

DECISIONS

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION (EU) 2021/944

of 3 June 2021

on the extension of the periods for the collection of statements of support for certain European citizens' initiatives pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2020/1042 of the European Parliament and of the Council

(notified under document C(2021) 3879)

(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) 2020/1042 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 July 2020 laying down temporary measures concerning the time limits for the collection, the verification and the examination stages provided for in Regulation (EU) 2019/788 on the European citizens' initiative in view of the COVID-19 outbreak ⁽¹⁾, and in particular Article 2(2) thereof,

After consulting the Committee on the European citizens' initiative established by Article 22 of Regulation (EU) 2019/788 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽²⁾,

Whereas:

- (1) Regulation (EU) 2020/1042 lays down temporary measures in relation to the European citizens' initiative to address the challenges that organisers of citizens' initiatives, national administrations and the Union institutions were faced with after the World Health Organization announced in March 2020 that the COVID-19 outbreak had become a worldwide pandemic. In the months following that announcement, Member States adopted restrictive measures to combat the public health crisis. As a result, public life came to a standstill in almost all Member States. Regulation (EU) 2020/1042 therefore extended certain time limits laid down in Regulation (EU) 2019/788.
- (2) Regulation (EU) 2020/1042 empowers the Commission to further extend the collection periods by 3 months in certain circumstances. The conditions for any further extension are similar to those that led to the initial extension after the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020, namely that at least a quarter of Member States or a number of Member States representing more than 35 % of the Union population apply measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which substantially hamper the ability of organisers to collect statements of support in paper form and to inform the public of their ongoing initiatives.
- (3) Since the adoption of Regulation (EU) 2020/1042 in July 2020, the Commission has been closely monitoring the situation in the Member States.
- (4) On 17 December 2020 ⁽³⁾, and again on 19 February 2021 ⁽⁴⁾, the Commission granted further 3-month extensions to initiatives that were in the process of collecting statements of support, following its assessment, that the conditions for granting such an extension under Regulation (EU) 2020/1042 were fulfilled. Proportionate extensions were granted to initiatives that started their collection period in the course of periods of extension.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 231, 17.7.2020, p. 7.

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) 2019/788 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on the European citizens' initiative (OJ L 130, 17.5.2019, p. 55).

⁽³⁾ Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2020/2200 of 17 December 2020 on the extension of the periods for the collection of statements of support for certain European citizens' initiatives pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2020/1042 of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 434, 23.12.2020, p. 56).

⁽⁴⁾ Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/360 of 19 February 2021 on the extension of the periods for the collection of statements of support for certain European citizens' initiatives pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2020/1042 of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 69, 26.2.2021, p. 9).

- (5) Since 1 February 2021, the pandemic situation caused by COVID-19 in several Member States has not significantly changed. By the end of April 2021, a substantial number of Member States still had measures in place restricting the free circulation of citizens within their territory in order to stop or slow down the transmission of COVID-19. 7 Member States reported on 19 April that they were applying national confinement measures, which prohibit or substantially restrict the freedom of citizens to move around freely within their territory, while 12 Member States reported that they were applying local confinement measures. Those confinement measures have been combined with additional measures with similar restrictive effects on public life in their territory or at least substantial parts of it, including restrictions on the accessibility of public spaces, the closure or limited opening of shops, restaurants and pubs, severe capacity restrictions on public and private gatherings and meetings and the imposition of curfews. The combination of those measures substantially affects organisers' ability to gather statements of support in paper form and to inform the public about their ongoing initiatives. Based on the information currently available, those measures, or measures with a similar effect, are likely to remain in place for a period of at least 3 months.
- (6) The Member States concerned represent at least one quarter of Member States, and more than 35 % of the Union population.
- (7) For those reasons, it can be concluded that the conditions for granting an extension of the collection periods are fulfilled in respect of 5 initiatives for which the collection period was ongoing on 1 May 2021. Those collection periods should therefore be extended by 3 months.
- (8) On 19 February 2021, the Commission granted an extension to 14 initiatives. For 9 initiatives it is not possible to benefit from a further extension, as these have already benefited from the maximum extension of 12 months.
- (9) For initiatives for which the collection period started between 1 May 2021 and the date of adoption of this Decision, the collection period should be extended until 1 August 2022.

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

1. Where the collection of statements of support for a European citizens' initiative ('initiative') was ongoing on 1 May 2021, the maximum collection period shall be extended for a period of 3 months in respect of that initiative.
2. Where the collection of statements of support for an initiative started between 1 May 2021 and the date of adoption of this Decision, the maximum collection period shall be extended until 1 August 2022 in respect of that initiative.

Article 2

The new end dates of the collection periods for the following initiatives shall be as follows:

- the initiative entitled 'VOTERS WITHOUT BORDERS, Full Political Rights for EU Citizens': 11 June 2022;
- the initiative entitled 'Start Unconditional Basic Incomes (UBI) throughout the EU': 25 June 2022;
- the initiative entitled 'Libertà di condividere': 1 August 2022;
- the initiative entitled 'Right to Cure': 1 August 2022;
- the initiative entitled 'Civil society initiative for a ban on biometric mass surveillance practices': 1 August 2022;
- the initiative entitled 'Green Garden Roof Tops': 1 August 2022.

Article 3

This Decision is addressed to:

- the group of organisers of the initiative entitled 'VOTERS WITHOUT BORDERS, Full Political Rights for EU Citizens';
- the group of organisers of the initiative entitled 'Start Unconditional Basic Incomes (UBI) throughout the EU';
- the group of organisers of the initiative entitled 'Libertà di condividere';
- the group of organisers of the initiative entitled 'Right to Cure';
- the group of organisers of the initiative entitled 'Civil society initiative for a ban on biometric mass surveillance practices';
- the group of organisers of the initiative entitled 'Green Garden Roof Tops'.

Done at Brussels, 3 June 2021.

For the Commission
Věra JOUROVÁ
Vice-President
