

European Citizens' Initiative IRELAND



**MAKING PARTICIPATORY
DEMOCRACY HAPPEN!**



EUROPEAN UNION



A landscape of participatory tools at EU level

As a citizen of an EU member state, you also enjoy EU citizenship and have the right to take part in the EU decision-making process. Take a look at the vast landscape of tools that allow you to get involved and shape policies at EU level.

- 1. Vote or run as a candidate in European elections.** Vote for the candidates whose political agenda best reflects your wishes for the EU. Throughout their mandate, keep in touch with your MEPs so they can represent your interests. EU nationals living in another EU country also have electoral rights. [Learn about them.](#)
 - 2. The Conference on the Future of Europe** gives citizens the possibility to join the pan-European debate, organise bottom-up events, and put forward proposals that they consider important for the future of the EU. The Commission has committed to following up on the outcomes of the Conference, wherever possible. The Conference's multilingual platform has been designed to spark a truly pan-European debate, allowing for all Conference-related proposals to be collected. [Activities take place throughout 2021.](#)
 - 3. European Citizens' Initiative** – propose EU action on an issue you care about and gather support across the Union. Once 1 million signatures are collected, you will meet with the Commission and participate in a public hearing at the European Parliament. The Commission will then examine the substance of your initiative and adopt a formal response outlining what action it will take or, if no follow up action is proposed, explain why not. If the Commission considers making a legislative proposal, the principles of subsidiarity, proportionality and better law-making will apply. In most cases, the European Parliament and Council will need to adopt the proposal for it to become EU law. Join one of the upcoming events online to engage with other citizens interested in participatory democracy.
 - 4. The Have Your Say Portal** allows all citizens and stakeholders (public authorities, NGOs, researchers, academics, businesses) to send their feedback and contribute to shaping EU initiatives. Share your views and opinions about upcoming EU laws and initiatives, by answering the questionnaire of a public consultation or commenting on legal drafts. The Commission analyses and sums up the feedback and contributions received. Reports become available under some initiatives. This way you can see how the feedback contributes to fine-tuning the initiatives. [Learn more.](#)
 - 5. The Have Your Say Simplify Portal** allows you to share your ideas to simplify existing EU laws. Your suggestions will be discussed by the **Fit for Future Platform** expert group. Have a look at the list of topics in the Platform work programme and share your ideas to increase their digitalisation potential, to simplify procedures and obligations linked to labelling, authorisations and reporting, or to avoid overlaps or uncertainty. You can also propose new topics.
 - 6. Submit a petition to the European Parliament** regarding the way European legislation is implemented and affects your life. Petitions relate to existing EU activities; they cannot request proposals for new EU laws; they can be submitted by a single petitioner. The Petitions Committee of the European Parliament aims to provide a response to all petitions and, when possible, a non-judicial remedy to legitimate concerns on issues related to the EU fields of activity which petitioners raise. [Find out how it works.](#)
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A landscape of participatory tools at national level - IRELAND



There is a rich participatory democracy landscape in Ireland, where citizens are put at the heart of the decision-making process. Learn more about the instruments available to you in your country.

✎ **Vote or run as a candidate** – elections in Ireland happen at local and national levels. Local elections to elect local councilors occur every five years. At national level, elections usually occur every five years, although a Dáil election (General Election for Lower House of Parliament) can take place more frequently. Seanad elections (for the Upper House of Parliament) must take place not later than 90 days after the dissolution of the Dáil. Presidential elections usually take place every seven years. You can find out more [here](#).

✎ **Voice your opinion in national referendums** – Under Article 46 of the Constitution of Ireland, amendments to the constitution must be submitted to the people for approval by way of a referendum. The proposed amendment to the Constitution must be introduced in the Dáil as a Bill. When the Bill has been passed by both Houses of the Oireachtas (Parliament), it must be submitted to the people for approval at a referendum. If a majority of the votes cast at the referendum are in favor of the proposal, the Bill is signed by the President and the Constitution is amended accordingly. More information [here](#).

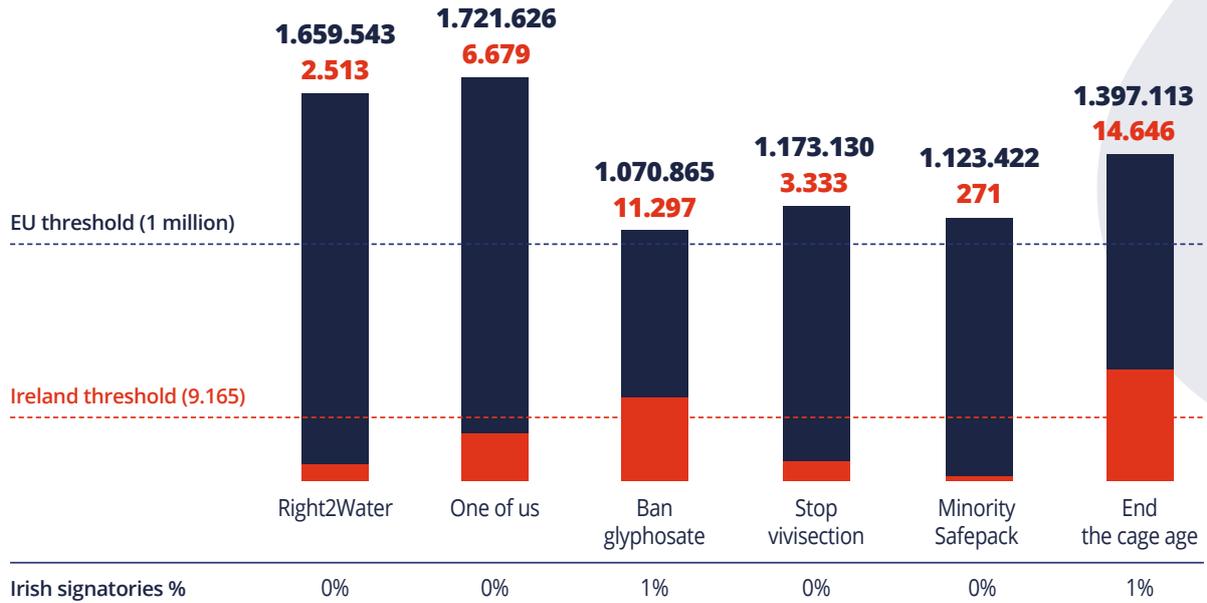
✎ **Get involved at national and local level** – initiatives which facilitate participatory democracy in Ireland include:

■ **Citizens' Assemblies:** they are an exercise in deliberative democracy, placing the citizen at the heart of important legal and policy issues facing Irish society. A Citizens' Assembly brings citizens together to discuss and consider important legal and policy issues facing Ireland. The Assembly then makes recommendations and reports back to the Oireachtas. Members of the Citizens Assembly are selected at random from the electoral register. They reflect Irish society in terms of age, gender, social class and regional spread. Each Assembly agrees its own rules and procedures for how it will carry out its business. Its meetings must follow 6 key principles to ensure fairness and avoid bias. The Assembly may invite and accept submissions from people who are interested in any of the issues being discussed, such as expert advisory groups. When the Assembly finishes considering each issue, it develops a series of draft recommendations and votes on each. It then reports to the Houses of the Oireachtas and makes recommendations. The next step for the Government is to provide a response to each recommendation and arrange for a debate in the Oireachtas. If the Government accepts a recommendation that the Constitution should be amended, its response in the Oireachtas will include a timeframe for the holding of a referendum. Find out more [here](#).

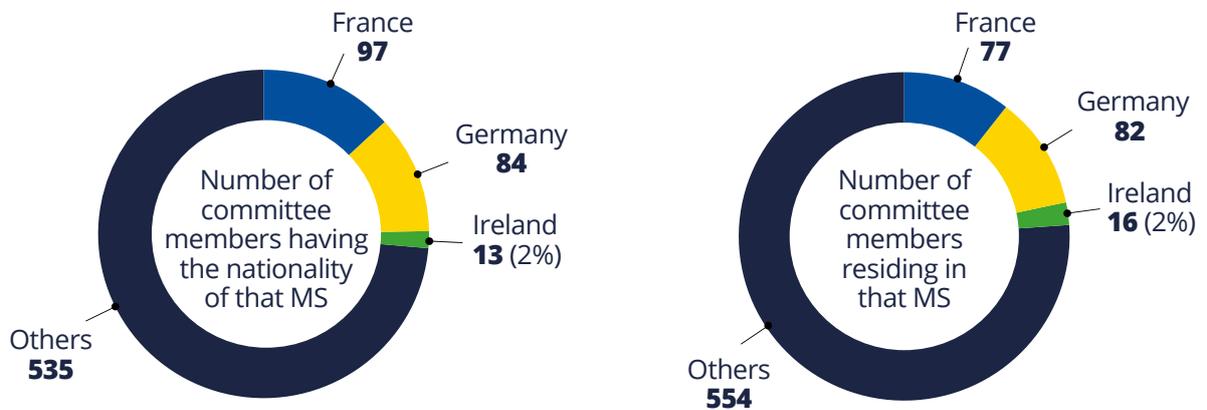


FACTS AND FIGURES – IRELAND

SIGNATURES RECEIVED BY SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVES



NUMBER OF IRISH CITIZENS IN THE GROUP OF ORGANISERS



USEFUL CONTACTS

General enquiries

For general questions on the European citizens' initiative, contact [Europe Direct](#), the European Commission's central enquiry service.

You can also contact a [Europe Direct centre](#) in your country.

Specific enquiries

If you are planning to launch a citizens' initiative, you can get help from:

- the [European Citizens' Initiative Forum](#) – independent support, information and legal advice
- [national contact points](#) – especially on aspects covered by national authorities or law.

National contact points for Ireland

Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Custom House
Dublin 1

telephone: + 353 1 888 2457

telephone: + 353 1 888 2339

telephone: +353 1 888 2249

e-mail: dorothy.kellegher@housing.gov.ie

e-mail: barry.ryan@housing.gov.ie

e-mail: Martin.Hehir@housing.gov.ie



**European
Citizens'
Initiative**