

On Friday, 8 September 2017, representatives of the legal service of the European Commission met with the organizers of the citizens' initiative on national regions in Brussels. A lawsuit before the Court of Justice of the European Union has been underway on the subject for four years now, since the Commission rejected the registration of the initiative, due to alleged lack of EU competences.

The Szekler National Council that developed the proposal has now initiated a personal consultation, given that the European Commission has abandoned her previously restrictive practices, and partially registered later initiatives, such as the **Minority Safepack** or the **Stop TTIP**

With this in mind, it seemed possible to achieve an out-of-court settlement regarding the citizens' initiative on national regions and the reform of the cohesion policy.

During the meeting with the lawyers of the European Commission, representatives of the Szekler National Council expressed their conviction that within the cohesion policy system of the EU, special rules should be laid down to prevent the economic backlog of national regions and the sustainability of regional cultures. The registration of the citizens' initiative is only the first step in this process. For the sake of settling the case outside of court, the members of the delegation undertook to clarify (as they have been doing so far) that they wish to pursue a legislation that respects EU competences and the sovereignty of the member states.

The Friday meeting saw the first direct contact, in the framework of which the parties carried out a constructive discussion on the disputed parts of the citizens' initiative, and the related legal positions. Although the conciliation proved to be extremely useful, and the parties managed to somewhat align their positions on the legal points in question, a decision is yet to be made regarding the registration of the initiative. As both parties seemed open to align the diverging positions, the initiators trust that an out-of-court settlement may indeed be possible before the conclusion of the judicial proceedings, and that the Europe-wide consultation and signature collection on the issues raised by the initiators can commence.

Press Service of the Szekler National Council

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