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European Commission - Press release

Commission registers European Citizens' Initiative on the definition of marriage and family if used in EU law

Brussels, 11 December 2015

Commission registers European Citizens' Initiative on the definition of marriage and family if used in EU law

The European Commission has today registered a European Citizens Initiative (ECI) inviting the Commission to propose legislation that defines the meaning of marriage as a union between a man and a woman and of family as based on marriage and/or descent for the purpose of EU law. This registration starts a one-year process of collection of signatures in support of the proposed ECI by its organisers.

The Commission's decision to register concerns only the legal admissibility of the proposal. The conditions for admissibility, as foreseen by the ECI Regulation, are that the proposed action does not manifestly fall outside the framework of the Commission's powers to submit a proposal for a legal act, that it is not manifestly abusive, frivolous or vexatious and that it is not manifestly contrary to the values of the Union.

The College of Commissioners discussed the legal admissibility of the proposed ECI on 9 December and concluded that the legal conditions for the registration of the ECI were fulfilled. The College has not analysed the substance of the initiative at this stage.

Should the ECI receive one million statements of support within one year, from at least seven different Member States, the Commission will have to react within three months. The Commission can decide either to follow the request or not follow the request and in both instances would be required to explain its reasoning.

Background

ECIs were introduced with the Lisbon Treaty and launched as an agenda-setting tool in the hands of citizens in April 2012, upon the entry into force of the ECI Regulation which implements the Treaty provisions.

Once formally registered, an ECI allows one million citizens from at least one quarter of EU Member States to invite the European Commission to propose a legal act in areas where the Commission has the power to do so.

If – and only if – a registered ECI receives the signatures of one million validated statements of support from at least seven Member States, the Commission must decide whether or not it would act, and explain the reasons for that choice.

For more information

Full text of the proposed 'Mum, Dad & Kids' ECI

Other ECIs currently collecting signatures

ECI website

ECI Regulation

IP/15/6304

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