Blog Editorial Guidelines

These editorial guidelines apply to posts intended for publication on the European Citizens' Initiative Online Collaborative Platform ("The ECI Forum") and aim at sustaining high information value, relevant formatting and common storytelling style to provide users with relevant and timely news and information. Please read them carefully before filling in the online template with your contribution.

General

Blog posts published on the Forum will be ***original and unique in terms of content and/or angle*** and ***first in time*** of publication. Re-posting articles already published by the authors on other websites or blogs is not accepted. Authors are however encouraged to publish on their platforms simultaneously with the publication on the Forum, providing a link to the Forum publication. Re-posting information about past events or rewriting freely available information about individual initiatives is only acceptable as a part of providing context and linking to resources for additional reading. The blog posts will be ***published in a timely manner***, based on their newsworthiness.

Blog posts will have a clear ***distinction between fact and opinion***, clearly stating authors', experts' and sources' affiliation with organisations with vested interest in the subject matter.

Structure, Writing Style, Visualisation

The Forum will publish blog post of a variety of formats, including text-based articles of a with illustrations and pictures, video stories, interviews, analytical articles form experts, user testimonials, infographics etc. The text-based stories and analytical articles from external contributors shall meet the following requirements:

Headlines will be content-led, focusing on promoting the core aspect or message of the post and, in line with standard SEO requirements, will include all important keywords enhancing online search opportunities.

The Lede, or the first paragraph of the post, will be short, to the point and attractive. Besides covering the traditional who, what, where, when, why, and how its main purpose is to grab the attention and "sell" the story to the reader and "hook" them to read as much of it as possible.

Blog articles will provide ***relevant background information*** and links to other articles and documents to help readers understand the content. We ***prioritise internal links*** to content already on the Forum – learning opportunities, expert advice, other blog articles, user experience etc. When relevant, additional documents such as pdf files, European citizens' initiative documents etc. can be hosted on the Forum to provide users with comprehensive information and reading experience.

External quotes and opinion will be clearly sourced and attributed.

The length of the blog posts will vary depending on the specific content, but we will prioritise *blogs of 600 words and more* providing users with the opportunity to go beyond the information character of the publication and get in-depth expert knowledge or shared authentic first-hand experience from Initiative organisers, experts and users.

Style, Tone and Voice

Blog articles will be written in a simple (but not simplistic) and concrete style, using straightforward language, avoiding unnecessary use of specialist terminology, institutional jargon, and complex and abstract language. The tone will be serious (but not official), friendly, natural and open. While enthusiasm and passion for a cause is the default style of citizen activism, exaggeration and direct promotion will be avoided.

Writer's bio

The posts will be accompanied by a short (one paragraph) bio and picture of the author and will offer an opportunity for contact and comment on the Forum. Authors are encouraged to register a profile on the Forum in order to provide users with contacts for potential follow up discussions

Images: Ideally, blog articles will include one image at every scroll depth (or about every 150-160 words), so that an image is always visible. Articles should have a strong header image and include pictures, graphs and other images that contribute to the storytelling. Stock images of high quality may be used to support posts as much as the selected imagery helps the user understand or engage with the content. Long shots of public events (conferences, roundtables, seminars etc.), pictures of speakers behind tables and similar will be allowed on an exceptional basis, as much as they illustrate engagement or otherwise contribute to the storytelling. Indicative photo sizes:

Horizontal – 16:9 ratio, 1920x1080 pixels size or higher, jpeg format

Vertical (to be used exclusively for the portraits of the authors)– max width 1000px, jpeg

Ending: Whenever relevant, the end the post will include a specific question suggesting user interaction or contribution to a debate, or a call for comments or action, with a link to the relevant content on the Forum

C. Data Protection and Copyright Declaration

ECI FORUM

I, the undersigned _____(enter your name), author of the blog post _____(enter article title) hereby declare that:

1.   I provide my consent for the publication of the blog post written by me on the European Citizens' Initiative Forum;

2.   I agree my name and picture to be published on the European Citizens' Initiative Forum as part of the published blog post.

3.   My blog post, including images used, is free from third-party copyright and related rights.

4.   I have received the written consent of the people featured in the photos and videos submitted for publication (if applicable).

5.   I agree that the copyright and other intellectual or industrial property rights related to the blog posts submitted for publication shall be owned exclusively by the European Union.

Date:

Place:

Signature:

Name: