

THE 2009 EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE SUMMIT

# SALZBURG MANIFESTO

FOR THE EUROPEAN CITIZEN INITIATIVE (ECI)

UNDER ART 11.4 TEU-TO LISBON

*ADDRESSED TO THE EUROPEAN UNION*

Today, May 9, 2009, on Europe Day, European citizens met in Salzburg, Austria, to assess the preparations towards the implementation of the European Citizens' Initiative Right as proposed by the Lisbon Treaty (TEU, Art 11.4). Co-hosted by the Initiative & Referendum Institute Europe (Marburg) and the Austrian Institute for European Law and Policy (Salzburg), the Citizens' Initiative Summit welcomed the decision by the European Parliament on the pending implementation of Art 11.4, the first transnational direct democratic procedure in history. This will put the citizens on an equal standing with the EU Council and the EU Parliament regarding the right to start legislative action on the EU level.

It is the understanding of the European Citizens' Initiative Summit that this new, innovative citizen right is an inclusive, integrative and transnational procedure. As an agenda initiative, it is neither a petition (which already exists in respect to the EU parliament) nor a full citizen initiative leading to a popular vote. It establishes for the very first time a direct legislative channel for European citizens.

The Salzburg Summit applauds the clear decision by the European Parliament on May 7, 2009 to agree on a Resolution for a citizen-friendly implementation process. This demonstrates the will of Parliament to put citizens on an equal footing with the Parliament and the Council, thereby establishing a modern representative democracy on the transnational level including direct democratic rights. The Summit however understands that several aspects outlined in the EP resolution need further improvement including the number of signatory countries, which at present seems too high. Furthermore, the Summit suggests that the time frames proposed in the EP resolution are too short and should be extended.

In light of the work on the regulative aspects of the implementation law which now requires additional fine-tuning and the basis of a citizen-friendly

understanding of the new Right, the Summit clearly states that the new European Citizens' Initiative Right will have to be complemented with a comprehensive supportive infrastructure, including the establishment of a European Citizen Initiative Office as well as financial and administrative advice and support across Europe.

The Salzburg Citizens' Initiative Summit agreed in particular on the following:

1. *If the European Citizens' Initiatives (ECI) are to become a useful right, they need a citizen-friendly design including regulatory actions and efficient proactive support from the EU.*
2. *Due to the fact that the European Citizens' Initiative Right is constructed as a mechanism for the input of political proposals from the citizens of Europe, the EU Commission should in principle affirm the initiatives as a support procedure for better and more formal identification of the concrete concerns of those citizens.*
3. *The EU is therefore invited to create a proactive guiding, supporting, consulting and accompanying entity – known as the ECI Office.*
4. *Since the envisioned pan-European initiative activities will inevitably include digital means of communication and signature gathering, the ECI Office is to create appropriate E-systems or adopt and adapt existing E-systems and have these operating under the supervision and scrutiny of the EU.*
5. *The implementation regulations have to predict and plan pragmatic models for viable and effective solutions. Since the European Citizens' Initiative Right is an agenda-setting initiative procedure (in contrast to a full citizens' initiative procedure leading to a binding popular vote on substantial issues), complex and costly high official structures using the 27 national authorities should be avoided.*
6. *Since the European Citizens' Initiative Right clearly and wisely seeks to facilitate transnational European concerns, any supporting infrastructure should also be located at the transnational European level. National authorities should not need to be used by the EU authorities other than to verify signatures by random control.*
7. *Restrictive measures – such as excluding the admissibility of so-called constitutional initiatives or attaching unnecessarily burdensome requirements – must be rejected. The widest range of submissions addressed to the EU Commission is to be welcomed.*
8. *Because the underlying concept of Art 11.4 signifies that the ECI is primarily directed at unrepresented or under-represented citizens, free initiatives which apply must necessarily receive basic financial support.*
9. *Initiatives funded by public money are obliged to disclose all formal cooperations with other individuals or organizations in respect to financial support.*

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