

# EFA SUMMARY ON THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS INITIATIVE (ECI) FOR NATIONAL REGIONS

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## Basic information

Deadline of the signature collection process: 7 May 2020.

Homepage of the ECI: <http://www.nationalregions.eu/>

Link to the online signature collection site: <https://eci.ec.europa.eu/010/public/#/initiative>

## Aim of the ECI

The regional development policy of the EU should pay special attention to regions with national, cultural or linguistic characteristics that are different from those of the surrounding regions (in summary, these areas are referred to as national regions).

Following a successful signature gathering campaign, the desirable scenario to implement the required “special attention”, would be the establishment of a separate funding scheme within the regional development policy of the EU, that would be accessible directly and exclusively to national regions. This new mechanism would provide additional funding to national regions for their special needs, complementing the sources these territories already receive from other EU funding programmes. The aim is thus to have additional funding that is equally available for all national regions.

Within this framework, we invite the European Commission to implement her obligations under the Founding Treaties, and actively contribute to maintaining the rich cultural diversity of the EU by means of providing proper financial support for national regions to preserve their own specific language, culture and identity within their respective homelands.

## EFA's interest

The ECI is in line with EFA core values and goals, as it aims to contribute to getting closer to a Europe of nations, and peoples by proposing a way to sustain the special characteristics of national regions. The ECI would result in gaining EU recognition for territories EFA represents in the framework of an EU legal act, that would enumerate all national regions of the EU. Involvement in the signature gathering process provides a unique opportunity for EFA to further improve the internal political cohesion among its members by means of cross-border campaigning activities for the ECI. Such campaign activity would increase EFA's visibility all around Europe, and potentially expand the voter base of member parties by emphasizing and being up front with EFA core values, aspirations, and political agenda for several months. The ECI pertains to the human dimension of sustainable development, which provides the opportunity to include EFA's main European coalition partner, the Greens in the campaign.