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COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION (EU) 2024/441

of 24 January 2024

on the request for registration, pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2019/788 of the European Parliament and of the Council, of the European citizens' initiative entitled 'European Citizens' Initiative in Defence of Agriculture and Rural Economy in Europe'

(notified under document C(2024) 489)

(Only the Spanish text is authentic)

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Regulation (EU) 2019/788 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on the European citizens' initiative ([1]), and in particular Article 6(2) and (3) thereof,

Whereas:

(1) A request for registration of a European citizens' initiative entitled 'European Citizens' Initiative in Defence of Agriculture and Rural Economy in Europe' was submitted to the Commission on 4 December 2023.

(2) The aims of the initiative as expressed by the organisers are divided into three objectives. Through the first objective, 'Protect European Agriculture and Rural Economy with an integral regulatory framework', the organisers call for 'a new, protective legislative framework' revolving around: 'priority use of agricultural land for food production'; guaranteeing 'food sovereignty and security'; 'addressing food chain issues and high prices'; ensuring 'access for farmers and rural communities to infrastructure and transport, financing, digitalization, work, entrepreneurship and education.' The second objective, 'Improve water management to support food security and establish a European Hydrological Plan', calls for 'a European Hydrological Plan that guarantees the supply and distribution of water between all the territories of the Union.' Through the third objective of the initiative, 'Establish a European Agency for Agriculture and Rural Economy', the organisers call for 'a permanent European authority' in the form of an 'EU Agency or high-level consultative Committee to monitor and observe the protection of Agriculture and Rural Economy in the EU decision-making process.'

(3) An annex to the initiative provides further details on the subject matter, objectives and background to the initiative. In the context of the first objective of the initiative, the organisers consider that 'European policies are not delivering a sustainable and long-term strategy for European farmers' and that agricultural production and rural land 'suffer from speculative movements' that 'force farmers to replace their agricultural land by other industries which do not serve the objective of food security.' As regards the second objective of the initiative, the annex explains that that 'healthy and rich water and soil are essential to the rural economy' and states that Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council ([2]) 'has not delivered in its attempt to require Member States to invest in clean rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters and groundwaters.' For the third objective of the initiative, the annex states that the establishment of a 'permanent European authority' operating 'as a consultative body with right to opinion in the policies and legislative dossiers that affect agriculture and the rural economy' would 'ensure that the agriculture and rural economy rights and interests are observed' in the decision-making processes of the Union.

(4) An additional document providing an analysis of the proposed actions has also been submitted by the group of organisers as part of their registration request.

([1]) OJ L 130, 17.5.2019, p. 55, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/788/oj

([2]) Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2000/60/2014-11-20).

(5) As regards the first and third objectives of the initiative, the Commission could adopt a proposal to 'Protect European Agriculture and Rural Economy with an integral regulatory framework' and to 'Establish a European Agency for Agriculture and Rural Economy' based on Article 43 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) on the common agricultural policy.

(6) As regards the second objective of the initiative, calling for the improvement of 'water management to support food security' and the establishment of 'a European Hydrological Plan that guarantees the supply and distribution of water between all the territories of the Union', the Commission has the power to present proposals for legal acts on the basis of Article 192 TFEU, insofar as these proposals can be considered to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Union policy on the environment as set out in Article 191 TFEU.

(7) For those reasons, the Commission considers that none of the parts of the initiative manifestly fall outside the framework of the Commission's powers to submit a proposal for a legal act of the Union for the purpose of implementing the Treaties.

(8) That conclusion does not affect the assessment of whether the concrete substantive conditions required for the Commission to act, including compliance with the principles of proportionality and subsidiarity and compatibility with fundamental rights, would be met in this case.

(9) The group of organisers has provided appropriate evidence that it fulfils the requirements laid down in Article 5(1) and (2) of Regulation (EU) 2019/788 and has designated the contact persons in accordance with Article 5(3), first subparagraph, of that Regulation.

(10) The initiative is not manifestly abusive, frivolous or vexatious, nor is it manifestly contrary to the values of the Union as set out in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union or to the rights enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

(11) The initiative entitled 'European Citizens' Initiative in Defence of Agriculture and Rural Economy in Europe' should therefore be registered.

(12) The conclusion that the conditions for registration under Article 6(3) of Regulation (EU) 2019/788 are fulfilled does not imply that the Commission in any way confirms the factual correctness of the content of the initiative, which is the sole responsibility of the group of organisers of the initiative. The content of the initiative only expresses the views of the group of organisers, and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the Commission,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The European citizens' initiative entitled 'European Citizens' Initiative in Defence of Agriculture and Rural Economy in Europe' shall be registered.

Article 2

This Decision is addressed to the group of organisers of the citizens' initiative entitled 'European Citizens' Initiative in Defence of Agriculture and Rural Economy in Europe', represented by Natalia CORBALAN ROMERA and Adolfo GARCÍA ALBALADEJO acting as contact persons.

Done at Brussels, 24 January 2024.

For the Commission
Věra JOUROVÁ
Vice-President