



Geneva Demopratic Forum 2024

European Citizen Initiative for the Right to Food

In collaboration with



**GENEVA
ACADEMY**

Académie de droit international
humanitaire et de droits humains
Academy of International
Humanitarian Law and Human Rights

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SECOND DEMOCRATIC FORUM 2024

In April 2023, the inaugural Democratic Forum in Geneva convened global leaders, activists, and organizations to address the critical issues surrounding the right to food and food sovereignty. This groundbreaking event resulted in the formulation of the Geneva Right to Food Manifesto, earning widespread support from influential bodies such as the FAO, IFAD, and WHO, as well as endorsements from the UN Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Food and the current Chairperson of the Committee for World Food Security.

In 2024, building on the success of the first Democratic Forum of Geneva, our vision is set to unfold as we host the second Forum with a targeted mission: uniting stakeholders for a European Citizen Initiative (ECI) focused on crafting a comprehensive right to food law. This initiative empowers European citizens to directly participate in the legislative process, proposing new laws that aim to enshrine the right to food across the continent.

Backed by international organizations and esteemed individuals, our forum will be a platform for dialogue, collaboration, and decisive action. By bringing together voices from various corners of Europe, we aim to forge a collective path towards legislative change, making the right to food a tangible reality for all.

This effort builds on the legacy of the first European Citizen's Initiative (ECI) on the right to water in 2013. In May 2024, Mater Fondazione, the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, and other key partners will convene a three-day Forum to elaborate an ECI on the right to food. This builds on the Geneva Right to Food Manifesto adopted in March 2023, translated into 14 languages, and the collective work of European right to food experts analyzing the added value for a just transition towards sustainable food systems in Europe.

The discussion in May 2024 will benefit from the experience of The ECI Campaign, the originator of the ECI, and the insights of initiators of other ECIs, including the right to water and the need to end the cage age.

UNITING FOR THE RIGHT TO FOOD IN EUROPE

In the face of global challenges, the right to food stands as a fundamental human right, and in Europe, we are committed to transforming this principle into a tangible reality. Welcome to our forum, a collective endeavor to establish a European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) for the right to food. Our mission is clear: to create a robust framework that safeguards and enhances access to nutritious food for every European citizen.

Scope of the Forum

Our forum is a convergence of minds, bringing together diverse expertise to address the multifaceted aspects of ensuring food security. The working groups within this initiative span the legal, advocacy, marketing, fundraising, operational, and ecosystem realms. Each group plays a crucial role in crafting a comprehensive strategy that not only leads to the registration of the ECI but also propels a dynamic campaign and oversees progress throughout the entire process and beyond.

A Resounding Call for Change

The tangible outcome of our collective efforts is threefold:

- **Registration of the ECI**
 - Our legal and operational teams will navigate the intricate legal landscape to ensure the successful registration of the ECI.
 - Bureaucratic hurdles will be surmounted, allowing us to lay the foundation for a Europe-wide movement for the right to food.
- **Launch of a Dynamic Campaign**
 - The campaigning group, with its diverse strategies including marketing, testimonials from influential figures, and a robust online presence, will spearhead an impactful launch.
 - Through engaging storytelling and persuasive advocacy, our campaign will resonate with citizens across Europe, compelling them to join the cause.
- **Progress Monitoring and Beyond**
 - As we collect signatures, our operational team will coordinate efforts, utilizing the expertise of NGOs and leveraging alliances at supranational, European, national, and local levels.
 - Post-registration, our ecosystem approach ensures sustainability, with alliances strengthening and decentralizing the movement, ensuring longevity beyond the initial stages.

This forum marks the beginning of a transformative journey: one that empowers citizens, challenges the status quo, and endeavors to embed the right to food in the heart of European policies. Together, let's make a resounding statement that echoes from the supranational to the local, advocating for a Europe where no one goes hungry, and every citizen enjoys their inherent right to food security.

Working group structure Forum 2024

- **Juridical and Legal Framework:**
 - Analysing existing legal structures related to the right to food.
 - Identifying gaps and areas for improvement in current legislation.
 - Collaborating with legal experts to draft a robust legal framework for the ECI.
- **Campaigning:**
 - **Marketing:**
 - i. Developing a marketing strategy to promote the ECI.
 - ii. Creating promotional materials and campaigns for different platforms.
 - **Testimonials:**
 - i. Collecting endorsements from influential figures:
 - ii. Chefs (Bottura, Andres)
 - iii. Artists (Pistoletto, Weiwei)
 - iv. Politicians, Actors, Sports players.
 - **Online Presence:**
 - i. Managing social media accounts to engage with a wider audience.
 - ii. Launching online campaigns to generate public support.
 - **PR:**
 - i. Crafting press releases and media kits.
 - ii. Building relationships with journalists and media outlets.
- **Fundraising:**
 - Setting fundraising goals between 100k to 500k for the ECI.
 - Implementing crowdfunding campaigns and seeking partnerships with donors.
 - Developing a comprehensive financial plan for the entire initiative.
- **Operation:**
 - **Registration:**
 - i. Navigating the legal requirements for registering the ECI.
 - ii. Ensuring compliance with regulations at different levels.
 - **Signature Collection Coordination:**
 - i. Developing strategies for efficient signature collection.
 - ii. Identifying countries with easier signature collection processes.
 - iii. Collaborating with NGOs to gather at least 100k signatures.
- **Bureaucracy:**
 - Creating a streamlined process for navigating bureaucratic hurdles.
 - Developing a team to handle administrative tasks and paperwork.
- **Ecosystem:**
 - **Levels:**
 - i. Establishing connections at the supranational, European, national, and local levels.
 - **Alliance Building:**
 - i. Forming an alliance of at least 100 NGOs.

- ii. Decentralizing efforts to build national and local alliances in eight EU member states.

FORUM 2023

In the canton of Geneva, a myriad of dedicated actors have been actively addressing critical issues surrounding food security and sovereignty, championing the fundamental right to food. Despite its acknowledgment in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), ratified by Switzerland, the right to food had yet to find its place in the canton's constitution.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic exposed thousands in the canton of Geneva to the harsh realities of food insecurity. Responding to this pressing need, the Grand Council (cantonal parliament) adopted a parliamentary initiative during this challenging period to enshrine the right to food in the constitution. In June 2023, the people of Geneva had the opportunity to vote on this significant inclusion.

While there is currently no specific initiative on food sovereignty, a pivotal moment in 2018 revealed the canton's stance. Despite the Swiss population voting against including food sovereignty in the federal constitution, Geneva's residents overwhelmingly voted in favor, indicating a favorable environment for such inclusion at the cantonal level.

In this context, a forum was convened to bring together stakeholders who have tirelessly worked on these crucial matters in the canton. The goal was to facilitate a constructive dialogue on the historical political implications of incorporating the right to food and food sovereignty into the constitution of Geneva. Powered by Fondazione Pistoletto, through democratic collaboration, our objective was to formulate a political proposal and initiate a campaign rallying support for the inclusion of the right to food and food sovereignty in the canton's constitution.

What is a democratic forum?

The forum was structured according to the principles of demopraxis. This method enabled organizations and institutions to meet on an equal footing, sharing their concerns and connecting their practices. This approach distinguished the forum from traditional meetings, as demopraxis aimed to weave together the practices of different organizations and institutions in a governance system emphasizing cooperation and mutual learning.

On the first day, a series of introductions took place, with each organization or institution presenting itself and highlighting its main challenges. Ample time was allocated for collective discussions on the definition of the right to food and food sovereignty.

The second day saw participants organizing themselves into small working groups centered around key issues like availability, access, and quality of food. The goal was to design solutions for potential integration into a draft law and policy proposal on the right to food and food sovereignty, as well as a campaign advocating for their inclusion in the constitution of Geneva.

The third day featured a general assembly where representatives from each working group shared the outcomes of their discussions with all participating organizations and institutions. Based on these insights, all stakeholders collaborated to formulate a comprehensive law and policy proposal.

What is a working group?

A working group is a collection of individuals with knowledge and interest in a specific topic or theme. They come together to discuss, exchange ideas, and confront differing perspectives. Moderated by a facilitator, the group ensures everyone has a chance to contribute while staying on topic. Participants share their experiences, knowledge, and viewpoints, with the facilitator recording key points and synthesizing the discussion.

In the context of the demopraxis forum on the right to food, working groups delved into different aspects of the right to food. Participants included experts and individuals with varied perspectives. Each session lasted for four hours, allowing for a thorough and productive exchange.