

Press Release

(Brussels/Vienna 22.03.2019) ECI STOP EXTREMISM at plenary of EESC - next steps in countering extremism in Europe

The European Citizens' Initiative STOP EXTREMISM presented the results of one year campaigning at the European Economic and Social Committee, discussing with delegates the next steps in countering extremism in Europe. The ECI is also saying „Goodbye“ to former speaker Seyran Ates

The European Economic and Social Committee welcomed the two representatives of STOP EXTREMISM European Citizens' Initiative (ECI), Dr. Sebastian Reimer and Michael Laubsch at its 21 March plenary held in Brussels, presenting the goals of our initiative and discussing together with the delegates our common concerns regarding extremism in Europe.

Luca Jahier, EESC president, welcomed the two speakers from STOP EXTREMISM, saying that it is the tenth ECI to be presented at an EESC plenary and the first one to be presented before the ECI had been officially forwarded to the European Commission, an indication of the level of trust that the Committee enjoyed with Europe's civil society.

Michael Laubsch stressed that the ECI wanted to rouse people from their "EU fatigue", bringing together EU politics, the EU institutions and the people of Europe to discuss how to fight extremism. „Hate is starting to disrupt our society. Our fundamental rights need renewed support, especially from the public“, he said. The EU needs to tackle the big questions, such as extremism and terrorism, because they can only be solved at European and multinational level.

„We need a clear definition of extremism if we are to give the phenomenon real meaning, Sebastian Reimer said in his speech. Fundamental rights should be the guideline and extremists are those who destroy fundamental rights. In order to fight extremism.

Following a fruitful discussion with the members of the EESC, the debate ended with a deep support for STOP EXTREMISM and the ECI tool in general as an indication of the level of trust that the Committee enjoyed with Europe's civil society.

Beside this important step forward for the ECI STOP EXTREMISM, we have to announce that one of our speakers, the German lawyer Seyran Ates, is no longer representing the

initiative. After a year of support and work, she has decided to focus on new projects and therefore will not be able to represent the ECI any further. Sebastian Reimer said, that „Seyran's work for STOP EXTREMISM was a huge support and we wish her all the best for her new work.“