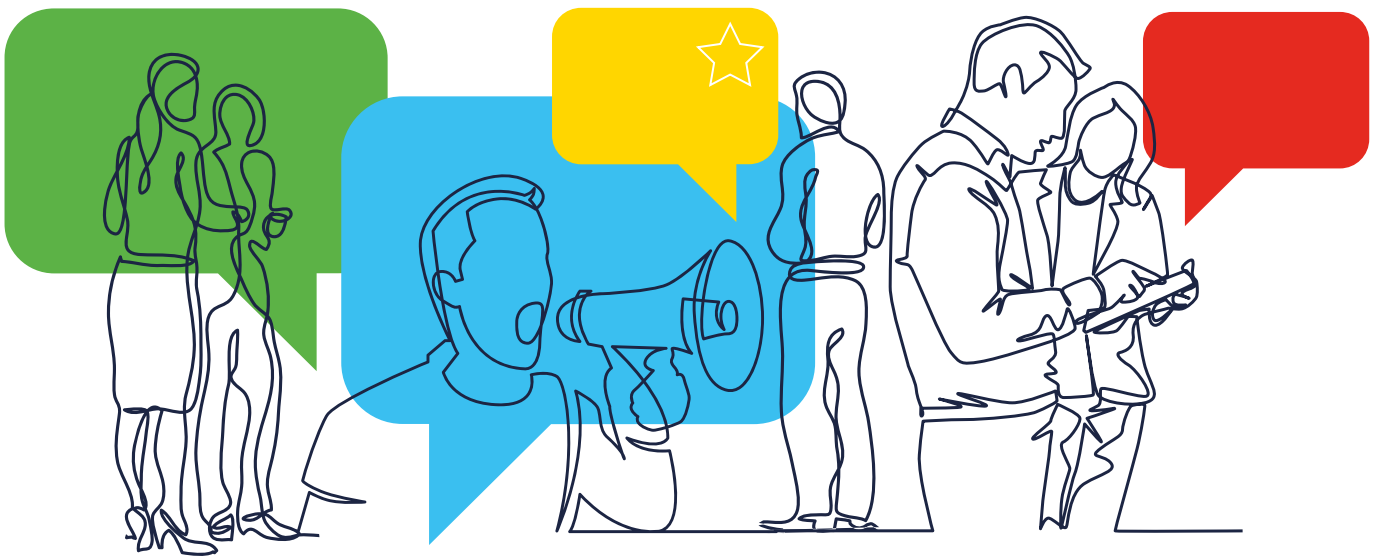




EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE

How to collect statements of support



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1

Overview

The goal is to reach at least 1 million signatures, including a minimum number in at least seven Member States, in **12 months**. As an organiser, you will have **6 months** from the date of registration of your initiative to decide when to begin the one-year collection of statements of support both on **paper forms and/or online**. You will need to inform the Commission of the chosen date at the latest **10 working days** before that.

Signatories need to be **EU citizens** (Member State nationals) and **old enough to vote** in European Parliament elections (age 18 except for Austria, Malta and Greece) - unless the Member State has decided to lower the minimum age for signatories to 16 and has informed the Commission accordingly.

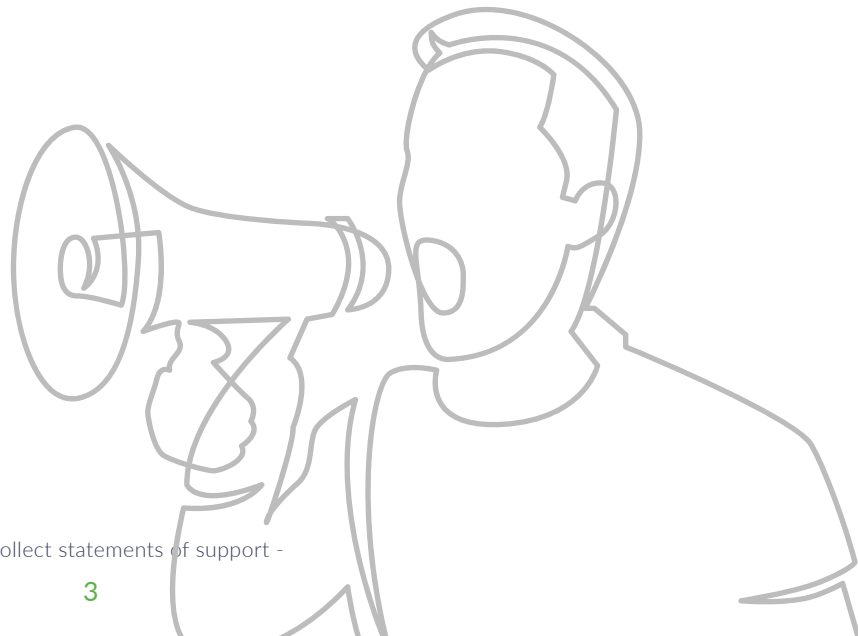
| Statement of support forms

As an initiative organiser, you must use **specific forms** which comply with the models for the statement of support form set out in Annex III of the European Citizens' Initiative Regulation, and which include all required information regarding the proposed initiative. That information must be identical to the information on the proposed initiative published on the European Citizens' Initiative official register website. In case of partial registration, the forms must also include the scope of the registration as described in the Commission registration decision.

Organisers can collect statements in any Member State, in any official EU language.

| Data requirements

Citizens who want to sign an initiative will be asked to provide some personal data in the forms.



For all signatories the following information is required: nationality; full first name and family name as well as, depending on the Member State:

either

- full postal address and date of birth (Part A of Annex III)

or

- a personal identification number and the number/document type (Part B of Annex III).

All EU citizens can sign an initiative regardless of their place of residence.

These data requirements can make the collection of statements of support sometimes complicated. As an organiser, do not forget to:

1. Train the partners who are helping you collect the statements of support – make sure they know all the rules concerning different requirements and when a signature is considered valid.
2. Always collect more than 1 million signatures in case some are judged to be invalid – for example, an extra 10%.

Although the organisers and competent national authorities are required under the European Citizens' Initiative Regulation to ensure that data protection is fully assured, you should also take into account that in some countries, signatories may be reluctant to provide all the personal data required because they are worried that their data will be misused or even sold.

While collecting statements of support, you should:

1. Make sure citizens know that the privacy of their data is taken very seriously, for example by explaining the data protection rules and that the online system must comply with very high security standards.
2. Explain to citizens the importance of filling in the form completely – if they omit information, their statement of support will not be accepted.

[More information on data protection.](#)



Don't Forget!

- A citizen may sign a statement of support for an initiative only once.
- Organisers need to inform the Commission of the number of collected statements of support in each Member State at least every two months during the collection period; once the collection period is over, the organisers have maximum 3 months to communicate to the Commission the final number of signatures for publication in the register.

2

Collecting signatures on paper

Initiative organisers should focus on collecting signatures not only online but also offline. Some initiatives have managed to collect numerous amounts of support through face-to-face campaigns.

While the most efficient way of signing is online, it may only be possible to reach certain signatories offline, at events, conferences or at the premises of supporting organisations.

Here are recommendations for collecting paper signatures:

| Use the right form

In order to collect statements of support on paper, make sure you use the specific form of the Member State the signatories come from (i.e. country of nationality). There are two ways you can prepare for this: (1) You can take the forms directly in either Part A or Part B of Annex III of the Regulation and pre-complete them before handing them to citizens; or (2) You can use the customised forms for each country available in your 'organiser account' on the European Citizens' Initiative website. Download these pre-completed forms by choosing the country, so that the relevant form is generated (Part A or B of Annex III) and the language of the form.

The second option is recommended, as the pre-filled form will enable you to understand what type of data citizens from different Member States need to provide when signing your initiative.

Each form includes the Member State to which it will be sent for verification, and remember: **citizens can sign an initiative only through the form of the Member State of their nationality!**



| Prepare your own guided forms

Since paper forms can be difficult to use, you should think of ways to carefully and clearly guide citizens in filling out the form without omitting any information which could invalidate their signature.

For example, you can add on the back of the form a one-page summary including a summary of the initiative, guidance for signing, and the address to send signed forms to. Printing them double-sided allows you to have the description on one side and the form on the other.

| Three tips to avoid invalid signatures

There are three main things organisers must keep in mind to ensure the form is valid:

- Signatories must use CAPITAL letters;
- Signatories must fill in all columns in the form;
- It is important to clearly indicate how many people can fill out one form in order to avoid mistakes.



Tips

An event provides a great opportunity to collect support for your initiative. Here are a few tips for maximising the collection of paper signatures at your events:

- Identify a specific place at the event where member(s) of your group of organisers can focus on making sure citizens fill in the paper forms correctly.
- Print out an A3 eye-catcher, to attract citizens to your cause, and an A3 'sample' paper form to guide citizens on how to support your initiative.
- Make sure you have a secure place to store the filled-out forms (e.g. a locked storage space).
- Print postcards or business cards for those who are interested in your cause but want to sign the initiative at a later stage or online.



3

Collecting signatures online

Statements of support are mainly gathered online. The online collection is a fundamental part of running a successful initiative.

Organisers who wish to collect statements of support online must use the Commission's Central Online Collection System.

These are the benefits of the Central Online Collection System:

1. Free of charge system accessible to persons with disabilities
2. Data collected and stored directly in the Commission servers
3. Possibility to send emails to supporters who have left their email addresses for that purpose
4. Technical support and training offered by the Commission
5. A system which allows for the uploading of scanned versions of the statements of support collected in paper form (optional)
6. No certification procedure is necessary.

However, please note that the system offers some customisation features (e.g. logo, background colour, social media links, etc.) but you cannot add other features.

