



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

Directorate G
SG-G-4
General Institutional Issues



MEETING OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON THE CITIZENS' INITIATIVE

12 March 2012

SUMMARY REPORT

1. STATE OF PLAY OF IMPLEMENTATION BY THE COMMISSION

The Chair presented the state of play of implementation on the Commission side. She mentioned the launch of the ECI website on the occasion of a conference on 26 January as well as the second version of the software available on Joinup that took on board various comments received from users on Joinup.

The Chair also updated the group on the delegated act adopted by the Commission to modify Annex I of the Regulation setting out the minimum number of signatories per member state, as a consequence of the change in the number of Members of the European Parliament. The delegated Regulation should be published before 1st April.

In addition, the Chair explained that corrigenda to the Regulation in a lot of languages were expected to be published before 1st April, in particular as regards Annex III and that the Commission software will need to be adapted accordingly.

The Chair reminded the participants to inform the Commission on the number of copies of the posters they would like to receive and in which language(s).

2. STATE OF PLAY OF IMPLEMENTATION BY THE MEMBER STATES

The Chair updated the participants on the notifications of competent authorities received by the Commission and invited the participants to present the state of play of implementation in their Member State and the timeline foreseen, in particular those for which authorities had not yet been notified to the Commission, despite deadline 1st March. The Member States were pressed to notify the Commission before 1st April.

A brief exchange of views then took place on general aspects of the two procedures to be carried out by the competent authorities (verification of statements of support and certification of online collection systems). Some Member States expressed their concerns as regards the one-month time limit to certify online collection systems, in

particular in the case they receive several requests at the same time or when organisers do not use the Commission software.

In answering questions, the Chair clarified notably that the one-month period starts once all the required documentation has been provided by organisers, which includes among others the risk assessment.

3. CERTIFICATION OF ONLINE COLLECTION SYSTEMS

This point started with the presentation of the risk assessment for the Commission software. The Commission explained that a full risk assessment was carried out, including criteria which go beyond the technical specifications set out in Regulation No 1179/2011. The risk assessment confirmed that the software is fully compliant with the technical specifications required by the above-mentioned Regulation.

Some Member States considered that the residual risk as calculated in the assessment remained significant. The Commission stressed that this figure was not particularly high, notably considering the fact that the risk assessment only concerns the software (once installed in an appropriate system, the risk should lower significantly) and that this risk does not relate to the technical specifications.

In responding to questions from various participants, the Commission explained that no particular platform was used for the risk assessment, that the full study took 21 days and that organisers should make a new risk analysis if they modify the Commission software.

The Chair clarified that Member States only have to verify that the online collection systems comply with the Regulation on the citizens' initiative¹ as well as the Implementing Regulation laying down technical specifications for online collection systems². The Commission will prepare a draft checklist based on the risk assessment and the guidelines but including only the technical specifications to be complied with.

An exchange of views followed on the procedures foreseen by Member States for the certification of online collection systems during which several Member States highlighted the need for a common procedure. The Chair answered that a common procedure cannot be imposed but that a common approach could be encouraged.

The Chair invited Member States to share the documentation on their procedures in CIRCABC and encouraged them to exchange views and best practices on this platform in preparation for the official launch of the ECI on 1st April. For that purpose, she reminded the participants that they need to register in ECAS in order to

¹ [Regulation \(EU\) No 211/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011 on the citizens' initiative](#)

² [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) No 1179/2011 of 17 November 2011 laying down technical specifications for online collection systems pursuant to Regulation \(EU\) No 211/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the citizens' initiative](#)

have access to the interest group in CIRCABC (invitations to the group would be sent soon after the meeting). Alternatively, participants may also send emails to the group.

She also recalled Member States which had not yet done so to send to the Commission information on the format of their postal codes and ID numbers where relevant and finally asked them to keep the Commission informed on possible communication campaigns in the Member States.

As regards the next meetings of the group, the Chair explained that due to budgetary constraints the Commission may not be in a position to reimburse the travel expenses of the participants and, with this in mind, will keep the group informed of the best ways to communicate.

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