



Conclusions

The 14th edition of the EESC's annual **European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) DAY** took place within the EESC's [Civil Society Week 2025](#), thus linking its overall theme «*Strengthening cohesion and participation in polarised societies*» to the European Citizens Initiative as a globally unique and innovative tool of transnational participatory democracy – and – the second most used formal way of EU citizens being involved in European politics after the elections to the EU Parliament.

The ECI Day participants – among them numerous ECI organisers and institutional and civil society stakeholders – discussed the ECI around **three big questions**:

Where do we stand? What are we doing? How can we get forward?

with the following conclusions:

- 1) In a modern representative democracy, as the EU is one, every vote is counted on election day – and **every voice is heard in all days** between.

The European Citizens' Initiative is the procedural realisation of this important principle, but has still a long way to go to in order to keep this promise in practice.

An institutional framework as the European Union *in general* or the ECI *specifically* can only fulfill its important role as a peacemaker within and in between societies, **if the high expectations into it are fulfilled** as much as possible. **Otherwise, many people lose their trust** into such a system and its representatives and follow forces which are much less interested in democracy, freedom and peace.

All stakeholders are conscious about the need of **stepping up their efforts and their roles** in making the ECI as such, and in this way also democracy in Europe, a sustainable success story, including by giving the ECI a higher visibility, ensuring a proper follow-up and impact, and by protecting, improving and strengthening it further (e.g. revision process of the ECI legislation (2027)).

- 2) In a discussion with organisers of currently ongoing initiatives, and with former and future practical use of the ECI in mind, **we got an insight into important parts of the critical supportive infrastructure at hand in Europe to assist active EU citizens in using the ECI as a tool to bring their ideas to EU agenda**. These views have been complemented by interventions showing:
 - the European Commission's **efforts to inform EU citizens**, and in particular young people, about the ECI
 - existing financing options, while acknowledging the call for better possibilities of **financial support for ECIs**;

- the important **role the national economic and social councils can play** in the ECI process;
 - **possibility of local and regional authorities to use the ECI** as a tool and method to promote their European policies.
- 3) ECI Day interactive workshops brought many useful and very concrete perspectives on how to empower our voices at the European level, ranging from
- identifying **key stakeholders, partners, influencers, and local CSOs**,
 - through **pre-targeting audiences**,
 - to **building a strong, unified narrative**.

Moreover, to develop the capacities of ECI organisers, there is a **need for a more structured peer-to-peer exchange among ECI organisers**, so that they can truly learn from each another, together with **stronger connections and sustained collaboration among ECI stakeholders** in general. More spaces for this knowledge-sharing and collective problem solving are needed. ECI Forum - and other supportive offers – must be made even better known.

- 4) **Impact Strategy for ECIs implies legal and political deliverables of an ECI – in other words**, discussing and raising awareness about legislative follow-up of ECIs, as well as participatory democracy in the EU, remains essential.

ECI organisers must be better involved in the Commission's decision-making process, which – firstly - requires more transparency by the Commission in order to (1) improve the quality and acceptance of the Commissions communication but also to (2) give the Commission a better understanding of the goals and concerns of the citizens, which should have additional opportunities to counter concerns and objections by the Commission.

We looked into potentials of the forthcoming **ECI revision process to be done by 2027 when it comes to ECI follow-ups and impacts** - at least four aspects need to be considered:

- the role of the European Parliament in the follow-up process
- the role of European Citizens Panels
- the right of ECIs to initiate and demand Treaty changes and
- stronger rules and obligations in following up successful ECIs.

In a nutshell, the ECI Day 2025 called to make democracy in Europe even stronger by

- **Protecting**
- **Enabling**
- **Promoting**
- **and Revising**

the European Citizens Initiative in the years to come.

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