

Citizens' Initiative: A tool to engage Europeans in EU debates. Joseph Daul MEP, Chairman of the EPP Group

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Commenting on the European Citizens' Initiative to be launched on 1 April, the Chairman of the EPP Group, Joseph Daul, stated:

"The 1st of April 2012 is an important day for European direct democracy. We can even call it a European Citizens' day because it is meant to engage our citizens in truly European debates. The EPP Group will be the people's partner in helping them voice their European concerns.

I see this initiative as a good opportunity for us, European lawmakers, to get closer to Europeans generally, to understand their needs and how to improve their daily lives. This is also a chance for citizens to provide an extra check on the legislative process.

This legal instrument will establish another direct link between citizens and the Union's Institutions, bridging the gap between them.

I call on the European Commission and the Member States to make sure that all the technical details are in place for an effective use of this new tool.

I also call on European citizens to use this tool so that the Parliament does not have to rely only on the points of view expressed by politicians in the Council. Citizens can now represent the Member States directly. The Citizens' Initiative represents a unique exercise in democracy on an EU-wide scale."