set up an EU Login account.** Follow the instructions to create and configure an EU Login account and set up a second factor for strong authentication. The EU Login manual is written in English and is available in the 23 official EU languages via an automated translation service.
2. **Connect with EU Login to create your organiser account** to be able to fill in and submit the request to register your initiative.

### Note

The email address that you associate with your EU Login account will be made public if your initiative is registered. Alternatively, you can provide another email address for public information in the field 'public email address' when filling in the request for registration.

# Completing the registration form

After creating your organiser account, you can fill out the registration form for your initiative.

There are **five components** that must be completed:

## 1. Group of organisers

The first step is to fill out the necessary information for the group of organisers, *including* the representative and the substitute. In accordance with Annex II (points 4 and 5) of the Regulation (EU) 2019/788, this includes:

- First name
- Family name
- Nationality
- Date of birth
- Address
- Postal code
- City
- Country of residence
- Documents that prove the full names, postal addresses, nationalities and dates of birth (Please note a legible scanned copy of the identity document will suffice)

For the representative and the substitute, additional information is required:

- Telephone number
- Email address
- Public email address (for publication on the official ECI website)

This information helps the European Commission check that the requirement for an ECI to be organised by seven EU citizens residing in seven different Member States is met. Remember, **the representative and their substitute** can be among the 7 members of the group of organisers or be 2 different members of the group (not official members of the group of organisers). They are authorised to speak and act on behalf of the organisers, serving as the main liaison between the group and the Commission. Their responsibilities include managing all submissions to the

Commission, accessing the organiser account, and receiving all official correspondence.

If there are additional members of your European Citizens' Initiative referred to as 'Other Members,' you simply need to add their names and proof of EU citizenship.

In the case where a **legal entity** has been created, when needed, documents should be provided to show that:

- A legal entity has been created under the national law of an EU Member State specifically to manage a particular initiative, and
- The representative of the group of organisers has been officially authorised to act on behalf of the legal entity.

Additionally, you can choose to designate a Data Protection Officer (DPO) in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (General Data Protection Regulation). While it is not mandatory in all cases, appointing a DPO is recommended. The contact details of the data protection officer will be published on the webpage of your initiative, and this can provide reassurance to citizens considering signing your initiative.

#### **Important note on proof of residence**

When filling out the proof of registration, make sure to provide up-to-date documentation to confirm your **current place of residence** (postal address).

If your identity document or passport does not include a postal address or was issued a long time ago, you must also submit other proof, such as a recent utility bill (e.g. water, electricity, or phone) or a similar document. Older identity documents may not be accepted as proof of current residence, even if they list an address. In these cases, additional evidence, such as a recent utility bill (not more than 1 year old), may be needed to confirm your current address.

### Reminder!

The group of organisers is comprised of **7 EU citizens residing in 7 different Member States**. Thus, this information must be filled out for all members of the group of organisers.

All members of the group of organisers *must be old enough to vote in European Parliament elections*. In most EU countries, this is 18 years old, except in:

- Belgium, Austria, Germany, and Malta, where the voting age is 16,
- Greece, where the voting age is 17.

## 2. Initiative details

When registering your initiative, you'll need to provide the following details:

### Language of your initiative

Specify the primary language in which your initiative is drafted. Remember, you can submit your initiative in any of the 24 official EU languages.

The Commission will translate the title, objective and annex of your initiative into all official EU languages after registration.

**Note:** If you want additional translations (e.g. of a draft legal act), it is your responsibility to provide them. Once your initiative is registered by the Commission, you can submit the translations to the Commission to add them to your official initiative page.

### Title of the initiative

**Your title will be a core part of your initiative's branding**, complementing its visual identity (e.g., logo). It therefore deserves thoughtful consideration.

An effective title reflects the essence of your proposal and appeals to and engages citizens. **A compelling title can be a game-changer in capturing attention and driving support.**

Tips for crafting an effective title

## Create a short and long version

A short title is ideal for social media and campaign materials, while a longer version can provide clarity for technical or detailed proposals. Striking a balance between brevity and informativeness ensures accessibility across various platforms. The title of the initiative must not exceed 100 characters (excluding spaces).

## Ensure a multilingual appeal

Since your initiative will need support across different EU countries, consider how the title translates into other languages. A convincing title that translates well in all EU languages is essential for broadening your reach and resonating with diverse audiences.

## Don't wait until the very last moment to decide on the title

If you plan to involve partners in the decision-making process, initiate discussions about the title early. This ensures adequate time for brainstorming, feedback, and consensus-building, avoiding delays at critical stages.

## Objectives of the initiative

When outlining the objectives of your initiative, it is essential to define the specific 'legal act of the Union' you want the European Commission to propose. To ensure your initiative is effective and meets the required standards, consider the following:

**Policy area:** Your proposal must fall within a policy area where the Commission has competence.

**Type of act:** You can propose either binding legislation or a non-binding act, such as a Recommendation.

In this section of the registration form, you should clearly define the main goals of your initiative in no more than 1,100 characters (excluding spaces).

## Examples of how other ECIs have crafted their objectives

## Stop Finning – Stop the Trade

### Objectives

Although the removal of fins on board of EU vessels and in EU waters is prohibited and sharks must be landed with their fins naturally attached, the EU is among the biggest exporters of fins and a major transit hub for the global fin trade.

EU is a major player in the exploitation of sharks and as inspections at sea are scarce fins are still illegally retained, transshipped, or landed in EU.

We aim to end the trade of fins in the EU including the import, export and transit of fins other than if naturally attached to the animal's body.

As finning prevents effective shark conservation measures, we request to extend REGULATION (EU) No 605/2013 also to the trade of fins and therefore ask the commission to develop a new regulation, extending “fins naturally attached” to all trading of sharks and rays in the EU.

Full initiative details available on the Commission's dedicated webpage ([https://citizens-initiative.europa.eu/initiatives/details/2020/000001\\_en](https://citizens-initiative.europa.eu/initiatives/details/2020/000001_en))

Learn more about how Stop Finning – Stop the Trade reached over 1 million signatures ([https://citizens-initiative-forum.europa.eu/document/stop-finning-stop-trade\\_en](https://citizens-initiative-forum.europa.eu/document/stop-finning-stop-trade_en))

## Stop Destroying Videogames

### Objectives

This initiative calls to require publishers that sell or license videogames to consumers in the European Union (or related features and assets sold for videogames they operate) to leave said videogames in a functional (playable) state.

Specifically, the initiative seeks to prevent the remote disabling of videogames by the publishers, before providing reasonable means to continue functioning of said videogames without the involvement from the side of the publisher.

The initiative does not seek to acquire ownership of said videogames, associated intellectual rights or monetization rights, neither does it expect the publisher to provide resources for the said videogame once they discontinue it while leaving it in a reasonably functional (playable) state.

Full initiative details available on the Commission's dedicated webpage ([https://citizens-initiative.europa.eu/initiatives/details/2024/000007\\_en](https://citizens-initiative.europa.eu/initiatives/details/2024/000007_en))



# Connecting all European capitals and people through a high-speed train network

## Objectives

We want to connect all European capitals through high-speed railway lines. We are calling for the European Commission to make a proposal for a legally binding act to establish a European high-speed train network as quickly as possible. This means linking up the existing high-speed railway networks and building high-speed lines where these do not yet exist.

Full initiative details available on the Commission's dedicated webpage ([https://citizens-initiative.europa.eu/initiatives/details/2023/000004\\_en](https://citizens-initiative.europa.eu/initiatives/details/2023/000004_en))

## Provisions of the Treaties you consider relevant

To determine if your proposal can be submitted as an ECI:

1. **Ensure it aligns with an EU policy area** where the Union has competence.
2. **Verify that the Commission has the power** to submit a proposal for a legal act within this policy area.

## What are the EU's competences?

The EU's competences are defined in the Treaties, particularly in **Articles 2–6 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)**. These provisions establish the areas where the EU can act and whether the Commission can propose legislation. For a comprehensive overview, refer to the EU competences.

## Identifying relevant Treaty provisions for your proposal

When submitting your initiative for registration:

1. **Identify Treaty articles** that empower the Commission to propose legal acts. These are...

...Articles referring to a **legislative procedure** (ordinary or special) typically authorise the Commission unless they explicitly assign this role to another institution.

For example: if your initiative calls for a legal act in the field of environmental protection, you would list Article 192(1) TFEU.

OR

...Articles stating that the Commission is responsible for making a proposal are also valid. For example: *“The Council, on a proposal from the Commission [...]”*

2. **List these provisions** in the registration form.

For a comprehensive overview, refer to the [policy areas and related Treaty articles](#).

Even if the provisions you cite are incorrect, your initiative may still be registered, provided:

- It falls within the framework of the Commission's powers to propose a legal act of the Union.
- It meets the conditions of the ECI.

#### **Important note**

If some of your initiative's objectives are outside the European Commission's powers, you will receive feedback and be given the opportunity to revise and resubmit your proposal. If you either decline to revise the initiative or submit a revised version that still exceeds the Commission's powers, the Commission will proceed with a partial registration. In such cases, only those parts of the initiative that fall within the Commission's competence will be registered, and statements of support may only be collected for those registered parts.

For more details on partial registration, please see the FAQ.

**Tips for choosing the correct Treaty articles for your initiative**

**Check for Treaty articles that can be used as a valid legal basis for the Commission to propose an EU legal act**

**Carefully review the text of the articles to ensure relevance**

Articles which refer to a 'legislative procedure' (ordinary or special) can be used for an initiative unless the article specifically mentions that an institution other than the Commission makes the proposal. Other articles explicitly naming the Commission as the proposer can also be used.

**Avoid overloading your submission with unnecessary articles**

Listing multiple provisions won't guarantee success.

**Learn from previous initiatives**

Examine both successfully registered initiatives and those for which registration was refused.

## Website for your initiative

A dedicated website is crucial for sharing information, updates and resources about your initiative with supporters. While not mandatory, providing the website's address during registration can boost the visibility and impact of your initiative.

### Why a website matters

A well-designed website helps:

- Centralise updates and essential information
- Build trust and credibility among supporters
- Facilitate engagement and encourage action, such as directing supporters to sign your initiative via the Central Online Collection System

[Learn more about campaigning strategies from successful ECIs](https://citizens-initiative-forum.europa.eu/practical-guidance/success-stories_en) ([https://citizens-initiative-forum.europa.eu/practical-guidance/success-stories\\_en](https://citizens-initiative-forum.europa.eu/practical-guidance/success-stories_en))

## Annex on the subject, objectives, and background (optional)

You can include an optional annex (up to 5,000 characters). While not mandatory, the annex is meant to elaborate on the initiative's objectives, offering background information, detailed explanations, or supporting arguments. Importantly, the annex should not introduce new objectives beyond those stated in the main initiative text. Its role is to support, not expand upon, the original proposal.

The Commission provides translation of the annex into all the official EU languages.

Several recent successful initiatives have included an annex to support their initiative, for example "[Fur Free Europe](#)" and "[Save Cruelty Free Cosmetics](#)".

## Additional information (optional)

You can upload a supporting document to provide further background details and strengthen your ECI. Many initiatives included a supporting document, including those that reached one million signatures: "[Fur Free Europe](#)", "[Stop Vivisection](#)", and "[Minority SafePack](#)".

Your document can be shaped freely to explain your initiative in greater depth, including text and images. It is not translated by the Commission, but you can provide your own translations for uploading to the initiative web page after registration.

### Reminder!

While there are no character limits, the file must not exceed 5 MB in size.

## Draft legal act (optional)

You can submit a proposed legal text to accompany your European Citizens' Initiative. While optional, this can be particularly useful for technical or legislation-focused initiatives. Draft legal acts are less common but have been included in past initiatives such as "One of Us", "Good Clothes, Fair Pay", and "Ban Fossil Fuel Advertising and Sponsorships."

If you submit a draft legal act, it will not be translated by the Commission, but you can provide your own translations for uploading to the initiative web page after registration.

### Important note on translations

Please be aware that the European Commission does not provide translations for additional information on your initiative or the draft legal act if it is included. Ensuring accurate translations into the necessary languages is the sole responsibility of the group of organisers.

## 3. Support and funding

Declare all sources of funding exceeding EUR 500 per sponsor to ensure transparency, as required by the ECI Regulation. This information will be published on the official ECI website. It is also advised to publish this information on your campaign website.

You will also have to provide information on the organisations assisting you on a voluntary basis, even if such support is not economically quantifiable.

Learn more by reading our [Financial Reporting Guidance Note](https://citizens-initiative-forum.europa.eu/document/how-report-financial-support_en) ([https://citizens-initiative-forum.europa.eu/document/how-report-financial-support\\_en](https://citizens-initiative-forum.europa.eu/document/how-report-financial-support_en))

## 4. Procedures and conditions

As part of the registration process, you will need to accept the privacy policy and specify the primary language in which you prefer to communicate.

## 5. Review and submit

Before completing your registration, you'll be asked to review all details carefully. Once everything is confirmed, click **Request Registration**, and you're done! After submission, wait for the Commission's decision on your registration request.

### Reminder!

Carefully check the spelling of all names, titles, and objectives before submitting your registration request. Once submitted, no further edits can be made.

## Timeline after submitting initiative for registration

After you submit your initiative for registration, the Commission will inform you within **two months** whether it has been officially registered.

If your initiative meets all the requirements, **but** it (or a part of it) is not in an area where the Commission has powers, you will receive a reply from the Commission within one month of submitting it for registration. The Commission will give you two months to revise your initiative and resubmit it for registration. You also have the option to send the exact same registration request or withdraw your initiative. After resubmission, the Commission will make a final decision within 1 month.

The Commission can decide to:

- register the initiative in its full version;
- partially register the initiative;
- refuse to register the initiative.

This entire process can take up to **4 months**.

## Need additional support?

Preparing all elements thoroughly increases your chances of a successful registration and helps attract broader support for your initiative. If your initiative gathers at least 1 million valid signatures, the Commission will begin the examination phase, considering all content registered upfront, including annexes, additional information, and draft legal acts.

**Important:** You cannot add any details after registration, so include everything you want the Commission to consider during this phase.

For more information, visit the [Commission's dedicated FAQ](#).

### Need expert advice on your idea?

[Ask our experts if you have any doubts about your initiative!](https://citizens-initiative-forum.europa.eu/seek-advice_en#) ([https://citizens-initiative-forum.europa.eu/seek-advice\\_en#](https://citizens-initiative-forum.europa.eu/seek-advice_en#))

## FAQ

## Can we make changes to the group?

**YES.**

If you decide to make changes to the group, the representative or substitute must notify the Commission through your organiser account.

If the changes affect the requirement of having a minimum number of group members from seven different countries, you **must provide the necessary documents** to confirm that your group still meets the criteria for nationality, age, and residence.

Additionally, you must **update the statement of support forms** to reflect these changes.

The names of new group members will be displayed in the online register, while the names of former members will remain visible throughout the procedure. This ensures that relevant authorities can verify the validity of collected and submitted signatures.

## Can I take part in different initiatives as an organiser?

**YES.**

There are no restrictions on how many initiatives you can be a part of.

## Can MEPs join a group of organisers?

**YES.**

**However**, they do not count towards the minimum number of people living in 7 different EU countries and cannot be part of this list when you submit your initiative for registration.

## Do I need to be registered to vote to be able to join a group of organisers?

**NO.**

You only need to be old enough to vote in European Parliament elections in order to be part of the group of organisers.

## As organisers, can you appeal a decision not to register your initiative (or to register only partially)?

YES.

The decision to not register an initiative is based on legal grounds, which means you can challenge it. The Commission will set out the reasons for its decision and explain which legal act or out-of-court remedies are available to you.

This includes bringing proceedings before the [EU Court of Justice](#) or filing a complaint with the [European Ombudsman](#) (to complain about maladministration).

## As organisers, can we withdraw an initiative once it is registered?

YES.

You can withdraw an initiative **at any time before officially submitting your initiative with all verified signatures to the Commission** (i.e. after you have collected all your signatures and had them certified).

Once you withdraw an initiative, you cannot reopen it, and all signatures become null and void.

But you will still be able to view it, in [archived initiatives](#).

## What does partial registration of an initiative mean?

An initiative is **partially registered** if some of its objectives fall outside the Commission's authority to propose EU legislation.

In such cases, statements of support can only be collected for the registered parts of the initiative. If the initiative gathers at least 1 million signatures and is submitted to the Commission, only the registered sections will be examined.

For more information on partial registration, read the [FAQ section on the ECI website](#).