



EU Fest Teachers Training Programme

Module 2 - Activity: Simulating a European Citizens' Initiative



European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) Simulation

Duration: 15-20 minutes

Group Size: Small groups of 3–5 participants

Materials

- ECI Proposal Worksheet
- Pens or digital collaborative workspace (Padlet, Miro or shared document)

Learning Purpose

This activity introduces participants to the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) as one of the European Union's participatory democracy tools. Through a collaborative simulation, participants experience the process of developing, promoting and evaluating a citizens' initiative while reflecting on how the activity could be adapted for their own teaching context.

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Explain the purpose of the European Citizens' Initiative.
- Describe the main stages of an ECI.
- Develop a proposal addressing a European issue.
- Evaluate how the activity could be implemented with their own learners.

Instructions

Step 1	Form Citizen Groups • Divide participants into small groups of 3–5. • Each group represents a group of EU citizens preparing to launch a European Citizens' Initiative.
Step 2	Develop an Initiative Each group designs an initiative by completing the worksheet. Include: 1. Title of the Initiative 2. European Challenge (What issue should the European Union address?) 3. Proposed Action (Describe one realistic action the EU could take) 4. Expected Impact (How would this proposal benefit European citizens?) Examples include: – Reducing plastic waste in schools – Improving digital safety for children and young people – Promoting media literacy across Europe – Supporting teachers' digital competences – Expanding mental health support for young people – Reducing food waste in educational institutions Encourage participants to choose a topic that is relevant to education, citizenship or current European priorities.
Step 3	Build Support • Each group has 2–3 minutes to present its initiative to the other participants. • After all presentations, participants vote for the initiative they believe would have the greatest positive impact at European level. • Explain that, in reality, a European Citizens' Initiative requires at least one million signatures from citizens in at least seven EU Member States before it can be considered by the European Commission.

Step 4	European Commission Review • The facilitator assumes the role of the European Commission. • For each proposal, briefly explain whether it would: 1. be accepted for further consideration; 2. require further development; or 3. fall outside the competences of the European Union. • Use this discussion to clarify the difference between issues that fall within EU competences and those that remain national responsibilities.
Step 5	Reflection Facilitate a short discussion using the following questions: • Which proposals received the strongest support? Why? • What characteristics made an initiative persuasive? • How does the European Citizens' Initiative promote democratic participation? • How could you adapt this activity for your own learners or subject area?
Facilitator Tips • Encourage participants to focus on issues that fall within EU competences. • Remind participants that the objective is not to design a perfect law but to understand how citizens can influence EU policymaking. • When possible, connect proposed initiatives to current EU priorities, such as the Green Deal, digital transformation, inclusion or education. • Invite participants to reflect on how the activity could be adapted for different age groups and educational settings.	

ECI Proposal Worksheet

1. Initiative Title

Create a clear and engaging title for your European Citizens' Initiative.

1. European Challenge

What European issue or challenge does your initiative aim to address?

Consider whether this issue falls within the competences of the European Union.

2. Proposed EU Action

Describe one realistic action that the European Union could take to address this challenge.

3. Expected Impact

How would your proposal benefit European citizens?

Who would be most affected?



4. Building Support

Prepare a 2-minute pitch to present your initiative to the other groups.

While listening to the presentations, consider:

- Is the proposal relevant to a European challenge?
- Is the proposed action realistic?
- Would you support this initiative?

5. Groups supporting this initiative

- ☐ Group 1
- ☐ Group 2
- ☐ Group 3
- ☐ Group 4
- ☐ Group 5
- ☐ Group 6

6. European Commission Review

Imagine you are presenting your initiative to the European Commission.

Decision

- ☐ Accepted for discussion
- ☐ Needs modification
- ☐ Rejected

Feedback





Reflection

A. What makes this proposal a European initiative rather than a national or local one?

B. How could this activity be adapted for your own learners or teaching context?