



European Commission registers two European Citizens' Initiatives on the rights of Union citizens after Brexit and rejects one on preventing Brexit

Brussels, 22 March 2017

The European Commission has today registered two European Citizens' Initiatives concerning the rights of Union citizens in the context of the withdrawal of a Member State from the EU and rejected a third proposal entitled 'Stop Brexit'.

The first invites the Commission to separate Union citizenship from Member State nationality in light of the UK withdrawal from the EU ("EU Citizenship for Europeans: United in Diversity in spite of jus soli and jus sanguinis"), and the second calls on the Commission to uphold the right of Union citizens to move and reside freely within the European Union ("Retaining European Citizenship"). At the same time, the Commission has rejected as inadmissible a third proposal calling on the Commission to prevent the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU ("Stop Brexit").

The Commission's decisions concern the legal admissibility of the proposed initiatives. At this stage, the Commission has not examined the substance of the initiatives.

The Commission found that the "**EU Citizenship for Europeans: United in Diversity in spite of jus soli and jus sanguinis**" and the "**Retaining European Citizenship**" initiatives meet the conditions necessary for registration under the Regulation on European Citizens' Initiatives. Both European initiatives call on the Commission to protect the status and rights of EU citizenship, in the context of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union. The Commission attaches great importance to the underlying issue of providing certainty and security to the 4 million citizens (3.2 million EU citizens in the UK and 1.2 million UK citizens in the EU) who are unsure of their future as a result of the decision of the UK to withdraw from the EU. While the Commission cannot propose secondary legislation aiming at granting EU citizenship to natural persons who do not hold the nationality of a Member State of the Union, the rights of EU citizens in the UK and the rights of UK citizens in the EU after the withdrawal of the UK will be at the core of the upcoming Article 50 negotiations. The Commission will do its utmost to prevent EU citizens from being used as bargaining chips in the negotiations with the UK.

In the case of the "**Stop Brexit**" initiative, the Commission found that the conditions for registration were not met. Article 50(1) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) explicitly allows any Member State to withdraw from the Union in accordance with its own constitutional requirements. While the Commission regrets the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, it respects the outcome of the referendum.

Next steps

The formal registration of the "Retaining European Citizenship initiative" will take place on 2 May and the registration of the "EU Citizenship for Europeans" initiative will take place on 27 March. In both cases, this will start a one-year process of collection of signatures in support of the proposed European Citizens' Initiative by their organisers.

Background

European Citizens' Initiatives were introduced with the Lisbon Treaty and launched as an agenda-setting tool in the hands of citizens in April 2012, upon the entry into force of the European Citizens' Initiatives Regulation which implements the Treaty provisions. Under the Treaty, every citizen has the right to participate in the democratic life of the Union by way of a European Citizens' Initiative. The procedures and conditions required for the citizens' initiative should be clear, simple and user-friendly. The commitment of empowering citizens to deliver a better Europe was reiterated by President Juncker in his [State of the Union address](#) in September 2016.

The conditions for admissibility, as foreseen by the Regulation n° 211/2011 on the European Citizens' Initiative, are that the proposed action does not manifestly fall outside the framework of the Commission's powers to submit a proposal for a legal act for the purpose of implementing the Treaties, that it is not manifestly abusive, frivolous or vexatious and that it is not manifestly contrary to the values of the Union.

Once formally registered, a European Citizens' Initiative allows one million citizens from at least one

quarter of EU Member States to invite the European Commission to propose a legal act in areas where the Commission has the power to do so.

If – and only if – a registered European Citizens' Initiative receives the signatures of one million validated statements of support from at least seven Member States within a period of one year from the time it was registered, the Commission must decide whether or not it would act, and explain the reasons for that choice.

For More Information

[Full text of the proposed "EU citizenship for Europeans: United diversity in spite of jus soli and jus sanguini"](#) (available on 27 March 2017)

[Full text of the proposed "Retaining European Citizenship"](#) (available on 2 May 2017)

[Full text of the proposed "Stop Brexit" Initiative](#) (available on 21 March 2017)

[Other European Citizens' Initiatives currently collecting signatures](#)

[European Citizens' Initiative website](#)

[European Citizens' Initiative Regulation](#)

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