

# María Carro-Pitarch\*

## The European Citizens' Initiative

### SLIDE 1

Hello, welcome. I'm Maria Carro and in this video, I'm going to talk about what the European Citizens' Initiative is and what the steps are to submit one.

### SLIDE 2

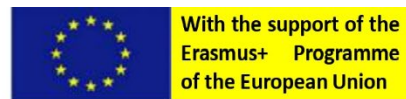
The European Citizens' Initiative is an instrument that allows citizens of the European Union to ask the Commission to propose new rules, thus bringing citizens closer to the decision-making process within the Union.

The Initiative is set out in Article 11 of the Treaty on European Union, Article 24 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and Regulation 2019/788.

As an introduction, I would like to outline some of the requirements of the Initiative. It must be submitted with the support of more than one million signatures of citizens of the Union, representing more than seven Member States. And the proposal



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must be on a subject which falls within the Union's competence.

### **SLIDE 3**

The procedure for submitting a European Citizens' Initiative is relatively straightforward and can be summarised in seven steps.

First, Article 5 of the Regulation regulates the preparation of the Initiative, which is the first step. In this step, a citizens' committee must be formed, which will be considered the official organiser of the Initiative.

This committee must include at least seven citizens of the Union (provided that they are of voting age for the European Parliament) and that they are residents in seven different Member States. In addition, none of these may be Members of the European Parliament.

A representative and an alternate must be appointed from among the members of the committee, who will act as the liaisons with the Commission.

### **SLIDE 4**

Secondly, the Committee has to register the initiative. However, this registration is not automatic, but subjected to the Commission's

discretion. Thus, after verifying a series of requirements such as that a committee has been effectively designated, that the legislative proposal is within the Commission's powers, etc., the Commission may decide to reject or accept (totally or partially) the registration of the initiative.

In case of rejection, citizens have two means of control to review this decision. On the one hand, through judicial review by means of an action for annulment and, on the other hand, through extra-judicial review by the European Ombudsman.

## **SLIDE 5**

Thirdly, the signature collection system must be certified. For initiatives that have been registered before 31 December 22, a particular system can be chosen and certified; from that date onwards, the central system must be used.

## **SLIDE 6**

The fourth step is the collection of signatures. The committee has a maximum of twelve months to do this, but the start of the collection can be delayed by six months if requested. As already mentioned, the minimum number of signatures required for the Initiative to succeed is one million from at least seven different Member States. Annex one of the Regulation sets out the minimums for each State so

that it cannot be submitted with nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand signatures from one State and one from another.

## **SLIDE 7**

Fifthly, the national authority checks the signatures for a period of three months and issues the appropriate certificate free of charge to the committee.

## **SLIDE 8**

Sixth, once the signatures collected have been certified, the Initiative is submitted to the European Commission within three months.

## **SLIDE 9**

Finally, the Commission publishes the Initiative in the official register and forwards it to the Institutions concerned, as well as to the national Parliaments. Six months after publication, the Commission has to adopt a formal response, but is under no obligation to pursue the Initiative if it does not consider it appropriate to do so.

## **SLIDE 10**

I hope you found this short video on the European Citizens' Initiative interesting.

That is all I had to say. Thank you very much for your attention.