Press release | 12.04.2017

Commission finally recognises need to revise European Citizens' Initiative

European Citizens' Initiative

Yesterday, in a speech to the European Citizens' Initiative Day conference, Vice-President Timmermans announced that the European Commission will present proposals to revise the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) later this year, after a public consultation. The Greens/EFA group was instrumental in pushing for this new democratic tool in the EU, but always wanted citizens' rights to be strengthened further. The ECI in force today has so far failed to deliver on its original promise, which is why the Greens/EFA group, civil society and citizens who have tried to use the ECI, have all pushed for its revision. The Constitutional Affairs Committee recently agreed to produce a legislative initiative report to force the Commission's hand, after it informed pro-democracy NGOs that it had no intention of reviewing the ECI legislation. Please see below a quote from **Josep-Maria Terricabras** in response to the good news.

“We welcome Commissioner Timmermans' intention to reform the European Citizens' Initiative. Just four months ago, he was claiming that it was 'too early' to make any changes. But what should have been a powerful tool to engage the people of Europe in EU decision-making has so far failed to deliver on its potential. The Commission must now come forward with proposals that will genuinely break down the barriers between citizens and the laws that affect them, and reinforce the EU’s democratic credibility. Crucially, there needs to be clearer obligations on the European Commission to follow up on successful initiatives. The lack of meaningful action in the past has undermined confidence in the scheme, and citizens need to know that their efforts will be turned into real action. We will continue to push for this to happen.”

Notes

Timmermans’ remarks can be found here: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEX-17-950_en.htm

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Josep Maria Terricabras

EFA President and first Vice President of the Greens/EFA Group

Contact person



David Weir

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