

Stop TTIP self-organised European Citizens Initiative

Press Release

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TTIP / CETA: People power prevails over political pressure!

Landmark ruling by Europe's highest court over the 'Stop TTIP' European Citizens Initiative

10.05.2017 - In September 2014 the European Commission refused to register the European Citizens Initiative 'Stop TTIP'. Today, the European Court of Justice ruled that the refusal had no legal basis.

"The Commission's refusal to register our ECI was arbitrary and political. They were not willing to hear the voices of citizens opposing their neo-liberal projects called TTIP and CETA. We welcome today's ruling as it honors these very voices. Today is a good day for European democracy," says Dr. Michael Efler, a member of the Citizen's Committee which tried to register the European Citizens Initiative (ECI).¹

After the EU Commission's refusal, over 500 civil society organisations launched 'Stop TTIP' in the format of a self-organised ECI campaign. Within one year 3,3 million signatures against TTIP and CETA were collected throughout the European Union while reaching mandatory country quorums in 23 member states (7 are required).² According to Karl Bär, a member of the campaign's steering committee, *"The damage caused by the Commission's rejection is immeasurable. After today's ruling, the 3.3 million EU citizens deserve at the very least a hearing in the European Parliament."*

Today's ruling by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) raises doubts about the role of the EU Commission in registering European Citizens Initiatives. *"We waited for this decision for over two years. In the meantime CETA has been ratified by the European Council and the European Parliament. The Commission should not be allowed to stop Citizens Initiatives so easily; especially given that this is about public participation in decision-making,"* comments Dr. Michael Efler while concluding that *"If the commission refuses to register an ECI, the European Court of Justice should review this decision within a fixed and short deadline."*

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1 <http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/welcome?lg=en>

2 Stop TTIP ECI result: https://stop-ttip.org/about-stop-ttip/?noredirect=en_GB