



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 other, 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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