

**Question for oral answer O-000033/2013  
to the Commission**

Rule 115

**Gerald Häfner, Michèle Rivasi, Sven Giegold, Eva Lichtenberger, Jean Lambert, Keith Taylor, Claude Turmes, Sandrine Bélier, Satu Hassi, Isabella Lövin, Hélène Flautre, Reinhard Bütikofer, Isabelle Durant, Mariya Gabriel, Raúl Romeva i Rueda, Tatjana Ždanoka, Malika Benarab-Attou, Bart Staes, Indrek Tarand, Jan Philipp Albrecht, Werner Schulz, Nikos Chrysogelos, Helga Trüpel, Jill Evans, Stanimir Ilchev, Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg, Margrete Auken, Zita Gurmai, Rui Tavares, Christian Engström, Helmut Scholz, Heide Rühle, Judith Sargentini, Dimitrios Droutsas, Kinga Göncz, Ulrike Lunacek, Martin Kastler, Martin Häusling, Edward McMillan-Scott, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Mark Demesmaeker, Andreas Mölzer, Alain Lamassoure, Jo Leinen, Manfred Weber, Marietje Schaake, Andrew Duff, Franziska Katharina Brantner, Filiz Hakaeva Hyusmenova, Rafał Trzaskowski, Marie-Christine Vergiat, Barbara Lochbihler, Søren Bo Søndergaard, Andrea Zannoni, Heinz K. Becker, Marielle de Sarnez, Evelyn Regner, Ana Miranda, Michael Theurer, Roberto Gualtieri, Olle Schmidt, Michael Cashman, Jean-Luc Bennahmias, Cecilia Wikström, Fiona Hall, David Martin, Csaba Sándor Tabajdi, Amelia Andersdotter, Erminia Mazzoni, Rebecca Harms, Philippe Lamberts, György Schöpflin, Michael Cramer, Bill Newton Dunn, Elmar Brok**

Subject: One year of European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) in practice: evaluating experience and tackling obstacles

Since 1 April 2012 citizens across Europe have had the right to convey their ideas to decision-makers at European level using the European Citizens' Initiative. However, almost all registered initiatives are reporting significant technical and administrative difficulties, leading to tremendous delays and unacceptably high costs. Most issues concern the open-source software for online signature collection offered by the Commission, which is extremely complicated to handle. Assistance remains slow and ineffective. An estimated 11 million EU citizens residing outside their home country are being denied their right to support ECIs by Member States.

- Is the Commission aware of the problems reported by the initiatives? What measures has it undertaken or does it plan to undertake to solve them?
- Does the Commission plan to extend assistance with the deployment of the online signature-gathering tool to upcoming initiatives too, so that fair and equal treatment of all is guaranteed?
- What will the Commission do to improve response times and capacities for reported problems?
- Will the Commission create the necessary infrastructure to enable citizens' difficulties to be responded to directly?
- Will the open-source software be redeveloped in a truly open procedure using a community approach, including proper testing and appropriate documentation?
- What is preventing the Commission from establishing, as the place to store signatures, one centralised online collection platform which is hosted on Commission servers, but which allows all the front end – the public form – to take place within the individual campaigns' websites?
- Would the Commission consider revising the implementing regulation before the scheduled deadline in 2015? If so, how can it be ensured that the experience of the existing initiatives is reflected and the relevant European Parliament committees are fully involved?
- Can the initiatives that have been burdened with testing and bug-fixing the software apply for reimbursement of their costs?
- Does the Commission have sufficient resources to provide the necessary technical environment

and technical support for the initiatives? If so, which budget lines are these covered by and which organisational units carry them out?

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