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# THE PLACE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS AND PARLIAMENTS IN E-GOV PROGRAMMING (BELARUS, LITHUANIA AND UKRAINE)

ABSTRACT

During the past few years most government agencies in Belarus, Ukraine and Lithuania have established a public face online, and developed e-government related programs: e-Belarus (2002), e-Ukraine (2003), and in Lithuanian, the Strategic Plan for Information Society Development (2001) and the Concept of eGovernmnet (2002). Governments in these three countries are reconfiguring their activities and services in order to make use of the opportunities provided by the Internet and new information and communication technologies (ICTs).

But many decision-makers and researchers still concentrate onesidedly on the provision of electronic services and regard society's participation as an unnecessary complicating factor [Suh, 2005]. They treat people as customers rather than as citizens who are responsible for taking initiative to solve problems; officials fail to grasp the benficial potential of CSOs for their own government work, and programmes focus on improving delivery of government services to citizens, business and other stakeholders.

At the same time, in Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine civil society organizations (CSOs) – from NGOs to business owners – have tended to devote their attention and resources to questions of connectivity, access and community development rather than to the matter of participation in eGov programming. As a result, 1) they lack information about the development of e-government strategies and about who exactly is and could be involved at the planning stages; and 2) bureaucratic procedures and special interest legislative processes have come to deprive citizens of the practical arts of deliberating and collaborating together [Naidoo, 2003].

The upshot is that new ICTs do not effectively serve their purpose – to improve communication among government, citizens, and parliament.

This study shows that the State's present emphasis on e-services and access has negative consequences for good governance if it is focused at creating "markets of individual users" [Reilly, Echeberria, 2003] rather than at creating a collaborative and networked participatory e-government. Instead, citizen participation should become a core principle for eGov (e-government and e-governance) planning.

As things now stand, however, CSOs activists themselves sometimes omit "participation" in their ICT-sphere advocacy. This true even though practice demonstrates that merely saturating access discourages the will to participate on the part of receivers. By contrast, a small participatory project managed by the community itself would accomplish what no focus on access can ever do: namely, improve relations, generate participation, and promote genuine communication [Pasquali, 2002].

This study investigates how  these deficits could be met through citizens participation in the three different  contexts of Belarus, Ukraine and Lithuania.

This study addresses this question in five steps. Part 1 defines the key concepts involved ( e-government, e-governance and related terms,  citizen participation). Part 2 explores the nature of eGov planning in the three countries. Part 3  indicates the principal ways that citizens and citizen groups can participate in this planning procedures and highlights critical issues for future civil society strategies in this sphere. Part 4 explores the challenges that political parties and parliaments face within the framework of eGov paradigm. Part 5 suggests how the challenges can be met, in general, and in the particular context of each country.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

E-government has developed in a diverse manner. Broadly speaking, it began with an emphasis on improving the efficiency of government procedures, and more recently is being recast to include a transition towards participatory and collaborative government. This research seeks to examine and deepen that trend in the cases of Belarus, Ukraine, and Lithuania. The comparative approach is designed to define the factors that shape patterns of CSOs participation and institutional responses to their initiatives, to identify current participants and non-participants and rationale for their attitudes, to analyze and promote best practices in the region and to provide a basis for cross-country partnerships. Such a comparison suggests itself from the three cases' similar historical background, their status as transition countries, and their ongoing dialogue on e-governance, within the framework of various regional and global cooperation programmes.

Specifically, this research entails regular analysis of current national eGov programmes; interviews with stakeholders to analyse eGov associated issues; assessment of citizens' expectations and institutional responses; current scenarios and evaluations.

The theoretical framework adopted here derives from the works of A.Fung, H. Scholl., A. Grönlund, S. Coleman and M. Hemmati, and others (see sources).

Some limitations of the study arise from the fact that the transformations in the three countries is incomplete. Also, it is impossible to be confident that the current state structures and responsibilities will remain unchanged in the short term. The same is true for government strategies, which seem subject to perpetual zig-zagging. In addition, the lack of similar, systemic data collection by government, CSOs and academic institutions in each of the countries means we lack comparable information about eGov development. In some cases, the necessary information is confidential (that is why some data cannot be referenced to the source). At the same time, despite their growing importance, civil society organizations in the three countries remain only partially understood. Even basic descriptive information about these institutions – their number, size, area of activity, sources of revenue and the policy framework within which they operate – is often not available. That is why comprehensive understanding of the role and significance of the civil society sector continues to constitute a major gap in the literature.

PART 1. DEFINITIONS

The concepts of eGov and citizens' participation are relatively new in political and academic discourse. The e-Gov field (also called electronic government, digital government, electronic governance, and similar names) emerged in the late 1990´s.[Grönlund 2004, p. 713]. The concept of citizen participation became popular worldwide with its integration in the declaration of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 [Rio , 1992].

Though a number of "official" definitions of these terms are suggested by UN, World Bank and other international institutions [World Bank, 2004; OECD, 2003, EU, 2004], the theoretical frameworks as well as normative implications of the above mentioned and related concepts are still under debate [Grönlund, 2004].

A conceptual shift from e-government to e-governance and from public participation to citizen participation in political agendas makes clarification of the conceptual framework even more important for this research project. In more practical terms, working out operational frames of reference could forestall problems and clarify the focus of the project.

Beyond, the core concepts of e-governance and citizens' participation, we need to be clear on such notions as e-government, e-administration, e-democracy, governance, access and participation.

## 1.1 eGov

The prevailing definitions of e-government emerged from practice, when governments across the world set up definitions as a basis for national strategies of Internet technology. These definitions include three goals: more efficient government, better services to citizens, and improved democratic processes. [Grönlund, 2004, p. 713]. Over the past few years, in many countries the rhetoric about e-government has undergone changes in two directions [Grönlund, 2004, pp. 718-719]:

1) to emphasize the need for organizational reform to go hand in hand with technology.

> E.g., the US 2002 E-Government Act defines e-government as "the use by the Government of web-based Internet applications and other information technologies, combined with processes that implement these technologies, to a) enhance the access to and delivery of Government information and services to the public, other agencies, and other Government entities or b) bring about improvements in Government operations that may include effectiveness, efficiency, service quality, or transformation;" [U.S. Congress, 2002];

 2) to focus on the role of government in society, that is, governance.

These trends resulted in  the emergence of two related terms: e-administration and e-governance.

*e-Administration* is defined as an administrative solution whereby government services are improved by cutting costs, managing and  monitoring performance, making strategic connections within government, and making administration transparent.

e-Administration connotes intra-organizational relationships or internal and public sector management. It includes: strategic planning in transitioning to electronic delivery of services, quantifying the cost effectiveness of electronic service delivery, benchmarking and performance measurement, human resource management issues like training and recruitment, deployment of staff and maximizing existing resources" [Benchmarking E-governance, 2001]. In other words, e-Administration is understood as "infrastructure management system of eGovernance" [Manuel, 2005].

The term e-governance, like governance itself, includes activities not only by government organizations but also private entities, such as companies, voluntary organizations, and – often forgotten! – individual citizens. Moreover, it features the processes and flows of governance, dimensions that are critical to understanding the context of information systems deployment and use [Grönlund,2004, P.719]

The two extremes of e-governance understandings may be characterized as a naïve one, seeing it as a tool for democracy promotion, and a simplistic one, using ICTs for enhancing service delivery only. M. Finger and G. Pecoud suggest a definition based on their model of three state functions: operations (government), policy making (democracy) and regulation [Finger, Pecoud, 2003, P.2]. (see table)

|  | e-governance as customer satisfaction | e-governance as process and interactions | e-governance as tools |
|---|---|---|---|
| Policy levels | National, evtl local | National, local | National, evtl. local |
| actors | Consumers, administration | Public and private | State |
| Policy functions | **Operations, service delivery** | Operations and policy making | Mainly service delivery |
| Use of NICTS | Substitution and communication | **Interactions** | **Technology driven** |

In this light, *e-government* may be defined as a "form of e-business in governance" for delivery of government services to citizens (G2C), businesses (G2B), employees (G2E) and other governments (G2G) by means of information and communication technologies (ICTs), as well as the "digitalization" or automation of the State's operational functions [Sarker 2004; Finger and Pécoud, 2003; Heeks, 2001].

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*e-Governance* is a concept that implies the growing use of the NICTs for the three state's main information technology functions (e.g., e-government, e-regulation and e-democracy), which increasingly involve non-state actors at levels other than the national one. E-governance is thus a dynamic process enhancing interactions among actors (citizens, consumers, administration, private sector, third sector), among levels (local, regional, state, global), as well as among functions (operations, policy-making, and regulation) [Finger, Pecoud, 2003, P.9].

The advantages of this definition of e-governance are several. Firstly, this definition, being less promotional and more analytical, opens up opportunities to find out more about citizen

participation instead of claiming visionary e-democracy possibilities (which are, in the case of Belarus, unlikely to promote cooperation with the government). Secondly, this definition includes CSOs' participation and is not reduced to mere e-democracy tools such as e-voting, forums, and so on.  As the example of  Belarus shows, pursuit of "democracy" alone – what some call "democratic fetishism" – can have any number of consequences (election of non-democratic individuals to public office). Thirdly, this definition includes not only national and local levels, but regional and global ones.

In "Prisma Strategic Guideline on  eDemocracy" [Kubicek et al.,2003, p.2]  e-democracy is defined as "the use if ICTs  (mainly the Internet, and mobile technologies) and CMC (computer mediated communications) to enhance active participation of citizens and to support the collaboration between actors for policy making purposes without the limits of time, space and other physical conditions in democratic communication, whether acting as citizens, their elected representatives, or on behalf of administrations, parliaments or associations (i.e lobby groups, interest groups, NGOs) within the political processes of all stages of governance. Thus it becomes obvious that e-democracy is one of the tools of e-governance (as democracy is a tool of good governance)" .

## 1.2 Citizens participation
Public and/or citizen participation in policy-making, while always implicit, was made explicit in the declaration of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 [Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 1992].  Principle 10 states that:

> "Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided."

Since that decalration, governments worldwide have recognized the importance of public participation to ensure policy implementation.

But still there is no universal definition for citizen participation or widely accepted general theory of citizen participation. Citizen participation is often defined as a citizen action that influences or seeks to influence policy decisions [Nagel, 1987] or as an action that incorporates the demands and values of citizens into public administration services [Zimmerman, 1986]. Citizen participation can be classified into two categories 1) political participation such as voting in elections or getting involved in political proceedings; and 2) administrative participation such as demanding for or keeping a close watch on administrative operations.

In the Prisma e-Democracy guidelines, participation is regarded as the highest level of interactivity  of citizens' involvement, including referenda, ballots, involvement of representatives of NGOs in legislation and planning procedures, consensus conferences, mediation, round tables, advocacy planning [Kubicek et al, 2003. P. 4].

Theorists of participation normally include in it lobbying, direct contacts, voting, joining organized groups (associations, interest groups, political parties etc.), engaging directly in deliberations about policies or public problems, but some argue that citizen participation is not to be confused with special interest politics and should exclude lobbyists, special interest

spokespeople, and advocates for others [Yankelovich,1998]. Overall, views range from critiques that citizens participation "is not a rational deliberative process" [Yankelovich, 1998] to celebration of the "promises and possibilities of citizens direct participation in the deliberative process" [Fung, 2005].

A. Fung's concept of "minpublic" – generated by descrete bodies of citizens who gather to discuss or decide matters of public concern – may be operationally useful for the given research. A "minipublic" contrasts with two more familiar mechanisms: 1) competitive elections that select professional politicians who theoretically represent societal interests and professional civil service mechanisms that select technical administrators; 2) the wide, diffuse "public sphere" of mass media, secondary associations, and informal venues of discussion [Fung , 2003].

Fung had proposed a typology based on: the scope of participation, the mode of communication and decision, and the extent of authorization (the link between discussions and policy or public action). "In many public meetings, citizens simply receive information from officials who announce and explain policies," Fung writes. "In others, citizens testify and express their preferences. A much smaller set of meetings are actually deliberative in the sense that citizens take positions, exchange reasons, and sometimes change their minds in the course of discussions" [Fung, 2005]. As for the extent of authorization, he adds, "at the low end of this spectrum, citizens gain individual, educative benefits from participation and no more.  In the middle, a great many public deliberations provide advice to officials. A few venues of participatory deliberation are actually vested with authority" [Fung, 2005].

For the purposes of the given study, *citizens participation* is defined as participation in communicative planning by people who are not professional planners or government officials. Such participation may be realized in a number of modes (joining organized groups, through direct deliberative participation, and so on).

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### 1.3 Accessibility.

According to A. Pasquali, the terms "access" and "participation" are often confused (the former substituting for the latter). For example, he shows that in the pricniples set forth in one of the WSIS preparatory documents, the term "participation" does not appear.  Either "we have access with a desire that it be participatory," or we have subjects who are considered only as "users of communication, information networks and the media" [Pasquali, p. 214].

The present emphasis on *access* in e-governance discourse has several perverse effects:

1) a growing ease of access makes participation more difficult and can inhibit it (and vice versa), generating more dependency, paternalism and social cybernetization, which explains the fact that the word "access" abounds in hierarchical business discourse, while participation scarcely appears;
2) saturating the access function, to the point of dumping, discourages and inhibits any potential will to participate on the part of receivers;
3) receiving others' knowledge and opinion without a counterpart can only institutionalize the muteness of the receiver/consumer.

As Pasquali writes, "there is no lack of experiments in raising the access threshold, measuring how much messaging the user can still take in. (Urban neighborhoods have been saturated with up to 500 television channels.) Meanwhile, a modest participatory project, such as a small,

nearby television station managed by the community itself, would do what no overdose of access can ever do: improve relations, generate participation and promote genuine communication" [Pasquali, 215]. Pasquali warns against "access hypertrophy, which can lead to serious participatory atrophy" and insists that specific definitions be given to both terms "where culture and communication is involved", i.e*: access - exercised capacity to receive (decode, come to know, discover, investigate, demand, recover, or place in the public domain) messages of any kind; participation: exercised capacity to produce and transmit (generate, code, provide a vehicle for, disseminate, publish or transmit) messages of any kind* [Pasquali, p. 214].

The term "accessibility" can combine access and participation:

*Accessibility* refers to conditions of access that are inclusive, participatory and normative: Inclusive, by taking account of the needs of all in the design, introduction and evaluation of strategies, policies, programmes and projects; Participatory, by ensuring the participation of all in decision-making with an impact on the life of individuals and communities; Normative, by developing and adopting concepts, procedures and standards that take into account the social, economic, cultural, linguistic, physical and geographical differences of all ) [Roy, 2005]

Part 2. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF EGOV PROGRAMMING IN BELARUS, LITHUANIA AND UKRAINE

In this section, comparing e-government strategies of Belarus, Lithuania and Ukraine, the elements considered are: major impulses behind e-gov programming, history of relevant strategies, institutional structure for eGov planning, and implementation; definitions of e-government in official documents; major objectives and principle lines of work of eGov strategies, and the role of various actors in e-government. The section offers a characterization of each e-government strategy from the point of view of the above-developed e-governance paradigm.

## 2.1. The major impulses behind eGov planning

According K. Reilly and R. Echeberria, typical motivations behind e-government include:

• Political: such as an election campaign promise, or political prestige.
• Economic: including international economic competitiveness, globalization, appearing modern or investor friendly, and pressure from private enterprise, including the IT sector.
• Information Society: such as addressing the digital divide or promoting a knowledge-based society.
• Management of the Pubic Administration: including modernization of the state, government restructuring, coordination of IT infrastructure, efficiency in government, customer relations management, standardization of government operations, and implementation of managerial controls.
• Promises: which include ideas such as good governance; anti-corruption, citizen centered government; customer relations management; use of ICTs to promote or facilitate agendas such as decentralization; use of ICTs to 'improve the quality of life of citizens' or 'facilitate growth and equitable distribution'; change in the culture of government or new values in the public service; and making citizens more confident in their government.
• Pressure from international relationships as well. These impulses come in the form of international meetings, which place nations in comparison to each other, benchmarking studies, and the agendas of international agencies [Reilly, Echeberria, 2003].


Lithuania. E-governance has not become part of a specific agenda in Lithuania. eGov related issues are discussed within the general framework of an information society and IST policy. These policies are characterized by experts as formal and superficial, because in most cases they stem less from internal demand (pressure from local businesses and ICT professionals) than from from international "benchmarking." The pressures (via personalities in and around the administration) often renders IS policies technocratic, technology as a value itself but not as a tool for achieving higher competitiveness and a higher standard of living. Different political parties put different emphasis on IS policy [LFMI, 2003, p.121]. The governing?? Leftist coalition (Social Democrats and Social Liberals) was passive in IS policy. In general, the development of eGov projects has been highly dependent on external factors. Many now perceive that a change in the culture of governance and emphasis on social capital are as important as ICT infrastructure. A shift from an information society to a knowledge society in strategic planning has manifested itself recently.

Belarus. General IST policy is aimed at improving economic efficiency and national competitiveness. Information society issues (or informatization) has never been an issue in election campaigns and still remains marginal for political parties. Any steps taken were dictated by ICT experts and academics, as well as the Ministry of Communications and Informatization. So, policies have been technical, reduced to computerization and automatization. The desire to

establish an online face for the country in the international arena is an important impulse for Belarusian government online projects. But the major impulse behind these activities is economic growth, experts say. The importance of the Internet for governmental activities (and some regulations) were formulated in the State programme of information support for foreign policy and foreign trade for 1999, adopted in 1998. Such programmes are adopted annually [See, for instance, http://pravo.by/webnpa/text.asp?start=1&RN=C20500454]. E-government issues are not connected to the devolution and decentralization of governmental functions. As the head of the Working Committee on e-government Valeri Tsepkalo emphasized, "rigid hierarchical structure of Belarusian government bodies is an indispensable condition for the success of the project, unlike in Denmark and Sweden, for example, where ministries are headed by members of different political parties or divided among federal states in Russia and Germany" [eBelarus 08.12.2004]. Some experts note that often incidental factors stimulate parliamentarians' or governmental officials' activities in this sphere, such as their previous professional experience, or even their children's interest in ICT issues. The other impulse is a desire to make the whole governing structure more transparent and manageable for higher officials themselves (the so-called vertical).

Ukraine. Major impulses lying behind e-government related documents adopted in Ukraine during recent years [see: http://www.stc.gov.ua/ukrainian/info/electr ] may be summed up as: 1) the desire to make governmnetal operations more effective through the use of ICTs; and 2) "international pressure." i.e., the country's image in the international arena. Though information society rhetoric is a characteristic feature of ICT-engaged Ukrainian CSOs [see for instance Information Society www.isu.org.ua], they have been incapable of sustained action in the eGov sphere. The reason is an absence of funding of NGOs engaged in eGov issues and the inability of the government to support such programmes. There is hope that introducing of e-government procedures could make government more transparent and accountable, but, again there are no sustainable policies. Private businesses, such Softline, Intel and Microsoft, remain major "pushers" of e-government procedures in the country [Ведяшкин, 2005].

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eGov projects in all the three countries are generally market-driven rather than strategic choices. In Ukraine and Belarus, they are stimulated to a large extent by the strong demand from businesses and from governments' desire to standardize its operations, and to implement more effective managerial controls. Ukrainian CSOs occasionally raise issues of accountable and transparent e-governance, but they lack sustained strategies. Governments in all three countries consider an online presence important for their international image. But Lithuania, being an EU member, is far more driven by the international context as wel as EU practice. Experts from all three countries emphasize that government officials cannot implement their information society and knowledge society rhetoric, and regard the digital divide and economic and managerial cost effectiveness as major reasons for introducing eGov practices.

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## 2.2. The history of strategies

There are different stages to e-government's emergence. Stage one involves the advent of computer use in governments and the application of networks and in particular the Internet to government activities [Reilly, Echeberria, 2003]. The second stage is characterized by the emergence of government-wide discussions on the issue, including the drafting of high-level e-government programmes. The third stage entails a coordinated e-governance agenda.

But e-government is to some extent the result of an "organic evolution" of governmental operations influenced by ICTs. In that light, the following stages can be recognized:

1) Projects emerge organically from below. In this stage, the more innovative offices in government begin to use Internet in isolated projects.

2) The need for a coordinated agenda is recognized.

a) an office is established, which at this stage, is principally dedicated to identifying the main actors, establishing committees, establishing a basic agenda, getting everyone online, and promoting e-government.

b) if networking and leadership efforts are unsuccessful, the e-government office resorts to working bilaterally with government dependencies in order to realize some concrete advances while promoting the agenda office-by-office.

3) Coordinated agenda. If a certain level of institutional coherence is established in step 2, then the e-government office and its network move on to more concrete efforts such as integration, coordination and standardization. At this stage, government agencies begin to appropriate the agenda and leadership becomes less important than coordination, except in the establishment of overall directions [Reilly, Echeberria, 2003].

Lithuania.  The appearance of information systems inside the Lithuanian state was followed by the establishment of the Ministry of Communications and Informatics and the  1992 adoption of the "National communication and informatics programme. Lithuania 2000." In 2000, a Task Force to prepare the concept of e-government was created, concepts for governmental Internet sites were developed, and unified Internet gateways (www.Lietuva.lt and www.Lithania.lt) were launched.  In the same year, responsibility for state information policy was transferred from the Ministry of Public Administration Reforms and Local Authorities to the Ministry of the Interior (in particular its Department of Information Policy).

The next year, the Government set up the Information Society Development Committee, with responsibility for regulation of information technologies and telecommunications, and coordination of the development of the Information Society.  Lithuania's Concept of Information Society Development was adopted in February 2001, followed in August with the adoption of the Strategic Plan for the Development of Information Society for 2001-2004. The main directions highlighted in this Plan are skills, public administration, electronic business, culture, cultural heritage and language. This Strategic plan is co-coordinated with the eEurope+ Action plan. In 2001, Lithuania established a Council of Knowledge Society under President of Lithuania Republic, a Commission for Information Society development under Prime Minister of Lithuania, and Committee for Development of Information Society under the Government of Lithuania.

In 2002, a number of strategic documents concerning an e-government agenda were adopted: Long-term Development Strategy of the State, Strategy on Creation of Integrated System of the State Registers  and Position Paper on e-Government (the 'Concept'). Next year Implementation plans on the Position Paper on e-government and on Creation of Integrated System of the State Registers were adopted.

In 2004, the Information Society Development Committee unveiled the official  "E-Gate of the Government," an Internet portal (www.govonline.lt, www.evaldzia.lt, www.epaslaugos.lt.),a nd 2004 became an "e-services year" in Lithuania.  In May,  a "Pilot Project of Electronic Signature Implementation in the  Public Institutions" was launched and the Information Society Development Committee published "The Model of Electronic Public Services.  In July the Lithuanian Parliament passed a Law on Amending the Law on State Registers. This Law establishes the setting up, management, reorganization and liquidation of state registers; the

system of state registers and the general principles of interaction between state registers; rights and duties of leading state register management bodies, state register management bodies, state register supervisory institutions, state register managers, state register data suppliers and recipients. In 2004, the Lithuanian Parliament endorsed a Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania for 2004-2008. One of its aims is to "encourage the development of the IT and telecommunications sector and to put the Lisbon strategy and e-action plan into practice." It also intends "to arrange for e-government services to be provided for both private individuals and legal entities and to link state registers and information systems into a secure public institution network." The Lithuanian government adopted a "Strategy on the Development of the Public Administration Sector until the year 2010." The use of Information Communication Technologies is one of the key aspects of the plan [IDABC eGovernment Factsheet; IDABC E-government in Lithuania].

The current e-gov strategy is based on documents developed in 2001-2002: E-Europe Action Plan+, Conception of the Development of Information Society, Resolution of the Seim (Parliament) on the Priorities in the Development of Knowledge Society and Knowledge Economy and Position Paper on e-government.

Belarus. Computers were introduced into governmental agencies in 1991; an Informatization Programme for 1991-1995, and then for the period up to 2000, were adopted. In 1992 the Informatization Fund under the Ministry of Economy was created. The major objective of the Fund was to provide financial support to the projects connected with the programme of informatization. In 1993 because of the lack of resources the programme of informatization was suspended, though some educational projects and some projects of the Ministry of Internal Affairs were still implemented. A technocratic attitude to "informatization" prevailed, which was reflected in the Law on the basics of state scientific and technical policy adopted in 1993. The same year the State Committee on Science and Technology under the Council of Ministers was established; the next year it was subordinated to the Ministry of Education.

The Law on Informatization was adopted in1995. According to the Law, the basic principles of informatization in the Republic of Belarus are: wide public online access to information; government participation in the development of the national informational resources; data security and protection [See Russian version at: <http://www.mpt.gov.by/baza/informatiz.htm].

The year 1997 may be considered as a milestone for eGovernmnet practices in Belarus. This year the Committee on Science and Technology became a State Committee and acquired status equal to that of a ministry; the Informatization Fund became a state fund (without private participants) and was subordinated to the Committee on Science and Technology. A Regulation of the Council of Ministers ("On official information in the global computer network Internet") was adopted. In order to carry out the Regulation, a special Interagency Commission was created (Ministry of Statistics, Ministry of External Economy Relations, Ministry of Communications, Committee of State Security, State Committee on Science and Technology, State Committee on Printed media and etc.). Since 1998, the Council of Ministers has adopted annual State programmes of information support of foreign policy and foreign trade; the current is September 2005 [See Russian version at http://pravo.by/webnpa/text.asp?start=1&RN=C20500454].

In 1998, the web-site of the National Center for Legal Information (www.ncpi.gov.by) was launched. The portal, the main governmental e-resource on legislaton, is aimed at providing citizens with information about legislation and improving legal activities of the government In 1999 an Interagency Committee on Informatization was created to develop a state informatization policy. The latter, adopted the same year, states that a transition to the information society is the major objective of the Belarusian government strategy in the sphere of

informatization. Development of infrastructure and security of information are pointed up as the basis for the transition, while no e-government related initiatives were mentioned in the Concept [See Russian version at http://pravo.by/webnpa/text.asp?RN=P39900195].

In 2000, the State Center on Information Security was created, and Law on electronic document and Decree of the Council of Ministers "On state registration of information resources" were adopted. In 2001 the State Committee on Science and Technology, State Supreme Attestation Committee and State Patent Committee were unified into Science Committee under the Council of Ministers. In 2002 Interagency Commission on Informatization worked out a "Programme for the widespread introduction of information technology to government for 2003-2005 und up to 2010 (Electronic Belarus)" which was adopted by the Council of Ministers. "E-Belarus" is aimed at developing governmental ICT infrastructure and the co-ordination of the introduction of ICT into administrative practice at all levels - from local authorities to ministries. The programme also provides measures for the promotion of e-commerce and e-learning in the country. Some e-government initiatives are mentioned as possible next steps after a successful implementation of the programme [See Russian version at: http://www.mpt.gov.by/baza/ebelarus_prog.htm]. This year may be considered as the beginning of a new period in the "history of eGov" in Belarus, as e-government agenda was officially articulated. At the same time no coordinated programme has been worked out yet and projects emerged organically from below.

In 2004, a Working committee on e-government was founded. The working committee was to submit proposals to the government on integrated information systems by 15 January, 2005. According to the head of the Committee, Valeri Zepkalo, the government hoped that an integrated system, and, in particular, web-based internet applications, would provide Belarusian citizens and businesses with more convenient access to government information and services. The integrated governmental information system was due to be completed by the end 2005 [http://www.dmeurope.com/default.asp?ArticleID=4832]. In 2005, the Council of Ministers issued a "Decree on the governmental website" to regulate these activities [See Russian version at http://pravo.by/webnpa/text.asp?start=1&RN=C20500764]. The Regulations on the House of Representatives web-site (based on Guidelines for the content and structure of Parliamentary Web Sites. – Inter-Parliamentary Union, Geneva, 2000) were developed in 2003 [Zelenkin, 2004].

The current eGov activities of Belarusian government are based on eBelarus programme, Concept of the CIS information infrastructure building and the country's laws and documents mentioned above. eBelarus states that the first stage of the programme will lay the basis for the introduction of e-government procedures.

Ukraine. eGov emergence may be located in the period of 1993-1995, when the National Informatization Policies presidential decree was published (1993) and a National Agency on Information Society Issues was created (1995). Though the National Concept of Informatization adopted in 1998 didn't use the term e-government, it created a unified state information resources system to support functioning of national government and local administration as one of the priorities. The president's March 13, 1999 decree created the Government Committee of Communication and Informatization of Ukraine by merging the Government Committee of Communication and the Government Agency of Informatization. Further, the same decree created the Government Committee of Information Policy from the former Ministry of Information [ Жданенко, 1999; Іванов, 1999].

E-government (understood as a unified system of governmental information resources) became an agenda in 2000, when following the Presidential address to Verchovnaya Rada "On the domestic and International situation of Ukraine in 2000" 62 servers were established, which are

used to inform citizens about the activity of government agencies. In 2001-2002 within the joint project of the State Committee on Communications and Informatization and Information Center Electronic News "Trancperancy of Local Administration" recommendations on information updating at governmental web-sites (2001),on the structure of the governmental agency web-site (2002). In 2002 State Committee on Communications and State Committee on information policy, TV and radio broadcasting issued a decree on information and technical support of a unified web portal of the executive governmental agencies and about rules of functioning of the executive bodies web-sites (2002).But at that time eGovernment was discussed only superficially as a part of information society programmes.

Since 1998, the Ukrainian government has produced a number of normative documents, which are forcing state bodies to publish on the Internet the information about their activity. As of today there is a functioning government portal, which is a gateway to the existing sites of state departments. The government bound all state departments to have its sites on the Internet. In accordance with the legislation of Ukraine the requirements of government for the sites of state bodies are limited by the arrangement of information about the department, its leaders and operational procedure with the citizens. Taking into account the fact that until now in Ukraine the e-signature is not used for the work with the documents; state departments are not accepting e-documents from the citizens and organizations. However, based on the initiative of some departments they have e-receptions, where user can leave information inquiry. There is no obligation for the department to provide answer to such information inquiry.

As an experiment, Ukraine's tax administration accepts tax account reports from enterprises in electronic form. These reports are provided on a floppy diskette – in other words there is no on-line submission over the Internet. Experts indicate that the problem is in the fact that in Ukraine there is no law "about electronic-digital signature," which would make facilitate introduction of on-line services by state departments.

Current eGov strategy is based on the documents 2003-2004: The Cabinet of ministers resolution "On creation of the informational system "Electronic government of Ukraine" (2003), eUkraine (2004), On the concept of the system of national information resources(2003), On providing governmental services to citizens and judicial bodies through the Internet (2005) and numerous secondary legislative acts as well as on National Informatization Programme(1998) and eEurope Action Plan+ [see State Committee on Communications and Informatization website http://www.stc.gov.ua/ukrainian/info/electr]

E-government (defined as introduction computers in government activities and application networks) emerged in 1992-1993 in all the three countries. E-government became an explicit agenda in 2000 in Lithuania and in 2003-2004 in Belarus in Ukraine. In Belarus and Ukraine eGov projects emerged organically from below, and, though the need for coordinated agenda has been recognized, leadership efforts have been lacking. In Lithuania, according to experts, coordination of eGov efforts is weak but trying to improve. But in none of these countries has e-governance, or at least e-government, become a priority, and there is no certainty how e-governance issues could be prioritized within a wider public.

## 2.3.Institutional structure

Lithuania. The institutional structure of e-gov strategy in Lithuania has undergone significant changes since 1992 (see History). At present, the principal institutions in e-government field are
-Information Society Development Committee under Seimas

- Information Society Development Committee under Government
- Information Society Development Commission of the Government headed by Prime Minister
-Knowledge Society Council under the President
- Ministry of Interior and its Information Policy Department
- other ministries (education, economy)

The Information Society Development Commission of the Government takes strategic decisions. It serves as a bridge for IST issues and decisions to be passed to the Government. This is a rather successful set-up, as IST issues are often too specific to be addressed directly at cabinet sittings. Outside experts are also more frequently invited to meetings of the Commission.

The task of the Information Society Development Committee is to develop strategic plans and implementation measures at the state level in accordance with EU guidelines. It is responsible for observing, designing, arranging and coordinating projects of e-Gov. It collects information on IS in Lithuania and the European Union, evaluates budgets for ICT projects in ministries, deals with integration of state registers, the use of the Lithuanian language in IT, the use of open code SW and the regulation of Internet content. It temporarily serves as a supervisory institution and prepares by-laws for qualified e-signature certification centers, sets e-qualification standards for public officials, etc.

The Knowledge Society Council under the President comprises public representatives, including academia and business people, politicians and public activists. Its task is to represent public opinion on IST issues at the highest, presidential level. Its influence depends on President-Government relations and the president's general influence.

The Ministry of Interior participates in the formation of strategy and in coordinating and supervision e-government projects and electronic service delivery, in particular from security of information technologies. The Ministry of Education is engaged in computerization of educational establishments, first of all secondary schools, and e-education programmes. It draws student enrolment plans for tertiary institutions. The ministry has already experience in working with municipalities and private public partnerships, especially in the field of computerization of schools. It is also possible to mobilize more resources than the ministry's alone. The Ministry of Economy deals with IS issues from the perspective of industrial policy. Its activities are mainly related to SME support programmes, business incubators, technology parks and similar subsidy-type engagements. The ministry's administrative capacities in IS policy are weak, both in terms of staff and experience. The Ministry of Economy is also in charge of the work of the so-called Sunset Commission, an interagency, public-private initiative to identify and reduce regulatory obstacles to business development. Although a separate group to deal with ICT was established within the commission, the results proved to be negligible [IDABC E-government in Lithuania].

Belarus The Institutional structure for informatization (and e-gov projects) implementation has undergone significant changes since 1991 (see History). At present, the principal institutions in e-government field are:
- Council of Ministers
- Interagency Commission on Informatization
- National Academy of Science (Center for Information Technologies)
- Center  for Information Security
- National Center for Legal Information
- Ministry of Communications and Informatization
- other ministries and state committees responsible for particular projects.

The Council of Ministers [http://www.government.by/ru/rus_news.html] adopts strategies and major programmes and coordinatse various agencies' activities in the field.

The Interagency Commission on Informatization was created to develop strategic guidelines for informatization policies and coordinate various agencies' activities in the field. At present it does not function now, though has not been dismissed officially.

The National Academy of Science (Center for Information Technologies) [ http://www.bas-net.by/ind.htm] is supposed to develop strategic plans and implementation measures and temporarily serves as a supervisory and coordinating institution when preparing by-laws, qualification standards and assessment surveys.

The National Academy of Science and Ministry of Communications and Informatization [http://www.mpt.gov.by] are in charge of implementation of eBelarus programme. Ministry of Communications and Informatization is responsible for the budget of the programme and for coordination activities. Ministry of Communications and Informatizations coordinates infrastructure projects.

The Center for Information Security is responsible for developing and providing electronic documents circulation systems for government agencies, of state standards for digital electronic signature and digital electronic signature certification and various security issues. National registration of domain names (by) is also the competence of the Center.

The National Center for Legal Information [http://ncpi.gov.by/ncpi.asp?idf=1&idt=6] is "a central state scientific and practical institution in the sphere of computer accumulation, storage, systematization and rendering for usage of standard legal information on paper and electronic (magnetic) carriers and creation of the interstate system of legal information exchange"[NCLI: Information]. The Center supports the standard databank of legal information of the Republic of Belarus and also computer databank of law drafts of the Republic of Belarus; organizes the dissemination of legal information; participates in creation of automated systems of inter-state legal information exchange and also in forming a single information space of the Commonwealth of Independent States; maintains the National Legal Internet-Portal of the Republic of Belarus.

The Ministry of Economy[http://www.economy.gov.by/] deals with IS issues from the perspective of industrial policy. The Ministry of Education[http://www.minedu.unibel.by/] is engaged in computerization of educational establishments, first of all secondary schools, and e-education programmes. It draws student enrolment plans for tertiary institutions. State Committee on Science and Technology[http://www.gknt.org.by/] is effecting the state regulation in the sphere of the scientific and innovation activity, as well as protecting intellectual property rights.

Ukraine *(to be developed)*
At present, the principal institutions in e-government field are:
Cabinet of Ministers
Coordination Council on Informatization issues in the Cabinet of Ministers
Ministry of Transport and Communications
State Committee on Communications and Informatization
State committee on Communications and Informatization [http://www.stc.gov.ua/ukrainian/info/politics] is the major implementing body in the sphere of informatization and is directly subordinated to the Cabinet of Ministers

e-government is associated with information society and modernization of the state or public sector management; is located in a dependency of the President's office. A lack of a stable institutional framework prevails. There is no a single coordinating body.

## 2.4. Definitions of e-government as presented in official documents

One of the major objectives of this study has been to understand how governments are defining the concept of e-government and to what extent they are aware of the fact of a paradigm change in e-governance.

Lithuania. At present there is no one common definition of e-government. Some definitions focus on technology, others emphasize service or competence of public administration. Usually the definitions point out that e-government is a provider of public services in distant way [Zailskaite]. E-government is understood as a tool for implementation of a public administration reform and state functions [Matulis, presentation]. The concept of e-government was formulated by the Ministry of Interior. The concept is coordinated with eEurope + action plan, which says only about government online: electronic access to public services with related benchmarks – percentage of basic public services available online, public use of government on-line services an percentage of public procurement which can be carried out on-line.

Belarus  The eBelarus programme defines "electronic government" as an automated information – analytical systems to support decision making process concerning governing economic development of the country, which will foster improvement and efficiency of central government and of local administrations on the basis of information and communication technologies [Вестник связи, 2003]. But this definition is not satisfactory even for governmental actors. There is an understanding that e-government is much broader concept and includes:
1) internal administration efficiency through a developed corporate network with the focus on coordination of subdivisions activities;
2) information-analytical system (data-base) for long term strategies development;
3) creation  of a unified data bases for public use;
4) services for specific target groups [Ладес, 2005].

Ukraine
"Electronic Government" is a system, through which informational-legal relationships among executive power bodies and between the latter and citizens and juridical persons are realized by way of use of Internet-technologies"[E-Ukraine] At the same time website of the State committee on Communications and Informatization suggests the term e-state ("Електронна держава" ), which means [ see http://www.stc.gov.ua/ukrainian/info/el_ukraine. ]:

1) wide usage of modern ways of communications, Internet in particular, at all levels of state governing – from central government to local administrations,
2)  introducing of electronic workflow in government agencies,
3)  integration of local agencies' networks into a unified government network,
4) Internet access for civil servants,
5) Provision of interactive participation of citizens in "state processes", in particular in elections.

The term "e-governance," though occasionally used in official discourse, serves as a synonym of e-government [see: http://www.stc.gov.ua/ukrainian/info/electr].

In all three countries there is no an standard official definition of e-government. In legislative acts, e-government is broadly described as computerization and automation (replaces current human-executed processes), informatization (provides information supports to current human-executed processes or/and e-services. That complicates any assessment of e-government progress and hinders the shift to an "e-governance paradigm". Even more, that leads to misunderstanding of eGov (and the host of notions associated with it) as a merely governmental (public administration) issue.

## 2.5.The major objectives, principles and lines of work of eGov programmes

Lithuania Objectives and lines of work in the sphere of eGov are defined in "Conceptual framework of the national information society development in Lithuania" [http://www3.lrs.lt/owa-bin/owarepl/inter/owa/U0091079.doc.] and in "Concept of e-government" [http://europa.eu.int/idabc/en/document/1343/403]

The "Conceptual framework of the national information society development in Lithuania" states among its key objectives (article 6.2) modernizing the management of the state, which requires "the utilization of computerized information sources, the creation of the adequate legal environment, the development of electronic government… and e-democracy; to provide the public with factual possibilities to obtain information from all public authorities, to create conditions for the development of information society of Lithuania and to submit proposals, criticize and participate in decision making". Though the issues of e-democracy and e-governance are not elaborated further in the document, article 14.3 sets the task "to design modern IT tools to assist the government, ministries and public authorities in the fulfillment of their functions by establishing data management information systems for the implementation of key state functions".

The concept specifies the following objectives:
- to develop effective means that will allow adapting public administration to modern needs,
- to reform decision making process in the degree that public administration should suit the modern management knowledge,
- to increase the speed of the services of public administration and improve their quality.

Within these objectives, creation of integrated systems of state registers, integration of Information systems of State Tax Inspection and State Social Security, and delivering 19 government services on the Internet by 2005 are priorities. It is stated that e-government is to be realized through a number of small projects.

Belarus. In Belarus e-government projects are carried out in the framework of eBelarus programme [www.mpt.gov.by/baza/ebelarus_prog.htm]. According to the programme, major objectives in eGov related area are:
- strengthening of the leading role of the state,
- creating of the national informational system meant for selection, processing and accumulation of information about basic elements of social, economic and political processes in society and formation of the appropriate national informational resource,
- improving of state bodies activity basing on ICT use,
-  increasing of the effectiveness of governmental managing functions on national and local levels

The programme states that, in 2004-2005, projects providing interaction between automated informational networks of state bodies are to be accomplished thus providing basis for establishing of "Electronic Government" will be created [e-Belarus].

Ukraine  The key document "On creation electronic information system 'Electronic government'" was adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers in 2003 [see: http://www.stc.gov.ua/ukrainian/info/electr].  The main tasks are:

- organization of reliable informational communications between subjects of the state power of all levels,
- creation of centralized databases to provide all structural subdivisions of the bodies of the state power with work facilities;
- delivery of informational services to the citizens through the Internet in a convenient and trustworthy form and ensuring realization of all aspects of informational interaction of citizens with state institutions;
- introduction of electronic democracy as a form of ensuring "transparency" in relationships citizen-state, elector-deputy. Creation of the electronic voting system.

As a result of the introduction of the System, the following can be expected:

- growth of trustworthiness, completeness and "operationality" of information, which is used and stored at governmental bodies;
- "transparency" of execution of resolutions and instructions to the government by the executive bodies and a high level of control over their execution;
- reduction of overhead expenses in governmental institutions;
- growth of confidence of the society to the work of the Government;
- ensuring interaction between citizens and governmental bodies with realization of a feedback, directed to meet individual informational needs of the population of the country in the field of obtaining necessary information and delivery of individual data, directed from citizens to the governmental institutions.

In accordance with the resolution draft the creation and introduction of the electronic informational system  "Electronic Government" is meant to be realized in three stages:

1) creation of the Unified web-terminal and integration thereto of web-sites and electronic systems of the executive bodies;
2) delivery of informational services of general purpose to citizens and juridical persons via Internet;
3) delivery to citizens and juridical persons via Internet of financial, commercial and other services, which need identification of subjects of legal relationships and ensuring integrity and trustworthiness of the information.

By July 2003, it was planned to develop and approve enumerations of the obligatory services of general and special purpose, and order their delivery via the "Electronic government" system starting from 1 January 2004. [DATES?]

> Governments in the three countries are pursuing e-government transformation in one way or another. But policymakers in each country have adopted different eGov approaches defined by dominating visions of governance. For the Lithuanian government, e-services are priority. The Belarusian concept of e-government is based on strengthening the managerial capacities of national and local governments. Governmental resolutions in Ukraine emphasize information provision and transparency as key elements of electronic government.

**2.6. The major actors and multistakeholder partnerships**

There is a general understanding in all the three countries that eGov programmes can be implemented on the basis of multistakeholder cooperation. Thus, eBelarus programme states that "achievements of informatization would be bigger with the existence of the integral programme of informatization development in the Republic of Belarus which joins efforts of ministries and other republic bodies of state management, non-governmental sector of economy, scientific and educational organizations" [eBelarus]. Governments seek financial assistance and technical expertise from ICT businesses. International bodies (World Bank, UNDP, CEENet and others) as well as national NGOs provide assistance in the form of benchmarking and training.

Each country has established multistakeholder partnerships.

Belarus has three partnerships contributing to the Information Society development: community of specialists and Belarus Development Gateway Partnership.

The Internet Forum is a community of specialists created in 1999 by the initiative of civil society and the Internet community. About 500 representatives from different communities participate therein. The community does not have a form of corporation.

The Belarus Development Gateway Partnership was created in 2004 under the initiative of NGO "Information Society". At present the partnership is obtaining the legal entity status. The partnership conducts conferences and seminars, including specialized seminars "Mass Media in Information Society" Participaqtes in organization of annual Belarusian Congress on Telecommunications, Information and Banking Technologies, Belarusian Internet Forum, International Conference "e-Trade in CIS countries" [Ershova, Hohlov, 2004].

The Belarusian Association of IT Developers advocates IT sector issues and concerns on local and global levels. It establishes cooperation with state structures, public [http://www.infopark.org/main.aspx?uid=79080].

There is a strong feeling in the country that "it is necessary to stimulate the co-operation of government, representative bodies, civil society organizations and international structures in order to provide conditions requisite for the development of a common infrastructure" [Popov, 2004].

In Ukraine, the Ukraine Development Gateway Project team established NGO "Ukraine e-Development Association" in 2001. Its members are the leading companies in the ICT sphere, multinational corporations and NGOs. One of the key projects conducted by the association is "Creating Regional Information Gateways and Information Centers on the Basis of Public Libraries in Ukraine" [http://www.e-ukraine.org/e-ukraine/mainindex/]

In 2002, the Information Society of Ukraine Foundation, Institute of the Information Society, International Renaissance Foundation and Internews initiated creation of forum of non-governmental organizations in the sphere of ICT and telecommunications. The organizations use discussion forums and working meetings for experience sharing. In 2003, Information Society of Ukraine Foundation initiated summoning public working group "e-Ukraine" with participation of civil society and research and education community"[Ershova, Hohlov, 2004]. Many of this multistakeholder partnerships were but temporary coalitions, working groups or task forces.

In Lithuania, major multistakeholder partnerships are Knowledge Economy Forum and association Infobalt. "Knowledge Economy Forum", established in 2001, includes managers of Lithuanian companies working successfully in the areas of information technology, laser

technology and biotechnology, scientists and politicians. "Infobalt", established in 1994, includes information technology, telecommunications and office equipment companies, educational institutions and public organizations. Other multistakeholder partnerships are established mainly on separate dimensions of IS development and are not large enough.

In all countries governments are major stakeholders in eGov programming as it is connected, in one way or another, with administrative reforms. The private sector, especially national IT application developers, and national academic institutions are normally seen by the government as essential partners. NGOs regard their participation in eGov project as the means to enhance human capacities and to empower local communities. As a result, only senior government officials, national private ICT businesses, academic institutions lobbying groups, and, to some extent, international bodies assume roles in eGov programming.

The lower and middle bureaucracy, organized groups of citizens, and local communities, not to mention individual citizens, remain passive and unresponsive to the eGov efforts of their governments. The same passivity characterizes the representative bodies of the three countries.

## 2.7.Conclusion

Governments in the three countries are pursuing e-government transformation in one way or another. Each country has worked out a general conceptual framework for eGov projects. E-services and provision of information are the central concerns of eGov programming. Governments take the role of leaders and set agendas in eGov programming. Citizens and organized citizens' groups and, generally, parliaments are not agenda setters. The private sector is viewed by governments as a source of information and finance, as well as an ICT products supplier. Citizen groups are not recognized as valuable contributors to eGov agendas. Even in Ukraine, where civil society actively tries to win a place in eGov agenda setting, the government remains the main player. The role of parliaments highly depends on the individual will and capacities of MPs, as in Lithuania, where only members of Seimas Information Society committee in 2000-2004 were active advocates of eGov initiatives. Citizens occasionally are invited to discuss some eGov issues, but the absence of an established institutional framework for deliberative participation makes such initiatives futile.

PART 3 PARTICIPATION OF CITIZENS AND CITIZEN GROUPS IN THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF EGOV PROGRAMS

**3.1. Political contexts** *( to be developed)*
This section will address issues of political participation context in Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine from socio-economic, political culture and institutional perspectives.

**3.2. Rationale for citizens participation in eGov programming** *(to be developed)*
Major characteristics of eGov programming in Belarus, Lithuania and Ukraine as described in Part 2 may result in two major consequences:
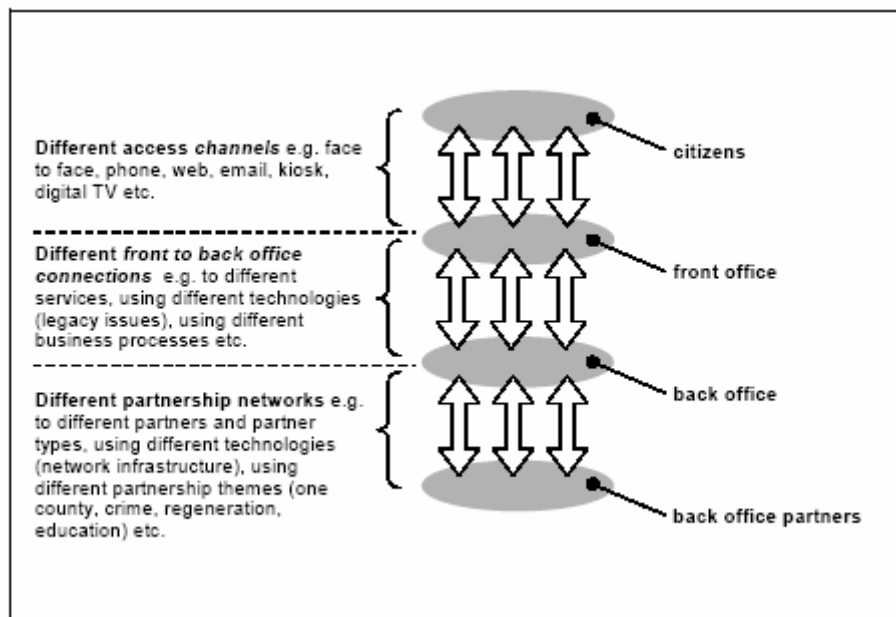
1) establishing  a customer relationship management model [Shaw et al, 2003, Richter at al, 2005 ];
2) establishing strong "political masters" leadership in e-government initiatives [Reilly, Echeberria, 2003].

Customer  relationship management model, while suggesting new opportunities, bears some risks presented in the table below.

| Opportunities | Risks |
|---|---|
| Customer oriented | Close one-to-government communication; Tendency to provide online spaces for individuals' polling rather than group and individual deliberation |
| Services provided more equitably | Less attention to the use of ICT as a tool for empowering citizens to solve their own problems or as a means to deliberate with other citizens and participate in agenda setting |
| Emphasis on efficiency and good quality of services | The fordist style approach to e-government is not a means to creative, curious and interested citizens |
| Services confused with participation, transparency and accountability | Services confused with participation, transparency and accountability |

(Source: Reilly, Echeberria, 2003)

In more practical terms, a customer-oriented approach in a local setting would feature the following characteristics: citizens are not directly connected to back offices; back office partners are not directly connected in front office; citizens are directly connected into the front office; the front office is directly integrated into the back offices; the back office is directly connected into back office practices [Richter at al, 2005]. These features make e-government a kind of a non-transparent black box ( see the figure below).

Different access *channels* e.g. face to face, phone, web, email, kiosk, digital TV etc.
→ citizens

Different *front to back office connections* e.g. to different services, using different technologies (legacy issues), using different business processes etc.
→ front office

Different partnership networks e.g. to different partners and partner types, using different technologies (network infrastructure), using different partnership themes (one county, crime, regeneration, education) etc.
→ back office
→ back office partners

[Source: Shaw et al., 2003]

Paradoxically, the "black box" model may result in weakening perceptions and understanding of the fundamental obligations of citizens and public servants. That is why the "black box of CRM-supported ICT" needs to be opened, to expose decisions corresponding to the design, deployment and procurement of these systems, in addition to their implementation [Richter at al, 2005].

K. Reilly and R. Echeberria pointed out problems connected with "political masters" leadership:

- it presents the temptation of creating a showpiece for the presidency rather than implementing real change, or picking easy targets for short term political gain, rather than fundamental change for long term societal gain,
- when masters cange , the program disappears, or faces serious continuity issues
- the e-governmnet leadership may be too far away from implementation terms to provide effective guidance and support
- strong leadership is often viewed as necessary in situations where there is a plurality of "leaders" in order to cut through and bring order . This situation is a tricky proposition and one that can easily backfire [Reilly, Echeberria, 2003].

These trends may result in disjuncture, misguided programming, lack of transparency and hidden agendas, as well as in undermining the desire of actors outside governments to offer support.

Therefore, if countries wish to reduce the tensions and to enhance legitimacy of their strategies, they should involve civil society actors in eGov programming.

Civic engagement in agenda setting provides a basis for a sustainable eGov strategy, increases the efficiency of policy implementation (by involving stakeholders in decision-making), enhances overall implementation capacity (through public-private partnerships and the sharing of knowledge and experience), catalyzes greater coordination via developing new partnerships and networks. Citizens and citizens groups will be able to forge a citizen-oriented e-governance that benefits not only themselves but the government as well.  Only citizens can provide the information needed to develop, maintain, and carry out an effective comprehensive plan. Professional planners and local officials need comments and ideas from those who know the community best: people who live and work there.  Citizens' involvement educates the public

about planning. It creates an informed community, which in turn leads to better planning. Citizens' engagement gives members of the community sense of ownership of the plan. It fosters cooperation among citizens and between them and their government. That leads to fewer conflicts and less litigation, which finally reduces costs for re-planning and conflict resolution and leads to a higher acceptance of results. Citizens' involvement is an important means of enforcing various laws. Having citizens informed about planning laws and giving them access to the planning process ensures that the laws are applied properly.

### 3.3. Institutional design for citizens participation *(to be developed)*
Citizen participation  (as defined above) is not restricted to NGOs, interest and other organized groups. Major forms of citizen participation are voting (elections and referenda) and direct participation in deliberative process. Both modes of participation - individual and organized groups - have their advantages and deficits.

*Associations* are internationally recognized as strategically important participants in the strategies development and implementation processes. According to a recent study of 36 developed, developing and transitional countries, undertaken by the John Hopkin Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, the civil society sector emerged as a important economic force with an expenditure of $ 1.3 trillion, equivalent to 5.4 percent of the combined GDP of the countries studied and a major employer (45.5 million full-time equivalent (FTE) workers) accounting for 4.4 percent of the economically active population .[ Ghaus-Pasha, 2005].

In the sphere of  strategy design, associations serve as a medium for broad political discourse and so have important public-sphere effects such as facilitating public communication, representing difference, and representing commonality [Fung, 2003; Habermas 1989, 1996]. But the role of associations in the design of strategies is taking root only gradually with governments that continue to dominate decision making processes, while associations offer *additional channels for interest representation and public deliberation.*

Associations often become *watchdogs*  to ensure government fulfillment commitements, equalize representation, enable social coordination and, in some cases, resistance [Ghaus –Pasha, 2005; Fung 2003 and others].

Participation in associations can *empower individuals and communities*  by increasing their senses of efficacy, providing them with political information and political skills, developing  heir civic virtues, and teaching them to be critical [ Ghaus-Pasha, 2004].

The strengths and limitations of associations as modes of citizens participations concerning these three dimensions were pointed out by Archon Fung [Fung 2003, 2004, 2005].

*Interest representation.* Fung agrees that "associations offer additional channels—beyond voting, lobbying, and direct contact with public officials—for individuals to press their public concerns. The views communicated by associations in areas such as health care, social security, education, and national security policy are likely to be more detailed, nuanced, and information rich than thinner channels of representation such as voting. Furthermore, associations often organize interests with less regard to territorial boundaries and so may introduce geographically dispersed interests that would be otherwise politically mute. Finally, associations may be better able to transmit intensities of interest to officials than formal channels of representation" [Fung, 2003] . But he proves that  many of the organizations, often referred as citizens' groups,  that have won

these victories are large lobbying organizations whose members do little more than contribute financial resources. These kinds of associations, given the opportunity structures of contemporary political institutions, may be best suited to equalizing representation. "They do not resemble the face-to-face organizations imagined by Rosenblum, Putnam, Skocpol, or, indeed, Tocqueville himself," Fung emphasizes [Fung, 2003].

*Public deliberation.* Proponents of deliberative democracy often see associations as helping to constitute a space, called the public sphere, in which more nearly ideal processes of communication can occur. It is in these more open and inclusive spaces that social problems and priorities—environmental degradation, racial discrimination, the burden of social risks are often initially articulated and transmitted to political and economic spheres. But, again, says Fung, actual civil societies and deliberative processes in the public sphere fall far short of this ideal: underlying inequalities of resources and status infect discourses in any public sphere, and so it is impossible to "bracket inequalities" in ways that make reason-giving and argumentation dispositive [Fung, 2003]

Discussing capabilities of associations for *resistance and checking power*, A. Fung notes:

"In contexts where democratic institutions are young, fragile, or even absent, however, the prime contribution of associations to democracy often has been resistance to illegitimate authority. More generally, those associations that are most capable of offering political resistance may be unlikely to foster a range of civic virtues such as tolerance, generalized reciprocity and trust, and respect for the rule of law. First, one of the ways in which activists and their associations develop solidarity and mobilize support is to articulate cognitive frames that set dominant actors and institutions as perpetrators of oppression and injustice. The virtues that such frames encourage are more likely to be dispositions toward criticism, suspicion, and disobedience, which are indeed democratic virtues in contexts of serious injustice but nevertheless quite distinct from more commonly cited civic virtues such as those discussed above. Second, organizations capable of offering resistance, especially in climates of severe repression, frequently do not follow democratic principles in their internal operations. Exigencies of survival and effectiveness press many of them to adopt forms that are neither open, transparent, horizontal, nor clearly accountable" [Fung, 2003].

As for *civic socialization and community empowerment*, the situation is similar to interest representation dimension: participation patterns in most associations do reflect an underlying socioeconomic bias. Those who are wealthier are more likely to participate in associations and so acquire the skills necessary to participate in other parts of political life. A. Fung concludes that "since both civic virtues and skills are acquired in the course of relatively dense interactions between members, organizations that provide opportunities for face-to-face interaction are more likely to generate these individual" [Fung, 2003] See Box 1

| Box 1 Associations | |
|---|---|
| **strengths** | **Weaknesses** |
| contribute to the legitimacy of collective decisions by enhancing the quality of public deliberation | typically involve professional politicians and advocates at the peak levels |
| | often represent elite members of elected assemblies or the professional delegates of interest groups |

| articulate criticisms of state action as well as putting forward public arguments in favor of social alternatives. | groups seek rent from the public through attempts to advance their ideological agendas rather than working in partnerships that advance public ends |
| --- | --- |
| | Precious few associations in contemporary civil societies can claim to be democratic in the sense that their leaders and agendas are controlled by members and constituents. Most are guided by the impulses of their leaders. |
| **opportunities** | **Threats** |
| can be venues in which members engage with one another to discuss the merits of various policies or politicians | the demands of strategic effectiveness create pressures toward hierarchy. If it is the case that secondary associations are largely oligarchical, they can hardly serve as sites of democratic deliberation among free and equal members |
| can advance justice by "equalizing representation" | well-organized groups can capture public resources and authority without attending to general interests or the needs of the unorganized |
| potentially offer a host of capacities to advance public ends that are unavailable to agencies of the formal state (if associations endorse policy, they can foster and enforce the compliance of their members) | |

Direct citizens' participation in the deliberative process is rare, though many believe it would help introduce new ICTs. Engaging ordinary citizens in deliberations about the operations of government can increase legitimacy, bring crucial local knowledge to bear on public action, add resources, and enhance public accountability. But experience reveals some critical concerns about direct deliberation:

1) the democratic character of processes and outcomes may be vulnerable to serious problems of power and domination inside deliberative arenas by powerful factions or elites;
2) external actors and institutional contexts may impose severe limitations on the scope of deliberative decision and action. In particular, powerful participants may engage in "forum shopping" strategies in which they use deliberative institutions only when it suits them;
3) these special-purpose political institutions may fall prey to rent seeking and capture by especially well-informed or interested parties;
4) the devolutionary elements of direct deliberation may balkanize the polity and political decision making;
5) empowered deliberation may demand unrealistically high levels of popular participation, especially in contemporary climates of civic and political disengagement;

6) these experiments may enjoy initial successes but may be difficult to sustain over the long term [Fung 2003,2004] See Box 2

| Box 2 Direct citizens' deliberation. | |
| --- | --- |
| strengths | weakneses |
| represent the population at large in the descriptive sense mirroring the demographic, economic, and social characteristics | typically engage a far smaller percentage of citizens than vote inlow-turnout local elections, while those who participate are not elected and so cannot plausibly claim to represent the vast majority of non-participants |
| bring local knowledge, mobilizing social resources, and increasing compliance through increased legitimacy | address highly localized issues ,it is unclear whether, and how, directly participatory institutions can be fashioned to address problems that unfold at greater scale |
| opportunities | threats |
| institutions that encourage direct participation may be less subject to the distortions of political equality that stem from unequal control of material and communica tive resources | participatory institutions will attract those who have special interests, greater resources, or a peculiar taste for participation - generate unjust outcomes by facilitating the domination of local elites or by constructing democratic majorities who are insensitive to the needs and rights of minority interests |

The above discussion of direct citizen participation in deliberative process and of associations' input shows that:

1. They should be considered as complimentary to each other.
2. Direct participation can make the leaders and agendas of interest groups and other associations more *responsive and accountable* to the interests of members and constituents.
3. When more common interests are threatened by the ecology of special interests or when accountability inducing reforms are unworkable, enhancing legitimacy, justice, or effectiveness may require *circumventing* the political grip of associations by shifting the locus of decision-making to alternative participatory arrangements. [Fung, 2003].
4. Deliberative citizens participation is often initiated either by state, or by CSOs, or emerges as the result of partnership between non-profit organizations and government officials or legislators seeking to solicit citizen input and enhance their own legitimacy.

The OECD has suggested a three-stage model of citizens engagement in policy making. The first stage is provision by governments of information for citizens. This is viewed as a one-way relationship covering both "passive" access to information on request and the "active" measures used by government to disseminate information. Stage two envisions a two-way relationship of consultation in which citizens are invited by government to provide feedback on specific issues. This exchange, however, is based on government's prior definition of the issues and o government providing background information. The third stage of the OECD's model entails

active participation of citizens in policymaking based on a partnership relationship. This means that governments acknowledge the role of citizens in proposing policy options and shaping the policy dialogue. The final decision on policy or policy formulation would rest with government [OECD, 2001].

In practice, relations between citizens and governments as policy makers are mostly limited to formal exchanges. Governments make available or deliver information to citizens who at best receive it in a one-sided exchange. Less frequently, governments invite citizens to offer their views as part of a 'consultation' exercise. In relation to national issues, this is usually done through a formal inquiry in which government sets the agenda and provides the background information and citizens are invited to make formal submissions. However, the third type of citizen participation is little practiced. Besides, while organised interests have a clear role in terms of their capacity to mobilise resources to present a position, their focused advocacy has definite limits in terms of canvassing a range of suitable policy options [Curtain, 2003].

The "democratic deficit" of political parties due to their own lack of internal democracy and lack of capacity to identify issues of community concern resulted in the fact that they often can't be vehicles for citizen participation [Pharr, Putnam, 2000].

The same holds true for the process of citizens engagement by associations. General participation/engagement activities of organized groups of citizens or/and government include awareness-raising, building capacity to mobilize, research for advocacy (information generation), lobbying to influence planning and policy formation, citizen-based deliberation, monitoring and evaluation, implementation (including partnerships) and auditing.

The general model of organized citizen participation in communicative government planning could be described in the following way. According to A.Fung, a space in which any particular mechanism of citizen participation can be located in the space constituted by the scope of participation, mode of communication and decision, and extent of authorization [Fung, 2005]. That means that participants roles (governments, associations, individual citizens) should be clearly identified and defined.

The organized citizen participation in communicative government planning (as in the case of eGov) should go through the following stages:

1. Issue generation – issues derive from multiplicity of sources
2. Issue identification – scoping, defining aspects of an issue by appropriate body (clear definition of the problem, information and date, preliminary list of stakeholders, the history of issue)
3. Identification of process parameters – the non-negotiable aspects of a decision process should be clearly stated and defensible reasons for that developed (for eg. by government)
4. Clarifying decision makers – a statement of whom has final authority to make the decision.
5. Goals and Timelines determination – time limitations, costs, staff availability, technical complexity, public interest, political climate, size and nature of stakeholder groups
6. Citizen participation process determination – ways of citizens engagement (individual judgements and opinions, focus groups interviews, random sample surveys, response forms, newspaper inserts, workshops, deliberative participation, discussion forums , and etc). Complicated and technical issues might best use advisory or ad hoc committees, workshops.
7. Informing- compiling information, educating members of community

8. Discussion and consultations
9. Decision making. Those charged with making final decisions review the recommendations developed and act upon it. This could involve acceptance or revisions of the product. The decision and rationale behind it are communicated to the public
10. Implementation
11. Evaluation

This model encompasses citizens as well as to organized citizen groups, consultations and opinion polls as well as direct citizens deliberation.

Specific strategies applied in direct citizens deliberation presented in the table below were summed up by Fung [Fung, 2001]

| Strategies | Tactics | Principles | Results |
|---|---|---|---|
| Education | Educative forum | A focus on specific needs<br><br>Involvement of ordinary people affected by those problems and officials close to them<br><br>Deliberative development of solutions to these problems | Individuals and community empowerment, will formation and articulation |
| Collaboration Persuasion | Participatory advisory panels | | develop linkages decision makers to transmit preferences after they have been articulated and combined into a social choice will formation and reasoned social choice |
| | Participatory problem solving | | solving particular collective problems reasoned social choice |

For direct citizens deliberation process the following elements of institutional design are important :

1) participants selection and recruitment,
2) structure and scope of discussions (stakes and subject), d
3) deliberation mode (organizational style of discussions)- public spheres should be constructed in ways that first and foremost allow those without voice and will to find and form it
4) frequency of discussions (recurrence and interaction),
5) monitoring (to observe and consider consequences what sorts of decisions are likely to work in various contexts(learning) and to pressure officials to serve public ends and plans (accountability),
6) citizens empowerment

Fung [Fung, 2003] discusses the following ways of recruitment of participants of deliberative discussions: voluntary self expression (normally well off people); selection of participants who demographically mirror the general population using opinion pall methods; recruitment through affirmative action – publicizing the event in communities that would otherwise underrepresented; incentives.

It is important to define structure and scope of direct deliberation, i.e what if anything citizens are likely to contribute in terms of insight, information or resources. Some areas would benefit very little from deliberation because they require highly specialist kinds of knowledge or training. What the citizens possess a comparative advantage over the actors such as politicians, administrators and organized interest groups. In some areas citizens:

-contribute information about their preferences and values
-may be better positioned to assess the impacts of policies and deliver these feedback to officials
- enhance public accountability when civic engagement allows them to monitor potentially corrupt or irresponsible officials.

The quality of institutional design factors has a number of functional consequences:
- Character of participation (quantity of participation and quality of deliberation),
- Informing (informing officials, informing citizens, fostering skills of citizenship).
- State action (official accountability, justice of policy, efficacy of policy, wisdom of policy).
- Political (popular mobilization) See table below (x – important, xx- highly important)

| | | Recruitment | Subject | Mode | Recurrence | Stakes | empowerment | monitoring |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Character of participation and deliberation | quantity | xx | xx | | x | xx | xx | |
| | bias | xx | xx | | | xx | xx | |
| | Del quality | | xx | xx | x | xx | xx | x |
| Information pooling and individual transformation | Informing of officilas | | xx | | xx | | | xx |
| | Informing of citizens | | xx | xx | xx | x | x | x |
| | Democratic skills | | | | xx | xx | xx | |
| Popular control and state capacity | accountability | | xx | | | | xx | xx |
| | Justice of policy | xx | xx | xx | | | xx | xx |
| | Efficacy of policy | | xx | xx | x | | xx | xx |
| Political effect | Popular mobilization | | xx | xx | | xx | xx | |
| | | | | | | | | |

Source: Fung, 2003 Recipes

Some authors regard a multistakeholder processes as a form of citizen participation. In that context, stakeholders are defined as "those who have an interest in a particular decision, either as individuals or representatives of a group. This includes people who influence a decision, or can influence it, as well as those affected by it. The term multi-stakeholder processes is described as *processes which*
- *aim* to bring together all major stakeholders in a new form of communication, decision-finding (and possibly decision-making)structure on a particular issue;
- are based on recognition of the importance of achieving equity and accountability in communication between stakeholders;
- involve equitable representation of three or more stakeholder groups and their views;
- are based on democratic principles of transparency and participation;
- aim to develop partnerships and strengthened networks between and among stakeholders.

Major forms of multistakeholder include traditional forms of participation (consultations, debate, dialogue, discussions, hearings, forums) as well as new ones, such as global policy networks and new social partnerships [Hemmati, 2002].

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**Global public policy (GPP) networks.** A term used by Reinicke et al (2000) in their work with the World Bank Global Public Policy Program. GPP networks are described as multisectoral collaborative alliances, often involving governments, international organizations, companies and NGOs. They 'take advantage of technological innovation and political liberalization'; 'pull diverse groups and resources together'; 'address issues that no single group can resolve by itself'; and, by doing so, rely on 'the strength of weak ties'

**New social partnerships.** A term used primarily in Europe, for example by the Copenhagen Centre: 'People and organizations from some combination of public, business and civil constituencies who engage in voluntary, mutually beneficial, innovative relationships to address common societal aims through combining their resources and competencies' (Nelson and Zadek, 2001, p14). Similar to MSPs (but in more of a 'business-type language'), new social partnerships are characterized by societal aims, innovation, multi-constituency, voluntary participation, mutual benefit and shared investment, and what is described as the 'alchemical effect of partnerships'.

**Stakeholder forum.** This is a rather broad term and can refer to various settings where views are stated and discussed. Forum-type events tend to make use of various forms of interaction (plenary presentations, break-out groups, panel discussions, and so on) and allow a lot of space for informal exchange.
[Hemmati, 2002, P.18]

Internet and citizens participation *(to be developed)*. In order to evaluate perspectives suggested by new technologies it is necessary to answer two questions : Does the Internet lead more people to civic engagement? Does the Internet lead (engaged) people to more engagement? The answer is that new online participatory mechanisms empower those who have better Internet access to much greater degree [Bimber]. Addressing this issue citizen online participation proponents are inclined to see access issues more important – that is to say, before engagement there should be digital divide problem to be solved. But in some contexts ( e.g in Belarus, where direct citizen participation through frequent referenda and voting is combined with non-participation tactics of considerable fractions of opponents of the regime) political engagement of the Internet lead population becomes central. In any case new technologies make the deliberative participation process more cost effective. As Andrew Chadwick argues, contemporary digital information communication technologies (ICTs) facilitate new forms of e-government-enabled public sector policy making that enshrine some of the important norms and practices of e-democracy. The potential for linking e-democracy in civil society with e-government at the level of the local and national state is far from straightforward but nevertheless achievable. In particular:
- online consultations integrating civil societal groups with bureaucracies and legislatures,
- the internal democratization of the public sector itself,
- the involvement of users in the design and delivery of public services,
- the diffusion of open-source collaboration in public organizations [Chadwick, 2003].

**3.4. Spaces for citizens' participation in e Gov programming** *(to be developed)*

In sum, citizen participation in eGov programming in Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus is often reduced to participation of CSOs in implementation practices (local projects, training, education) and takes forms of administrative participation (monitoring, evaluation, benchmarking of administrative operations). This section addresses the topology for citizen participation in the process of eGov planning, i. e spaces for political participation in deliberative process. More particularly, at what levels (global, regional, national, local), interfering with what state functions (operations, policymaking, regulations), through which forms (individuals, organized groups, multistakeholder partnerships), is such participation possible?

**3.5.Conclusion** *(to be developed)*

<u>Parliaments in eGov planning</u>
In this part the impact of  NICT-enabled participatory mechanisms on parliaments in the three countries will be studied. Shortcomings in current eGov strategies due to parliaments' passive roles in eGov  programming will be examined. Possibilities of applications of  eDemocracy strategic guidelines worked out in the frameworks of  EU PRISMA and PUMA projects will also be investigated.

Conclusion

Part V Scenarios for civil society participation in eGov programming *(to be developed)*

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