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COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION (EU) 2026/1141

of 19 May 2026

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 'Rights for Nature: Empower Citizens to Represent and Protect Ecosystems'

(Only the English text is authentic)

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' initiative ([1]), and in particular Article 6(3) thereof,

Whereas:

(1) A request for registration of a European citizens' initiative entitled 'Rights for Nature: Empower Citizens to Represent and Protect Ecosystems' was submitted to the Commission on 27 March 2026.

(2) The aim of the initiative as expressed by the organisers is to 'recognise Rights of Nature in European law via a legal act such as a directive or a regulation to strengthen the protection of ecosystems'. The organisers 'seek to move from treating nature as property to recognising ecosystems as living entities with intrinsic value and fundamental rights' including 'the rights to exist, to regenerate their biocapacities and vital cycles, and to be restored' The organisers consider that '[e]cosystems should also be granted legal personality'. The initiative also aims 'to empower citizens and communities to act as stewards and representatives of ecosystems, both to prevent harm and to support protection, restoration and regeneration. Thus, these representatives should have legal standing and additional legal measures when defending ecosystems' rights, building on Mar Menor's example in Spain'. An annex to the initiative provides further details on its background, its subject matter and its objectives.

(3) The Commission considers that, based on Article 192(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) in connection with Article 191(1) TFEU, it could adopt a proposal for a legal act to strengthen the protection of ecosystems, including the rights to exist, to regenerate their biocapacities and vital cycles, and to be restored. Such an act could also confer legal personality on ecosystems and grant citizens and communities standing to act on their behalf.

(4) For that reason, 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.

(5) 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.

(6) 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.

(7) 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.

(8) The initiative entitled 'Rights for Nature: Empower Citizens to Represent and Protect Ecosystems' should therefore be registered.

([1]) OJ L 130, 17.5.2019, p. 55, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/788/oj.

(9) 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 'Rights for Nature: Empower Citizens to Represent and Protect Ecosystems' shall be registered.

Article 2

This Decision is addressed to the group of organisers of the citizens' initiative entitled 'Rights for Nature: Empower Citizens to Represent and Protect Ecosystems', represented by Emmanuel SCHLICHTER and Marine YZQUIERDO acting as contact persons.

Done at Strasbourg, 19 May 2026.

For the Commission
Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ
Member of the Commission