

Wake up Brussels - How a million signatures can change Europe

(15 April 2010) The European party of socialists and democrats organized a public hearing to discuss with MEPs and civil society the proposal of the European Commission on the European Citizens' Initiative. The S&D speakers welcomed the initiative of the Commission. [Martin Schulz](#), chair of the S&D group opened the conference and underlined the importance of the European Citizens' Initiative. The Spanish State Secretary for the European Union, Diego Lopez Garrido stressed that the Citizens' Initiative is one of the progressive elements of the Treaty. He hoped that the Parliament and Council could deal with the Regulation even before the end of the Spanish Presidency. Governments have underlined fears of fraud and the criminal liability of organizers. [Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič](#), Vice-President for Inter-institutional Relations and Administration was congratulated for his work to advance the proposal. The Commissioner defended the Commission proposal, stressing that it remains possible for the Commission to reject a proposal.

In one of the following panel sessions EPSU's Deputy General Secretary underlined the importance that the initiative is simple, easy to access.

The current Commission proposal is not achieving that objective yet.

Specific points: Minimum number of states is set too high, age should be 16 years. The Commission wants to apply three tests (registration and values; admissibility and if it should act or not) without recourse to an appeal. The time allowed is too short and the identification data required will pose a big hurdle. A role should be foreseen for the European Ombudsman. These comments were echoed by others such as MEP Jo Leinen, Connie Reuter of Solidar, Sylvia Kaufmann of the German Social platform and who was the author of the 2009 EP report. Journalist and President of the International Press Association Lorenzo Consoli argued that there is also a corporate approach to the ECI to ensure that initiatives can not be run again when failed, and introducing hurdles to citizens.

The European Commission will formally introduce the ECI to the European

Parliament 19 April. Discussion in the Council has started and in the EP [the Committee on Constitutional Affairs](#) will be responsible.

The Conference took place 15 April 2010, in the European Parliament Brussels. Around 120 participants took part.

The EPSU position to the Green Paper

- [EPSU contribution ECI](#)

- The [programme of the Conference](#)
- The [report of the European Parliament](#)(Adopted May 2009)
- The [portal of the European Commission on the European Citizens Initiative](#)
- Directly to the [proposal of the European Commission](#)
- [Question and Answers by the European Commission](#)

Other civil society organizations

- [European Citizens Initiative](#)
- [Initiative and Referendum Institute Europe](#)

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