



MINISTER FOR TRADE
AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

12 DEC 2013

Citizens' Initiative

Dear Vice-President Sefcovic,

The Chairperson of the European Affairs Committee in the Danish Parliament, Mrs Eva Kjer Hansen, has brought my attention to the so-called Minority SafePack Initiative.

I understand that the Commission has rejected the request for registration of the initiative because it falls manifestly outside the framework of the Commission's powers cf. Article 4(2)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 211/2011. According to the Commission's letter to the organisers of 13 September 2013 parts of the proposed initiative might individually fall within the Commission's powers to submit a proposal for a legal act. However, the request for registration was rejected since "the Commission considers that there is no legal basis in the Treaties which would allow the Commission to present a complete set of proposals for the "Minority SafePack" as defined in [the] application".

The introduction of the Citizens' Initiative in the Lisbon Treaty was generally considered a significant improvement of democratic legitimacy in the EU as it would encourage citizens to get involved in the democratic process. For this to happen it is of course important that citizens' committees seeking to organise proposals for a citizens' initiative receive proper guidance. It was in that spirit the legislators decided that the Commission should, upon request, provide citizens with information and informal advice, notably on registration criteria cf. Recital 4 of the regulation.

The Regulation on the citizens' initiative has been in force less than 18 months and a review is not foreseen until April 2015. Without questioning the Commission's decision in the concrete case on the Minority SafePack Initiative, I would like to encourage the Commission

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to consider if more could be done to guide citizens' committees which request the registration of a proposed citizens' initiative. For example, the Commission could provide more elaborate answers on requests for registration and, if possible, give an assessment of which parts may fall within or outside the Commission's powers to submit a proposal for a legal act. Such guidance would enable organisers to revise a proposal so that it could be registered.

I am convinced that it would benefit the citizens' initiative if the Commission in the practical application of the Regulation made arrangements to be more attentive to citizens seeking to be involved in democratic process in the EU. We share a common interest in increasing the EU's democratic legitimacy wherever possible and improving the guidance on the registration of citizens' initiatives would in my view be a step forward.

Yours sincerely,



Nick Hakkerup