

MORAIS BISMARQUE GASPAR Ana Gloria

From: Reinhard Uhrig [REDACTED]
Sent: 19 February 2014 15:12
To: GADESMANN Gundi
Cc: Daphne Rieder
Subject: European Citizens' Initiative: Ombudsman invites feedback / ECI "My Voice Against Nuclear Power"

Dear Ms Gadesmann,

as a prologue to answering your questions:

Klaus Kastenhofer as representative submitted a proposed citizens' initiative on Nuclear Power on the 1st of April 2012. Dr Kastenhofer was then the director of GLOBAL 2000 / Friends of the Earth Austria, among the other representatives were persons from Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark, UK, France, Cyprus, Hungary, Germany, Lithuania, Finland, and Luxemburg.

The request was rejected on 30th of May 2012 "on the grounds that it falls manifestly outside the framework of the Commission's powers to submit a proposal for a legal act of the Union for the purpose of implementing the Treaties". The organizers have not resubmitted a revised text or lodged a complaint, mostly on the grounds of lacking resources in the groups involved in the proposed ECI.

1. Do you consider the citizens' initiative right to be sufficiently well known among the general public so that citizens feel confident in signing initiatives? If not, what, in your view, could be done to raise awareness?

No.

Awareness-raising in the form of active communication of the tool via the media would be vital.

2. Please give your view on the information and guidance the Commission provided to you as an organiser of an initiative (on the Commission website, in direct contacts etc.).

The contact and information we got was adequate.

3. Please give your view on the functionality and usefulness of the Commission's software for collecting signatures online. In particular, please consider issues such as hosting of the online collection system and the online system's accessibility for visually impaired persons.

We had to sub-contract the Website and hosting to a service provider, who had to adapt the software. The cost incurred was far beyond the scope available for small organizations and posed a strain even on persons and groups backing them involved in this proposed ECI.

For the system of an ECI to be functional and citizen-friendly, the Commission's software would have to be truly open-source, and secure

hosting should be provided by the EU in order to make this possible for citizens without the technological knowledge and funds.

4. The Commission extended the deadline for the first initiatives to collect signatures because of problems getting the online collection system up and running. Please comment on whether you consider that this extension of the deadline was sufficient and applied in a fair manner.

As our submission was rejected, we never got to this phase.

5. Please give your view on the functionality and usefulness of the paper form to be used for collecting handwritten signatures.

In our view, a major obstacle to the functionality of paper forms in the process of collecting signatures is the varying requirements of submission fields of the ECI from country to country: in our view, it would be a major deterrent to signatures in the street if people would have to provide their passport number, as is required in Austria, where people are not even required to carry a passport on them.

6. Do you have any concerns or comments in relation to the treatment of personal data provided by citizens signing an initiative (either online or on a paper form)?

No.

7. Do you have any concerns or comments as regards the possibilities (or lack thereof) of tracking the number of signatures obtained throughout the collection period?

As the signing process has of necessity be done in a secure "black box", the organizers would definitely need a way of obtaining feedback on the number of signatures collected, at least on a weekly basis.

8. What is your experience as regards the contacts with different national authorities in relation to your initiative (for certification of the online collection system and certification of the number of valid statements of support)?

Online collection system was not a problem, certification of numbers: we never got to that stage

9. What changes to the ECI Regulation would you consider useful, if any?

as above: uniform requirement on the fields to be submitted, assistance to organizers in hosting, software

10. Please provide any other information or suggestions, in succinct form, that you would consider useful for improving the citizens' initiative procedure.

In order to make any initiative work, public attention has to be generated. As we are competing in a media- and advertisement-driven world, a certain amount of airspace on radio / TV as well as space in national newspapers should be provided by the EU for organizers of ECIs, even if this is very short.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Reinhard Uhrig

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Dr. Reinhard Uhrig
Geschäftsführer – Director
GLOBAL 2000 – Friends of the Earth Austria, Neustiftgasse 36, A–1070 Wien


skype reinharduhrig twitter @reinharduhrig facebook Reinhard Uhrig

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