



CAMPAIGNING: HIGHLIGHTS FROM WEBINARS

This document highlights the key recommendations on campaigning shared during the webinars of the European Citizens' Initiative Forum. The recommendations are grouped by topics and are retrieved from the following four webinars:

- [How to run a successful campaign European Citizens' Initiative Forum Webinar 2018](#)
- [How to campaign and fundraise for a European Citizens' Initiative European Citizens' Initiative Forum Webinar 2019](#)
- [Tools to run a successful European citizens' initiative campaign European Citizens' Initiative Forum Webinar 2019](#)
- [Campaigning online for your European citizens' initiative European Citizens' Initiative Forum Webinar 2020](#)

Key takeaways

1. It is crucial to target the right audience and to address people in an effective way.
2. It is helpful to build a great coalition of different organisations. However, the more partners are on board, the more coordination is needed. Organisers must be mindful of striking the right balance and know their network well to be well aware of its capacities to carry out different tasks.
3. The exact composition of the group of organisers (e.g. with public figures or important allies) is relevant for the campaign.
4. It is important to localise the campaign. Local partners should not get the impression of only participating in a European campaign for the initiative but also to “own” the national campaign themselves.
5. Organisers should set targets of how many signatures they want to collect in which period and in which countries.
6. To advertise as political campaigners on Facebook and Twitter, organisers must be certified advertisers.
7. Consistent visuals help to run a successful campaign. Basic, translated templates (e.g. for banners, websites or social media content) help to address people in their own language in the different countries that organisers would like to target.
8. When building a website, organisers should rather think of a user journey than of a website as a standalone element.
9. To get policy makers or media on board, organisers always have to specify the benefits of their involvement in the campaign.

Further relevant points

Partners' engagement

- Network building is essential for organisers. In the best of cases, the network partners work on the respective issues for years already.
- It is advisable for organisers to start planning 1-2 years prior to the registration of their initiative. Organisers have to keep in mind that preparation time is essential.
- It is not enough to have a strong European, central campaign, but the national campaigns have to gain traction.



- Partners do not only help to raise attention but also to collect signatures. Organisers can ask every partner beforehand how many signatures they think they will be able to collect. However, organisers should be mindful that partners tend to usually overestimate their capacity of collecting signatures.
- Having volunteers working for the campaign is of great help. The professional background of volunteers can be of utmost importance to a campaign.
- Engaging trade unions can be good because they have a wide membership. However, they may have difficulties to convince their base about the importance of EU wide campaigns.
- Organisers should not underestimate the importance of email newsletters and virtual calls. They are key to keep partners and volunteers up to date.
- Offline events can be good to motivate partners and volunteers.

Celebrity engagement

- Organisers should use their entire network. Individuals are advised to build relationships to get in touch with influencers so that organisers can broaden their appeal.
- Political parties can be partners for European citizens' initiative campaigns. The European Parliament hearing can be used strategically if organisers are well prepared, they can align with MEPs in advance.
- A prominent person or politicians in the group of organisers can help to gain public traction. Organisers should be strategic and not define the 7 members of the group of organisers too early so that potential prominent partners can still be taken on board at a later stage.

Social media use

- A social media strategy is important and must be prepared well in advance.
- One European citizens' initiative organiser shared that 2/3 of their signatures originated from social media activities.
- Advertisement on social media helps to target specific audiences. However, running political ads is difficult on Facebook. Only authorised advertisers are allowed to set up political campaigns.
- It is only possible to run advertisements on Facebook in the country of residence. Therefore, organisers need to make sure to have a transnational team if they want to run Facebook ads all over the EU.
- Twitter makes a difference between political content and cause-based advertisement. Advertisement for parties or elections are considered as "political" and are not allowed on Twitter. Cause-based advertisement is not banned, but it requires a certified advertiser account to launch them.
- Organisers' messages on social media should be consistent, easy to recognise and relatable.
- Digital presentations are possible (e.g. via Twitter). Organisers can plan one day with numerous actions online (this can include regular reminders of how to get involved, for example).
- It is crucial to produce unique content. Preparing it before launching the campaign is key. In this regard, personal stories can help a lot to attract attention.
- It is crucial that followers are involved and feel connected. This does not only work with social media but can also be triggered by newsletters.
- Organisers should use simple wording and messages in their own language.



Traditional media use

- Traditional media engagement is as important as social media to gain public traction.
- Personal links with journalists on all levels help organisers to foster media coverage.
- EU level campaigns have to coordinate with national / local partner organisations.
- A launch event is important to get public attention and must be well organised.
- Art performances may seem promising but can be very difficult to successfully implement.
- Paper materials are important for offline campaigning and should be translated in the local languages of the countries where the initiative aims at collecting signatures.
- Events can help to promote an initiative. It is good to have central, European events, but local partners must have the freedom to organise their own events at national level.
- For organisers, it can be very good to be a speaker at an external event to get new supporters on board.

Website

- Organisers should check if the domain name of their slogan is available before they define the name of the initiative.
- Organisers should not underestimate their possible outreach. If they have a good campaign, they will have a lot of visitors and the website's infrastructure must be fit for that.
- Google optimisation is good and helpful. SMO (social media optimisation) enables proper sharing and nicely presented posts when copy pasting in social media. To build a website, organisers can (for example) use Wordpress, Drupal, Wix or a static html.
- Organisers can build a pre-made website for their partners to provide the best possible assistance. Basic templates should be translated in different languages to address people in their own language.
- Consistent visuals are important. Organisers have to remember that visuals are the key element on a website that attracts attention.
- When having a website in place, the first step must be conversion from social media, Google or other websites to the campaign homepage.
- Landing on the website must be the continuation of the social media experience (regarding content and visuals). The landing page should have: (1) a short slogan, (2) an introduction text, (3) a meaningful picture, (4) a call for action and (5) background information.
- Organisers should display their network (e.g. partner organisations) on the website.
- The supporting platform must be GDPR compliant and should be sharable.
- Organisers have to make sure that their website is also mobile friendly.
- It is good to use pictures, short messages and call to action buttons and to avoid heavy texts.
- Email remains an important tool to spread a message for a campaign.