

European Citizen Initiative

EU citizens are now able to begin to promote European Citizen Initiatives

The Electoral Census Office will verify and certify support for initiatives to be embarked upon

The European Union (EU) Treaty provides for **each citizen being entitled to participate in democratic life of the Union by means of an European Citizen Initiative**, regarding issues that he or she regards as requiring an EU legislative act.

In order to embark on an initiative, a citizen Committee is needed (the *Organisers*) made up of at least seven citizens of the EU, old enough to vote for the European Parliament and resident in, at least, seven of the Member states.

The *Organisers* are responsible for preparing the initiative, the application for registering with the European Commission, and its handling during the citizen support statement collection procedure.

Support required

In order to support a European Citizen Initiative, the signatories must be citizens of the EU, and be old enough to vote in elections to the European Parliament. A million signatures are needed, from at least seven Member states.

The minimum number of signatories required in each Member state corresponds to the number of Members of the European Parliament, elected in that State multiplied by 750. In the case of Spain, 40.500 are needed.

Signatures must be collected after registering the initiative at the European Commission, within a maximum of 12 months.

Support statement collection systems

The *Organisers* may gather statements of support on paper or electronically.

For statements of support on paper, customised forms will be used for each Member state.

Support statements collected via a website will be stored in a Member state. In which case, the collection system must guarantee that only individuals may submit statements, and must have in place the necessary security measures for guaranteeing protection of their details.

In Spain, certification of support statements will be carried out as follows:

- 1) The statements of support by a Spaniard resident in Spain will be verified in Spain.

2) The statements of support by a Spaniard resident abroad will be verified in the following manner:

- The statements collected with the form model not including the personal identifier will be verified in the Country of residence.
- The statements collected with the form model including the personal identifier will be verified in Spain.

3) Statements of support by nationals of other Member states resident in Spain must be verified in the Country of their nationality.

Certifications

The online collection system requires certification by the competent authority of each Member state where data are stored, within one month from the date of submission of the application by the *Organisers*. The Electoral Census Office has been designated by Spain as the certification authority for electronic collection systems via websites.

The *Organisers* should submit support statements collected to the competent national authority for verification and certification of those that are valid. Certification must be issued within three months of submission. The ECO has been appointed by Spain as the verification and certification authority for these statements.

Further information

EU Regulation 211/2011, of 16 February 2011:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:065:0001:0022:EN:PDF>

Executorial regulation EU 1179/2011, of 17 November 2011:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:301:0003:0009:EN:PDF>

Commission Information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/welcome?lg=en>

Electoral Census Office Information:

http://www.ine.es/en/welcome_en.htm, Electoral Census Office, Jurisdiction of the Electoral Census Office, European Citizen Initiatives