

## **Interview: ECI Ending the tax exemption on aviation fuel in the EU**



### **1. Who are the people behind your ECI?**

We are a group of current and former students from all over the EU. We tried to represent within our citizens committee every sphere of Europe, from the South to the North, and from the East to the West. With this, we hope to create a more enriched environment that can help our ECI grow and succeed. As such, the members of our Committee represent France, Greece & Belgium, as well as Italy, Germany, UK and the Netherlands.

### **2. Which main problems do you want to solve?**

Our journey began when we observed that the most carbon-intensive mode of transportation - aviation - remains outside the boundaries of taxation in Europe. Despite the ever-increasing availability and usage of commercial flights, the horrid environmental impacts of these developments have remained unaddressed. As we realised that most people are not aware of dangers in the development of the aviation sector, we sought to address this growing concern by attracting the attention of not only policy-makers, but first and foremost of the European citizens themselves. The aviation sector continues to enjoy unfair and lucrative tax advantages, while other modes of transportation such as trains cannot compete with the heavily subsidised air-travel industry. That is why, we chose to pursue an initiative that seeks to achieve a logical response: putting an end to the tax exemption of aviation fuel and providing European citizens with more sustainable and viable alternatives for transportation.

### **3. Why choose the ECI procedure?**

The European Citizens' Initiative is the only instrument that citizens can use at the European level to voice their concerns and put pressure on their governments and on the EU.

The aim of the ECI is not only to propose a text, but also to show to national governments that citizens throughout the European Union are concerned about climate change and more importantly that they are ready to take necessary actions to build a greener future. To be adopted, ECI legislative proposals require unanimity in the Council of the EU, that is why it is key for all member states to see that this project is widely supported by their own citizens.

### **4. What is the concrete goal of your ECI?**

The proposal of our ECI seeks the introduction of a pan-European kerosene tax for all flights within our Union. What is equally important is to incentivise people to use alternatives and environmental-friendly means of transportation such as trains, instead of the most polluting mode of transport. Aviation plays a central role in today's globalised world and we recognise that fully. Nevertheless, we believe that substitutes to planes should be promoted by our governments. Therefore, our proposal seeks to create a regressive kerosene tax, which primarily aims at taxing short flights with higher rates. Similarly, we wish to preserve a tax exemption for flights to islands as there are no viable alternatives to air travel.