

Call for authors

Report on European citizens' initiatives

The Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung (RLS) is an internationally operating, left, non-profit organisation for civic education affiliated with Germany's 'Die Linke' (Left Party). Active since 1990, the foundation undertakes analysis of social and political processes and developments worldwide. We are committed to peace, democracy, social justice and democratic socialism based on international solidarity. The RLS Brussels Office is a think tank that addresses European and international issues from a left-wing perspective and promotes political education.

Background

The European Union is facing a crisis of legitimacy. The democratic deficit for which it is often criticised is partly down to the lack of opportunities for citizens to participate in its activities. Against this backdrop, debates regarding forms of direct democracy have become ever more prominent. European citizens' initiatives are one such participatory instrument: they strive to exert greater influence on the European Commission, and thus on the politics of the European Union, by means of petitions. However, the practical experience amassed to date indicates that citizens' initiatives fail at European level.

The project

In view of these political developments within the European Union, the RLS Brussels Office is issuing a call for authors for a report on European citizens' initiatives. This report should analyse the reasons for the failure of past citizens' initiatives and put forward proposals for alternative direct-democracy tools.

It should be based on the findings of empirical research conducted by the author(s), which should include conducting and analysing interviews with the organisers of sample citizens' initiatives and with NGOs and experts in political science and other related fields.

The report should consist of three sections:

1. an overview of registered initiatives that have garnered responses from the European Commission or have been terminated;
2. an interview-based analysis, involving various stakeholders, of the reasons behind the failure of past initiatives;
3. proposals on alternative forms of direct democracy in the European Union.



The aim of the report is to examine direct-democracy tools in the European Union and the Member States. In this connection, the report should determine which countries of the European Union have direct-democracy processes that are effective tools for political participation and consider how these could be rolled out to all the countries of the European Union. The report should not go into the specific content of the petitions it examines; rather, it should identify and highlight structural and procedural weaknesses.

The report may be written in German or English. It will be published in both languages, with RLS coordinating its translation and layout and covering the associated costs. The report should be approximately 100 pages long; however, its exact length cannot be determined in advance as it may depend on the research findings and methods.

Your profile

- You possess excellent knowledge of the European Union's political system and are well-versed in current political debates regarding direct-democracy tools.
- You have experience in writing journalistic texts, preferably in connection with left-wing organisations.
- You have scientific expertise in methods of empirical social research.
- You identify with the values and goals of the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung.

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Deadlines

- Deadline for applications: 29 June 2020
- Award of assignment: 6 July 2020
- Submission of outline: 3 August 2020
- Submission of draft report: 2 November 2020
- Submission of final report: 30 November 2020

How to apply

The criteria serving as a basis for the award decision are as follows: price (60 percent), synopsis (20 percent) and experience of author(s) (20 percent). Applications may be submitted by individuals, groups or institutes.

The deadline for applications is **29 June 2020, 13:00 (CET)**. Detailed applications, written in German or English and including a brief concept paper, a CV, a price proposal and a list of the individual items, should be emailed to Alexandra Spaeth: alexandra.spaeth@rosalux.org.

Should you require any further information, please email us at this address.

