

**MORAIS BISMARQUE GASPAR Ana Gloria**

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**From:** Anthi Soulitsioti [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 31 March 2014 16:04  
**To:** Euro-Ombudsman  
**Subject:** [EOWEB] submit feedback on how European Citizens' Initiatives work  
**Attachments:** OMBUDSMAN QUESTIONNAIRE ECI INVESTIN EDUCATION.docx

**Follow Up Flag:** OI/9/2013/TN  
**Due By:** 03 April 2014 08:30  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Sender**

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**Sender** Anthi Soulitsioti [REDACTED]  
**Date** Monday, March 31, 2014 4:03:58 PM CEST

**Your data**

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**Part 1 - Contact information**

<b>First name</b>	Anthi
<b>Surname</b>	Soulitsioti
<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>E-mail address</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Language you would like to receive an answer in</b>	en - English
<b>Other language you would accept an answer in (if applicable)</b>	en - English

**Part 2 - Data**

**Subject** submit feedback on how European Citizens' Initiatives work  
We submit feedback on how European Citizens' Initiatives work on behalf of the Invest in Education ECI supported by the Diktio - Network for reform in Greece and Europe.

**Content**

Anthi Soulitsioti  
Member of the ECI Invest in Education

**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?**

Even though the ECI started officially at 2012 we believe that citizens are not aware of their right to call directly on the European Commission to propose a legal act. In our opinion more focus should be given on the promotion of the ECI. This could be achieved by creating a campaign that will be addressed to all member states of the EU and that will be focusing on the citizens power to propose a legislation.

**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 information provided to the ECI organisers, which is on the official webpage of the ECI (<http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/welcome>), is really well organized and helpful. As soon as we decided that we should start a European Citizens' Initiative, we visited the ECI portal and all steps were clear. We think that the first impression someone has when visiting the ECI portal is comprehensive. It helps him to get quickly the necessary information, to understand if his idea can be transformed into an ECI campaign and to see previous Initiatives and get new ideas.

**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.**

The biggest challenge we encountered while forming our ECI proposal, was to proceed with the certification of our online system of the initiative. Unfortunately, precious time (2 months) was lost from our signature collection because of the difficulties we faced while trying to use the official software. Although our proposal appeared online on the ECI platform in the reality no one could sign. However, now that the collection of the signatures is running we are not facing any more difficulties. People find it easy to use the form provided, even those who are not familiar with the internet.

**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.**

Unfortunately we also asked for such an extension and we did not get one. We believe that it would help a lot.

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

The collection of the handwritten signatures is also useful especial for older people that are not familiar with the internet.

**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)?**

Many times citizens are not willing to give their passport or ID number. They are afraid of giving, especially online, their personal data.

**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?**

In our opinion the system of tracking the number of signatures works perfect.

**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)?**

As we already mentioned the biggest challenge we encountered was to proceed with the certification of our online system of our initiative. Both the reviewing of our documents and the initialization of our online system required contact with the ECI technical service almost on a daily basis. But most times we couldn't reach them (neither by email or phone).

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

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

We believe that the countdown for the signatures collection should start when the first signature is recorded on the on line collection system. In this way we secure that the system is on and working and that we don't loose precious time.