

NEWSLETTER

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ECI from
A to Z

EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE:
A TOOL FOR ENGAGEMENT AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

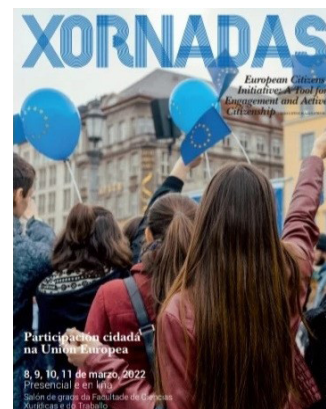


After a year of constant work, peer learning activities and the ECI Online Course, the time has finally come to travel and to meet, face to face, everyone involved in the Project. The present number of the Project's Newsletter will be thus fully dedicated to the ECI Model event that took place in Vigo from the 8th to the 12th of March and that marked the end of the first year of the Project "ECI: from A to Z".

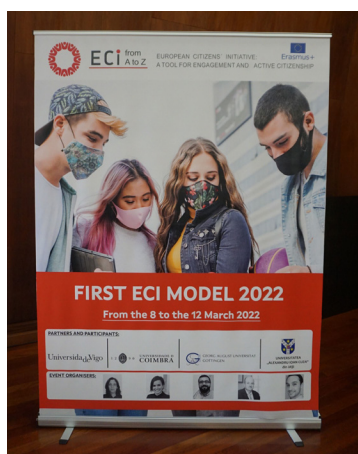
DAILY CONFERENCES ON CIVIC PARTICIPATION IN THE EU

Each day of activities, from the 8th to the 11th of March, started with conferences on civic participation in the EU, not only aimed at the staff and students from the Project but at the entire community of the Faculty of Law of the University of Vigo. "Xornadas de Participación cidadá na Unión Europea" were organized by Professor M.^a Antonia Arias Martínez and, as members of the Project, Professor Dulce Lopes, Ángel Aday Alemán, Tamara Álvarez Robles, Pablo Riquelme Vázquez and Koldo Martín Sevillano, and counted with the participation of multiple scholars and researchers who shared with us valuable reflections on the importance of civic participation at EU level, the role of the European institutions and the main features of the ECI as a tool for civic participation.

Among all their positive outcomes, these enriching conferences provided the students with the fundamental information regarding the ECI and encouraged their critical spirit, allowing them to improve the proposals they would later develop and present.



TRAINING SESSIONS



During the week, the Project's Professors, researchers and tutors gathered within the scope of training sessions in order to discuss the development of the activities and, when needed, to evaluate the students' work as part of the simulated ECI procedure.

ECI MODEL A SIMULATION OF THE ECI PROCEDURE

The final activity of each year of the Project, the ECI Model, is the peak of the work carried out throughout the year and the result of all the meetings, peer learning activities and the ECI Online Course. For five days of successive activities, the students put into practice their ideas and articulated all the measures they had discussed among the groups regarding an European Union subject of their preference.

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After the inauguration of the ECI Model on the 8th of March by the Project's coordinator, Professor Dulce Lopes, the two first days were mainly dedicated to **work in groups** in order to finish the proposals and fill in the request for registration of the ECI proposals. During these two days the students were finally able to meet each other in person and to work together under the supervision of their tutors.

On the third day, the 10th of March, **the European Commission deliberated** in private regarding each ECI proposal and the respective decisions regarding the registration of the proposals, all of which were positive, were transmitted to the teams. Meanwhile, the students prepared their presentations for the following day.



On the fourth day, the 11th of March, the highlight of the ECI Model finally arrived and all the teams presented their ECI Proposal, in around 15 minutes, in the much-awaited **Parliament Hearing**.

The European Parliament, represented by 10 deputies (MEP), carefully heard the speakers of each group and analyzed the proposals, posing questions they found relevant at the end of each presentation.





On the last day, after having carefully examined all the proposals and considering the presentations as well as the Parliament's Resolutions regarding each ECI proposal, **the European Commission publicly read its Communications** containing the political and legal conclusions on the substance of each proposal, allowing the organizers to give their feedback.

The final session was closed with the **delivery of participation** certificates to the students and some final words from the Project's coordinator.

THE TEAMS' PROPOSALS

After several months of creative and constructive work in groups, among themselves and with the tutors, the Project's students from the four partner Universities finished and presented their ECI proposals, that we hereby expose briefly.



Group 1 "ExtraLocal" – "Ensure Security for Refugee Mobility"

This ECI proposal asks for the adoption of several measures to guarantee safe and well-organized transportation of refugees throughout the transit towards the EU, their reception and settlement in the final destination.

Group 2 "Traveling Minds" – "New Focus on the Right of Erasure Within the EU"

This Citizens' Initiative asks for measures to ensure that everybody has the right of erasure and is aimed at granting protection regarding the online presence and digital signature.

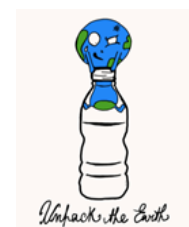


Group 3 "The New 28th Country" – "Fair Frontex: Push back their uncontrollable competences, not people!"

This proposal asks for a fairer, safer, more transparent and accountable Frontex, namely by reforming the Agency's governance framework, commitment to human rights, democracy and EU values, enforcing the Agency's Fundamental Rights Strategy and improving transparency and accountability mechanisms within the Agency.

Group 4 "Fighters for a Green Kepler" – "Unpack the Earth"

This Citizens' Initiative asks for measures to promote the use of biodegradable materials as an alternative to plastic in packaging, by increasing, among other proposals, taxes on plastic packaging production.



Group 5 "Initiative Earth" – "Greener Clothes - Greener Planet"

This ECI proposal asks for the induction of consumers to buy less clothes while becoming more conscious about their actions when buying different types of items, overall benefitting the planet.

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Group 6 “Partnership” – “We Craft, EU Protect”

This proposal asks for the creation of a transparent EU GI protection system for no products, considering the existing differences between products in the context of indications.



Group 7 “The Flower Power Pacifists” – “Humanitarian Aid: You Can Help the Unseen”

This Citizens’ Initiative asks for the redefinition of EU’s tools and actions in the field of aid and assistance provided to vulnerable groups in case of grave humanitarian crisis.



Group 8 “Satellites” – “Food redistribution: the path to a prosperous society”

This ECI proposal asks for improvement of the European regulatory framework on food waste and redistribution to achieve Sustainable Development target 12.3: “By 2030, halve global food waste per capita at retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains (...)”.



Looking back on the first year of our “ECI: from A to Z” Project and, specially, on this wonderful week, filled with academical achievements but also fun moments, we can gladly state that this experience has allowed the students to develop their skills, to be more engaged in EU policies and, on the personal level, to make new friends from different countries. We are extremely thankful to all the students who have been a part of this journey alongside with us, Professors, researchers and tutors of the Project, and we wish them nothing but the greatest success in the future!

Although the end of the first chapter has arrived, a new year of work, trips and promotion of civic participation at EU level awaits us and we cannot wait for it!

Will you be part of the second year of our Project?