



Brussels, 11.9.2024
C(2024) 6087 final

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION

of 11.9.2024

on the request for registration, pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2019/788 of the European Parliament and of the Council, of the European citizens' initiative entitled 'ECI for a Water-Smart and Resilient Europe'

(Only the English text is authentic)

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Regulation (EU) 2019/788 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on the European citizens' initiative¹, and in particular Article 6(2) and (3) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) A request for registration of a European citizens' initiative entitled 'ECI for a Water-Smart and Resilient Europe' was submitted to the Commission on 17 July 2024.
- (2) The aims of the initiative as expressed by the organisers consist of seven objectives: (i) 'To advocate for a strategic and holistic action plan for water in Europe, and the development and implementation of dual, complementary policies in all EU policy areas, as called for in the Declaration for an EU Blue Deal'; (ii) 'To urge the European Commission to prioritise water as a strategic standalone priority within the EU framework and elevate water resilience to the same priority level as decarbonisation'; (iii) 'To significantly reduce the water footprint of all segments of society and stress a paradigm shift at the European level to safeguard clean water for individuals, businesses, farmers and ecosystems; (iv) 'To accelerate a shift towards water-efficient, circular industry and agriculture, to secure competitiveness by promoting innovative solutions such as digital tools, resource recovery, hybrid green-grey infrastructure, nature-based solutions, and inclusive governance tools'; (v) 'To ensure the availability of the right skills for a water-smart economy, preserve jobs and create new job opportunities for workers'; (vi) 'To promote stewardship and connectedness to aquatic environments and support restoration and protection efforts'; (vii) 'To ensure every individual's human right to clean and safe water and sanitation, and the restoration and protection of ecosystems and biodiversity'.
- (3) An annex to the initiative provides further details on the subject matter, objectives and background to the initiative. It states that 'access to water is now becoming uncertain' and that 'the European water policy landscape' is 'fragmented and ineffective' in addressing current challenges. The annex explains that despite 'the advanced state' of the Union's water legislation, 'many goals remain unfulfilled due to insufficient funding, delayed implementation, and lack of comprehensive integration of water concerns into sectoral policies'. The organisers thus call for 'a comprehensive strategic

¹ OJ L 130, 17.5.2019, p. 55, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/788/oj>

political priority on water, integrated into all EU policies'. They consider that 'addressing water resilience necessitates a sector-specific approach', and that it is necessary to 'raise public awareness regarding water consumption and good practices'. The organisers also state that the water dimension should be integrated into all Union policies to ensure that 'water resilience and sustainability are primary considerations in policy formulation and implementation' and to recognise the 'critical role' of water 'in the EU's ecological and socio-economic landscape'.

- (4) An additional document prepared by the European Economic and Social Committee and entitled 'Declaration for an EU Blue Deal' has also been submitted by the group of organisers as part of their registration request.
- (5) As regards the aims of the initiative, the Commission could submit a proposal for a legal act encompassing objectives (i) to (iv), (vi) and (vii) of the initiative on the basis of Article 192 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).
- (6) The Commission could also submit a proposal for a legal act concerning objective (v) of the initiative, based on Articles 149 or 153(2)(a) TFEU.
- (7) For those reasons, the Commission considers that none of the parts of the initiative manifestly falls 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.
- (8) That conclusion does not affect the assessment of whether the concrete substantive conditions required for the Commission to act, including compliance with the principles of proportionality and subsidiarity and compatibility with fundamental rights, would be met in this case.
- (9) The group of organisers has provided appropriate evidence that it fulfils the requirements laid down in Article 5(1) and (2) of Regulation (EU) 2019/788 and has designated the contact persons in accordance with Article 5(3), first subparagraph, of that Regulation.
- (10) The initiative is not manifestly abusive, frivolous or vexatious, nor is it manifestly contrary to the values of the Union as set out in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union or to the rights enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.
- (11) The initiative entitled 'ECI for a Water-Smart and Resilient Europe' should therefore be registered.
- (12) The conclusion that the conditions for registration under Article 6(3) of Regulation (EU) 2019/788 are fulfilled does not imply that the Commission in any way confirms the factual correctness of the content of the initiative, which is the sole responsibility of the group of organisers of the initiative. The content of the initiative only expresses the views of the group of organisers, and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the Commission,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The European citizens' initiative entitled 'ECI for a Water-Smart and Resilient Europe' shall be registered.

Article 2

This Decision is addressed to the group of organisers of the citizens' initiative entitled 'ECI for a Water-Smart and Resilient Europe', represented by Constantin DEDU and Piotr SADOWSKI acting as contact persons.

Done at Brussels, 11.9.2024

For the Commission
Věra JOUROVÁ
Vice-President

