THE 2009 EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVES´ SUMMIT

Salzburg Manifesto
for the European Citizen Initiative (ECI)

UNDER ART 11.4 TEU-To LISBON

ADDRESSED TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

Today, 9 May on Europe Day, European citizens have met in Salzburg, Austria, to assess the preparations towards the implementation of the European Citizen Initiative as proposed by the Lisbon Treaty (Art 11.4). Co-hosted by the Initiative & Referendum Institute Europe (Marburg) and the Austrian Institute for European Law and Policy (Salzburg) the Citizen Summit welcomed the decision by the European Parliament on the pending implementation of Art 11.4., the first transnational direct democratic procedure in history, which will put the citizens on a equal stand with the EU Council and the EU Parliament regarding the right to start legislative action on the EU-level.

It is the understanding of the European Citizen Summit that this new, innovative Citizen Right is an inclusive, integrative and transnational procedure, which as an agenda initiative is neither a petition (as already existing in respect to the EU parliament) nor a full citizen initiative leading to a popular vote, is establishing for the very first time a direct legislative channel for European Citizens.

The Salzburg Summit welcomes the clear decision by the Europen Parliament to agree on a Resolution for an citizen-friendly implementation process on May 7, which demonstrates the will of the parliament to put the citizens on a equal footing as the Parliament and the Council and hence establishing a modern representative democracy on the transnational level, including direct democratic rights. The Summit however understands that several aspects outlined in the EP resolutions needs further improvement including the number of countries from which the signatures must come from, which seems to be too high. Furthermore the Summit does suggest, that the time frames proposed in the EP resolution are too tight and should be extended.

While the work on the regulative aspects of the implementation law now requires to be additionally finetuned and based on a citizen-friendly understanding of the new right, the Summit clearly states that the new European Citizen Initiative right will have to be complemented with a comprehensive supportive infrastructure, including the establishment of a European Citizen Initiative Office as well as financial and administrative advise and support across Europe.

The Salzburg Citizen's Initiative Summit agreed especially on that

1. **the European Citizens' Initiatives (ECI), if they are to become a useful right, need a citizen-friendly design including regulatory actions and efficient proactive support from the EU.**

2. **following the fact that the European Initiative Right is constructed as a mechanism for the input of political proposals from the citizens of Europe, the EU Commission should in principle welcome the initiatives as a support procedure for better and more formally identifying the concrete concerns of those citizens.**

3. **The EU is therefore invited to create a proactive guiding, supportive, consulting and accompanying entity – named the ECI Office.**

4. **Since the envisaged pan-European initiative activity will inevitably include digital means of communication and signature gathering, the ECI Office shall create appropriate E-systems or adopt and adapt existing E-systems and have these operating under the supervision and control of the EU.**

5. **The implemenation regulations have to foresee and come up with pragmatic models for viable and effective solutions. Since the European Initiative Right is an agenda-setting initiative procedure (in contrast to a full citizens' initiative procedure leading to a binding popular vote on substantive issues), complex and expensive high official structures using the 27 national authorities should be avoided.**

6. **Since the European Initiative Right clearly and wisely seeks to facilitate transnational European concerns, any supporting infrastructure should also be located at the transnational European level. National authorities should not need to be used by the EU authorities other than to verify signatures by random control.**

7. **Restrictive measures – such as excluding the admissibility of so- called constitutional initiatives or attaching unnecessarily burdensome requirements – must be rejected. The broadest range of submissions addressed to the EU Commission is to be welcomed.**

8. **As the underlying concept of Art 11.4, means that the ECI is primarily aimed at unrepresented or under-represented citizens, free initiatives which apply for support must necessarily receive basic financial support.**

9. **Initiatives funded by public money are obliged to disclose all formal cooperations with other individuals or organisations in respect of financial support.**