Marina Sokolova
2005-2006 International Policy Fellowship
OSI, Budapest

THE PLACE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS 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 eGovernment related programs. 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 one-sidedly 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 beneficial potential of civil society organizations (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 (CSOs) – from non-governmental organizations (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 (eGovernment and eGovernance) 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]. As things now stand, CSOs activists themselves sometimes omit "participation" in their ICT-sphere advocacy

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

The key question in this context is how these deficits could be met through citizens' participation in the three different contexts of Belarus, Ukraine and Lithuania. The research reveals that legitimate and efficient citizens' influence on eGov public policies could be exercised through a combination of two approaches – CSOs networking and citizens' deliberative participation. A key organizational capability for civil society groups that address issues of better eGov planning through the practices of monitoring,

campaigning, bargaining, lobbying, and direct citizen participation in decision-making is the ability to network effectively – including across sectors and across countries.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

eGovernment 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 presentation, as a part of a wider research seeking to examine and deepen that trend in the cases of Belarus, Ukraine, and Lithuania, is aimed to analyze the role and significance of the civil society sector in eGov sphere.

The comparative approach is designed to define factors that shape patterns of CSOs participation and institutional responses to their initiatives, to identify current participants and non-participants 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 eGovernance, 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; analysis of CSOs activities in eGov related spheres and of possible institutional framework for legitimate and efficient citizens' participation in eGov programming.

The theoretical framework adopted here derives from the works of A.. Fung, H. Scholl, R. Heeks, S. Coleman, A. Gronlund and others (see bibliography).

Some limitations of the study arise from the fact that the transformations in the three countries are incomplete. 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 and academic institutions in each of the countries means we lack comparable information about eGov development. 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.

The study addresses issues of citizens' participation in three steps. Part 1 provides definition of eGovernance as a qualitative concept. 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 civil society strategies in this sphere.

Part 1. EGOVERNANCE AS A QUALITATIVE CONCEPT

The concepts of eGov is relatively new in political and academic discourse. The eGov field (also called electronic government, digital government, electronic governance, and similar names) emerged in the late 1990´s [Grönlund 2004, p. 713]. 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].

The prevailing definitions of eGovernment emerged from practice, when governments across the world set up definitions as a basis for national strategies of Internet technology. One of the principal goals of eGov programmes has initially been to utilize new information technologies in order to achieve efficiency in public management. However, technological approach has gradually been extended to include more qualitative objectives such as increased citizens participation, enhanced accessibility of public services, improvement of public management methods, decentralization of administration and more transparency in decision making.

These trends resulted in the emergence of four related terms: eAdministration, eGovernment, eDemocracy and eGovernance.

eAdministration 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. eAdministration 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-Government , 2001]. In other words, eAdministration is understood as "infrastructure management system of eGovernance" [Manuel, 2005].

eGovernment is a "form of e-business in governance" on the delivery of government services to citizens (G2C), businesses (G2B), employees (G2E) and other governments (G2G) with the use 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].

In "Prisma Strategic Guideline on eDemocracy" eDemocracy is defined as "the use of 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 [Kubicek et al.,2003, p.2].

The term eGovernance, 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]

eGovernance is a concept that implies the growing use of the new information and communication technologies for state's main information technology functions, which increasingly involve non-state actors at levels other than the national one. eGovernance 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].

eGovernance should be understood as performance of good governance vial electronic medium in order to bring about change in how citizens relate to governments and to each other.

Major qualitative characteristics of eGovernance may be defined as the following
1) broader and more direct participation of citizens in policy development;
2) strengthening of intermediary democratic institutions;
3) free flow of information;
4) accessible and individualized service delivery;
5) improved accountability and transparence of governing bodies.

It is necessary to emphasize that eGovernance is concerned not with electronic service delivery and electronic workflow, or electronic productivity or even electronic voting. These are the mechanistic operations of today's government. Instead, eGovernance moves beyond these 'commonplace' activities to electronic consultation with citizens, electronic engagement in issues and networked social guidance [Riley, 2003]. The term eGovernance, therefore, implies the concept of government transformation from its bureaucratic, hierarchical structure and impersonal anonymity to one, more fitting the needs of an information society [Riley, 2003; Pearce, 2004].

The overarching goal, in this case, is to effect a transition to collaborative or networking eGovernance in order to promote democratic values and principles of civic engagement. eGovernance context brings about two important questions:
- – If eGovernance is so comprehensive, complex and innovative, how can it best be managed?
- – What manner of planning, organizing leading and *controlling* are the best to apply in order to facilitate eGovernance initiatives? [Pearce, 2004]

The possible answer is that *implementing an eGovernance initiative (programme or project) means changing institutional relationships and depends on the involvement of partners, both from civil society and business, encouraging citizen participation in the decision-making process and making government more accountable, transparent and effective.*

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

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

2.1. Major impulses behind eGov planning

According K. Reilly and R. Echeberria, typical motivations behind eGovernment 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. eGovernance 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 international "benchmarking." The pressures (via personalities in and around the administration) often renders technology as a value itself but not as a tool for achieving higher competitiveness and a higher standard of living. 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]. eGovernment 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 eGovernment 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 governmental 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 eGovernment 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 eGovernment procedures in the country [Ведяшкин, 2005].

eGov projects in Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine are generally market and international context driven rather than strategic choices. In Ukraine and Belarus, they are stimulated largely by the strong demand from businesses and from governments' desire to standardize its operations, and to implement more effective managerial controls. For instance, Ukrainian Minister of Transport and Communications Viktor Bondar, speaking at 2005 WSIS meeting, concentrated on e-commerce and electronic digital signature issues. Ukrainian civil society organizations occasionally raise issues of accountable and transparent government through introduction of new ICTs, but they lack sustained strategies.

Governments in all three countries consider an online presence important for their international image. Lithuania, being an EU member, is far more driven by the international context as well as EU practice. At the same time, "smooth functioning of public institutions" as well as transparency were mentioned among the prospects opened up by "application of the achievements of ICTs in public administration" by Mr. Antanas

Zenonas Kaminskas, chancellor of the Government, in his statement at the 2005 WSIS meeting. "By implementing e-government package, our government aims to create a favorable legal and institutional environment for investment and innovation", noted Lithuanian Chancellor [Kaminskas, 2005].

2.2. History of strategies

There are different stages to eGovernment'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 eGovernment programmes. The third stage entails a coordinated e-governance agenda.

But eGovernment 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 eGovernment.

b) if networking and leadership efforts are unsuccessful, the eGovernment 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 eGovernment 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 eGovernment 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 eGovernment agenda were adopted: Long-term Development Strategy of the State, Strategy on Creation of Integrated System of the State Registers and Position Paper on eGovernment (the 'Concept'). Next year Implementation plans on the Position Paper on eGovernment 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.), and 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 eGovernment 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 eGovernment in Lithuania].

The current eGov 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 eGovernment.

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 in 1995. 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 eGovernment 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 legislation, 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 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 eGovernment 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 eGovernment 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 eGovernment 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 eGovernment 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 Tsepkalo, 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.

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].

eGovernment (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 "Transparency 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). However, 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. According to Ukrainian legislation, 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 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 adopted in 2003-2005: 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+, and Presidential Decree «On Priority Tasks in the Introduction of the Advanced Information Technologies" [see State Committee on Communications and Informatization and President of Ukraine websites http://www.stc.gov.ua/ukrainian/info/electr; http://www.president.gov.ua/documents/3398.html]. Presidential Decree signed on October 20, 2005 aims to create necessary conditions to facilitate the economic and social development of Ukraine, substantially improve the living standards of people, to ensure the openness and transparency of the central and local government, and enable Ukrainian citizens to exercise their Constitutional rights in the information sector. The Cabinet of Ministers has been instructed to develop the National Strategy of the Information Society in Ukraine and Action Plan for its implementation, reports the presidential press service. In addition, the Cabinet was instructed to organize the provision of administrative services to legal entities and individuals based on the use of e-information system "eGovernment", improve the laws and regulations, simplify the state registration and accounting of entrepreneurs employed in the information industry. It is planned, that by 2010 the executive branch of the government and other state agencies will introduce the electronic circulation with the use of the electronic digital signature; ensure the implementation of electronic government procurements; equip public schools with computers and connect them to the Internet; foster the introduction of payment cards for non-cash payments in a daily life of the population, develop electronic formats of archives, libraries, museums and other culture institutions. In addition, the Internet access opportunities are to be developed in all inhabited localities throughout Ukraine [http://www.president.gov.ua/documents/3398.html].

2.3. Institutional structure

Lithuania. The institutional structure of eGov strategy in Lithuania has undergone significant changes since 1992. At present, the principal institutions in eGovernment 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 invited to meetings of the Commission more frequently.

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 eGov. It collects information on information society issues 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 ICT 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 eGovernment 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 small and medium business 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 eGvernment in Lithuania].

Belarus The Institutional structure for informatization (and eGov projects) implementation has undergone significant changes since 1991 (see History). At present, the principal institutions in eGovernment 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 coordinates 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 information society 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.

In Ukraine, at present, the principal institutions in eGovernment field are:
Cabinet of Ministers (http://www.kmu.gov.ua), Coordination Council on Informatization issues in the Cabinet of Ministers, Ministry of Transport and Communications, State Committee on Communications and Informatization [http://www.stc.gov.ua/ukrainian/info/politics], Parliamentary committees on Science and Education and on Informatization. However, the whole system is undergoing crucial changes now.

eGovernment (defined as introduction computers in government activities and application networks) emerged in 1992-1993 in all the three countries. EGovernment 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. However, in none of these countries has eGovernance, or at least eGovernment, become a priority, and there is no certainty how eGovernance issues could be prioritized within a wider public.

2.4. Definitions of eGovernment as presented in official documents

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

Lithuania. At present, there is no one common definition of eGovernment. Some definitions focus on technology, others emphasize service or competence of public administration. Usually the definitions point out that eGovernment is a provider of public services in distant way [Zailskaite, 2004]. eGovernment is understood as a tool for implementation of a public administration reform and state functions [Matulis, 2004]. The concept of eGovernment 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 and 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]. However, 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 (database) 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 "eGovernance," 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 standard official definition of eGovernment. In legislative acts, eGovernment 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 eGovernment progress and hinders the shift to an "eGovernance 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. 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 eGovernment" [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.

Belarus. In Belarus eGovernment 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:

- increase 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;

- increase 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.

According to the draft resolution, 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.

It was also 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.

It is important to note, however, that Ukrainian National Strategy of Information Society development for 2006-2015 does mention neither eGovernance, nor eDemocracy concept. Only e-services and access to information and telecommunication services are mentioned as key elements of information society [National Strategy].

Governments in the three countries are pursuing eGovernment transformation in one way or another. However, 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 eGovernment 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. Actors and partnerships

In spite of differences in political context, current eGov agendas in Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus are characterized by common deficits: absence of comprehensive concept of eGovernance; prevailing a customer relationship management model (CRM); administrative leadership in eGov related initiatives; emphasis on access, not on participation.

These deficits affect the quality of eGovernance planning in three ways

- centralized use of technologies by national government departments, without devolving the benefits of technology to intermediary institutions, such as local government, parliament, parties, civil society organizations and independent media;

- a failure to provide broader and more direct participation of citizens in policy development, i.e. to link better governance to broader and more inclusive democracy;

- a failure to avoid "reality gap" in eGov planning.

In all countries under discussion, *governments* are major stakeholders in eGov programming as it is connected, in one way or another, with administrative reforms; governments take the role of leaders and set agendas in eGov programming.

The role of *parliaments* highly depends on the individual will and capacities of MPs, as in Lithuania, where only members of the Seimas Information Society Committee in 2000-2004 were active advocates of eGov initiatives. National legislators do little about policies regarding eGovernance. Few parliamentarians have personal expertise on the issues, and in most cases, they do not have adequate professional staff to support them with these matters. Recently, a number of eGov draft laws were discussed in Ukrainian Parliament (September 2005 hearings on information society development; plans for internet broadcasting of parliamentary services; changes to laws "On citizens' applications", "On information", "On electronic document and workflow" in order to use ICT to widen access to information, draft law on access to court decisions which are to be published at the official websites of judicial authorities, draft law on national information society strategy submitted by Committee on Science and Education). However, parliamentarians in the three countries barely discuss eGov strategies, and even if they do, they still have little influence on what the government actually implements.

Private sector, especially national IT application developers are normally seen by governments as essential partners, as a source of information and finance, as well as an ICT products supplier. However, too many IT firms, IT consultants, government officials forget that the public sector remains fundamentally different from the private sector. Administrations pick up an information system designed for the private sector and try to adjust it to a very different public sector reality. "The large design-reality gap generates lots of heat and noise, not much light and, ultimately, plenty of failure" [Heeks, 2003, p.4].

CSOs regard their participation in eGov projects as the means to enhance human capacities and to empower local communities. Civil society organizations remain passive receivers of information – only access and not participation (active contribution) is expected from them. Citizens occasionally are invited to discuss some eGov issues, but the absence of an established institutional framework for deliberative participation makes such initiatives futile. That entails reality gaps in eGov planning, when the values and objectives of the government designed programmes do not correspond to values ,objectives and skills of real end users (for more on CSOs see part 3 of the research).

Partnerships. There is a general understanding in all the three countries that eGov programmes can be implemented on the basis of multistakeholder cooperation. There is a strong feeling that "it is necessary to stimulate the co-operation of government, representative bodies, civil society organizations and international structures in order to provide conditions for the development of a common infrastructure" [Popov, 2004]. In practice, these partnerships are based on cooperation of governmental structures and domestic and international ICT businesses. The latter provide technical solutions and financial support for projects designed and adopted by governments.

One illustration of the government's attitude to the role of civil society in eGov planning is Lithuanian draft concept of eGovernment, which says:

> 5.8. Non Governmental Organisations. Municipalities and other non-governmental organisations shall be responsible for the delivery of services to the citizens and business via the Internet. The government shall not compel or in any other way influence, except for setting an good practice example, non governmental institutions to transfer their delivery of services to the Internet. A Co-ordinator shall show an initiative by inviting non-governmental organisations to develop e-Government projects and shall deliver to the governmental institutions all the information available in terms of project implementation.

> 5.9. Business. Participation of business in the development of Concept and its further implementation is and will remain among the most important guarantees for the success. Possible participation of the commercial organizations can take the following form: delivery of services directly or through co-operation with public institutions. This includes commercialization of public services, like adjustment of a basket of services to special needs and creation of value added; showing an example of good practice to public institution through the introduction of e-business models; co-operation with public institutions by creating an infrastructure and services for their needs; joint work in implementing e-Government projects [Draft Concept, 2000].

It is typical for government agencies and business associations in the three countries to announce their cooperation on some issues as multistakeholder partnerships or as wide civic coalitions. For instance, Lithuanian eGovernment concept development task force of 2000 was presented as a group with participation of civil society. In fact, the task force included head of Information technology Division of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, Head of Public Information Division of the European Committee under the

Government of the Republic of Lithuania, Deputy Director of Lithuanian development Agency, Head of Information technology Division of the Government, Head of Wire Communication Division of Information technology and Communications Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Adviser to Prime-Minister, and Deputy Minister of Public Administrations Reforms and Local Authorities [Draft Concept, 2000].

*Governments in the three countries are pursuing eGovernment transformation in one way or another. Each country has worked out 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 source of information and finance, as well as ICT products supplier. Citizens organized groups are not recognized as valuable contributors to eGov agendas. Even in Ukraine, where civil society actively tries to win the place in the eGov agenda setting, the government remains the main player. The role of parliaments highly depends on individual will and capacities of MP*s, 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 absence of established institutional framework for deliberative participation makes such initiatives vain and futile.

3. PARTICIPATION OF CITIZENS AND CITIZENS' GROUPS IN THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF EGOV PROGRAMMES

This section provides general overview of the issues of citizens' participation in eGov programming, CSOs' role in formulating eGovernance agenda, and indicates principal ways that citizens and citizen groups can participate in this planning procedures, highlighting critical issues for future civil society strategies in this sphere.

3.1. Issues of participation and access

The terms "access" and "participation" are often confused in information society and eGov discourses, the former is often used as a substitute for the latter. In many cases, citizens' participation in eGov is understood as active usage of e-services developed by government.

The present emphasis on access in eGov 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.

That is why specific definitions should be given to both terms. In the context of given research, Pasquali's definition of *access as a*n *exercised capacity to receive (decode, come to know, discover, investigate, demand, recover, or place in the public domain) messages of any kind* is accepted [Pasquali, p. 214].

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]. Since that declaration, governments, at least symbolically, worldwide have recognized the importance of public participation to ensure policy implementation in various spheres, including eGov domain.

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.

For the purposes of the given study, *citizens participation is defined as participation in communicative planning (or influence collective decisions) by people who are not professional planners or government official*s.

Citizens' participation in agenda setting and programming 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 eGovernance 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.

In other words, citizens' participation in eGov programming should be based on the following principles: access, information, awareness, communication, involvement [Okot-Uma, 2001, p.4].

3.2 Setting eGovernance agenda

eGovernance as a qualitative concept is centered on empowered civil society, enhanced citizen participation, interactive and more transparent decision making. Current eGov projects in Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus, characterized by absence of a comprehensive concept of eGovernance, by prevailing a customer relationship management model, by administrative leadership and by emphasis on access, fail to address a qualitative concept of eGovernance as collaborative or networked governance.

The overarching goal for civil society actors in this context is to effect a transition to collaborative or networking eGovernance paradigm in eGov planning, focusing on
- a freer flow of information between government and citizens;
- strengthening of intermediary democratic institutions, such as parliaments, local government, civil society organizations (CSOs) and independent media;
- opportunities for citizens to participate more directly in policy development; in order to promote democratic values and principles of civic engagement.

Furthermore, since governments' attitudes to eGov issues are inadequate to provide society with qualitative eGovernance strategies, and since civil society is almost by definition one of the main beneficiaries of e-Governance, then civil society actors could and should fill a vacuum of leadership and assume the role of a "democratic corrective"

in formulating and implementing eGov agenda by campaigning for citizens' eGov awareness building; providing incentives for broader citizens' participation in eGov discussions; involving local governments, political parties, parliaments, and media into eGovernance debates.

To bring eGov policy into better alignment with good governance values, and in order to participate in a substantial sense, citizens and various citizen groups should organize themselves to provide civic leadership for
> *– formulating eGovernance agenda;*
> *- promoting eGovernance agenda in order to make people more knowledgeable about eGovernance issues;*
> *- promoting public debate in order to prevent any single policy framework;*
> *- monitoring and checking government information society and eGov strategies against eGovernance issue, bringing their activities into public view;*
> *- coordinating CSOs activities in order to enhance legitimacy and efficiency of their dialogue with authorities;*
> *- demonstrating that if governments wish to reduce the tensions and to enhance legitimacy of their strategies, they should involve civil society actors in eGov programming.*

In some cases, governments proclaim their readiness for dialogue with CSOs. For instance, the Draft Law on National strategy of Information society development for 2006-2015 adopted by Ukrainian parliament on February 21, 2006 [See Ukrainian version at: http://www.e-uriadnik.org.ua/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=4054]. The law defines roles of government, civil society and private sector in the following way:

- Government sets up national priorities, coordinates and controls law fulfillment by all the participants of the process;

- Private sector provides introduction and application of ICTs in all spheres of life, develop information infrastructure and provides information and communication services;

- Civil society institutions supervise government authorities and private sector in order to provide equal access to information and communication services, shape public opinion on priorities of information society development [p.4].

In order to make such claims and advances reality, *it is very important then to use momentum to formulate and promote eGovernance agenda and to prove the ability of CSOs to participate in policy process effectively.*

3.3. Civil society and eGov issues: current situation

Associations
There are various associations in each country, engaged in information technologies and information society issues, which are aware of the importance of eGov programmes. These associations may be divided into four groups
1) IT business associations;

2) associations engaged in information society issues;
3) organizations implementing single eGov related projects;
4) organizations and groups more focused on eGov issues and providing online venues for discussions and analysis.

IT business associations. The first group includes Belarusian IT Developers association (http://www.infopark.org/), Lithuanian Infobalt, established in 1994 (http://www.infobalt.lt), Internet Association of Ukraine, founded in 2002 (www.inau.org.ua/), IT Ukraine Association, set up in April, 2004 (http://www.witsa.org/profiles/itukraine.htm), Associations of the players of Internet market of Ukraine, created in 2000 (http://www.auriu.org) and the like. These organizations try to lobby government telecommunications policies and policies in the sphere of information society. In order to do so, they sometimes initiate ad hoc coalitions, involving other stakeholders in their activities. For instance, in Ukraine in March 2005, an all-ukrainian forum "Information Society of Ukraine" took place in Kiev. Associations of enterprises and public organizations working in ICT sphere organized the forum, and around 400 representatives of the leading enterprises, associations, and public organizations of all sectors and areas of the ICT industry took part in it. Participants of the Forum adopted report to the President of Ukraine "On Urgent Measures for Development of Information Society in Ukraine", suggesting specific steps on changing normative and legal base, the concept of state governance, and tax and customs policies in the field of ICT and the information society. In order to establish new mechanisms of interaction between the ICT industry and the political power, Civil Council on ICT issues was founded. The primary goals of the Council's activity were formulated as follows: 1) achieving consolidated position of the non-governmental organizations in the field of ICT, 2) presenting this position to insure it being considered in the state power institutions, 3) participating in the formation and implementation of the state policy in the field of telecommunications, informatization, and ICT, and participation in formation and implementation of the European conception of building information society in Ukraine. But, in spite of the wide objectives proclaimed, the major concerns of the Forum were to influence the process of establishing National Committee for Regulating Communications (NCRC). In order to do that, it was suggested to create the Committee consisting of the experts who "met the requirements of professionalism, integrity, patriotism, and the norms of the corresponding Law, as well as had undisputable authority with the ICT field participants" [www.ict-forum.in.ua;http://www.e-ukraine.org/e-ukraine/searchFull?item_id=233507].

On March 30, 2006 Internet Association of Ukraine put forward a proposal to introduce a position of vice Minister on Information Society and ICT issues which should work in close cooperation with Civic Council on ICT issues. Still, the major area of concern for such initiatives is infrastructure, telecommunications and access issues [http://www.e-uriadnik.org.ua/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=4304].

To achieve their goals and to make their claims more legitimate, these influential associations often manipulate other CSOs participation in coalition.

Associations engaged in information society issues represented by such organizations as Belarusian NGO Information Society, set up in 1999

(http://www.kv.by/index1999382102.htm), Lithuanian Knowledge Economy Forum, established in 2001 (http://www.zef.lt), Lithuanian Free Market Institute, founded in 1990 (www.freema.org), Ukrainian Federation of Informatics (UFI), established in 1991 (http://www.ufi.org.ua/eng/about.html), Charitable Foundation "Information Society of Ukraine", created in 2001 (http://www.isu.org.ua), Lithuanian Computer Society, founded in 1990 (http://www.liks.lt). These organizations perform activities aimed at popularizing ICTs through various seminars, exhibitions, participation in scientific and practical conferences, representation in the public administration system. For instance, Belarusian Information Society Association conducts conferences and seminars, including specialized seminars "Mass Media in Information Society", and participates 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]. Lithuanian Computer Society is known widely as an organizer of biennial forum "Kompiuterininku dienos" of seminars for artificial intelligence; and other workshops, for instance, for informatics teachers [http://www.liks.lt/en/modules/tinycontent/index.php?id=1#known].

Members of such associations participate, if invited in developing governmental information technologies and information society programmes. Thus, UFI experts took part in developing government informatization program adopted in 1998, prepared legal acts governing certain informatics sections, in particular information storage and protection, application of Information Technologies in education and budget process. UFI members participated in various state and public committees and organizations, in particular, the National Informatization Committee, Communication and Informatization Advisory Committee at the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (More info at: http://www.ufi.org.ua/eng/about.html).

Organizations implementing single eGov related projects. In Belarus, for instance, UNDP has implemented a number of ICT Projects supporting the establishment and development of educational UNIBEL network infrastructure in the City of Minsk and in all the regional centers and of backbone network connecting over 15 governmental organizations, as well as providing Internet access to non-profit users. Within the UNDP projects framework, training courses for deputies of Belarus National Assembly's House of Representatives were provided: The project also provided assistance in developing a website (Russian and English versions) of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Belarus National Assembly (www.house.gov.by) [Tavgen, 2005].

Open Society (Soros) Foundation supports various programs including IS projects in Lithuania. In 2001 it funded a survey of governmental websites in Lithuanian "Analysis of Quality of Communication between Citizens and Governance by Internet" [http://politika.osf.lt/inf_society/summaries/AnalysisOfQualityOfCommunications2.htm] The most successful project is Internet portal www.bendruomenes.lt intended for providing local communities with information exchange and communication tools. "Communities portal" is a virtual space where communities are able to exchange information and experience, as well as prepare common projects. It makes communities more open and more visible to whole Lithuania; encourages computers' and internet usage inside communities, and improves skills of communities' members to apply information technologies. The fundamental principles of the project are: to be in contact

with communities constantly, reacting adequately to their changing needs; to involve communities to participate actively in the portal content update; to encourage feedback (comments, discussions, responses). Currently communities' network integrates around 300 active communities, which prepare articles, present their activities in mini websites, use free e-mail, discuss in the discussions forum, comment articles.

Ukrainian Renaissance Foundation is engaged in dissemination of eGov practices in Ukraine within the framework of IRF Civil Society Impact Enhancement Program ("Public Information E-Offices" competition) and through organization and funding study tours of the Ukrainian representatives of the public and civil sectors in IT and Is sphere to the E-Governance Academy (Tallinn, Estonia).

NGO Privacy Ukraine, established in 1999 (http://www.internetrights.org.ua) prepared report devoted to the protection of privacy in telecommunications, information security, encryption policy of Ukraine was presented at 27-th meeting of the International Working Group on Data Protection in Telecommunications (May 4-5, 2000, www.datenschutz-berlin.de).

Both Privacy Ukraine and International Renaissance Foundation actively participated in organizing of "The Most Open Agency of the Local Government on Internet" competition, and international Conference "Freedom of Information, Transparency and E-Governance: View of the Civil Society (October, 2004). In 2004, both organizations published and presented Ukrainian translation of the UN World's Report "World Public Sector Report 2003: E-Government at the Crossroads" with the supplementary overview of the e-governance in Ukraine.

These organizations are also trying to influence government policies through partnerships. For instance, 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].

Later on, in September 2005, Internet Association of Ukraine, International NGO "Internews Ukraine", International Renaissance Foundation, in cooperation with Parliamentary Committee on Education and Science, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, the National Academy of Sciences, Microsoft Ukraine, and representative office of Intel in Ukraine became organizers of Parliamentary hearings on the development of the information society of Ukraine [http://www.sluhannya.in.ua/].

Still, there is no much success achieved. No sustainable or multistakeholder partnerships have been created, all initiatives mentioned above ended up in temporary coalitions, ad hoc working groups or task forces. On the other side, government has not responded actively to the signals of CSOs, being "unable or unwilling to organize dialogue of ICT specialists and civil servants. Ukrainian authorities ignore projects and achievements of CSOs" [Колодюк, 2005].

Organizations and groups focused on eGov issues and providing online venues for informing, discussions and analysis. These are Internet projects E-Belarus.ORG (http://e-belarus.org) and E-Uriadnik (http://www. e-uriadnik.org), Ukrainian Institute of the Information Society (http://e-ukraine.org.ua).

E-Belarus.ORG, set up in 2001, is an independent think tank on ICT developments, e-government and e-democracy in Belarus. It provides analysis, surveys and advice on trends and specific issues regarding government, political activism and technology, monitors political initiatives, specific IT-tenders and projects as well as new e-government trends in Belarus and other countries. The organization sees its mission in creating basis for for comparison, assessments and strategic advice in the sphere of digital media developments in Belarus within the framework of international context and policies, cover digital media developments in Belarus from a tech, business and policy perspective Belarus in order to allow various stakeholders in the country and abroad to come to grips with the latest trends in the sector.

The Institute of the Information Society's (established in 2001) activities are targeted at creation of a basis for development of the Information Society, its fundamental elements: e-government, e-commerce, e-elections. First steps on this way are to highlight this issue in the society, to create prerequisites for digital democracy. In order to do that, in 2003, the Institute has launched the information project "Ukrainian Network of the Information Society" (www.e-ukraine.org.ua) within the World Bank funded 2003-2006 scheme E-development project. Ukraine [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2003/05/09/000094946_03050 104002323/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf]. The project has been intended to strengthen the Ukrainian NGOs and private sector representatives' leadership in public-private partnership by increasing the voice of the Ukrainians through a series of on-line and off-line seminars, workshops, public hearings, and conferences.

Internet project E-Uriadnik (http://www.e-uriadnik.org.ua/) includes online eGovernance newsletter, online discussion forums, publications, interviews. The project is supported by Agency of Information Development (Ukraine), Privacy Ukraine and eGovernance Academy (Estonia).

The short overview presented above, proves that there is no lack of information society and eGov initiatives within the CSOs sector. The most influential IT business associations actively promote CSO participation issues in order to enhance the legitimacy of their claims to impact governmental policies. However, being providers of services, business are more inclined to promote issues of access and e- services, rather than more general eGovernance issues.

Other civil society organizations are often looked upon as having only a minor, supporting role in eGov programming and implementation, the main elements of which are widely understood to include an effective administration, a flourishing economy, and provision of public services (e.g. taxation, education, health care etc.). In many cases, CSOs regard their participation in eGov related projects as the means to enhance human capacities and to empower local communities, and remain passive receivers of

information – only access and not participation (active contribution) is expected from them. Some major NGOs and ad hoc coalitions try to influence public policy in the sphere, but the government remains unresponsive to their initiatives.

CSOs' failure to influence public policy on eGov issues is due to the fact that they are often manipulated by business associations to support legitimacy of "infrastructure focused" agenda, while projects like E-Belarus or E-Uriadnik lack resources to formulate clearly and promote actively "citizens oriented eGov agenda". Therefore civic groups should built an organized, targeted, managed on the basis of modern methods network That will help them to enhance efficiency and legitimacy of their efforts, and could make them partners valuable to the authorities, rather than objects of manipulations by interest groups.

Citizens

In Ukraine, Bealrus and Lithuania, notwithstanding present political differences between countries, the common experiences during the communist rule imposed a substantial amount of commonality in general public views and values.

According to New Europe Barometer public opinion poll conducted in 2004, only 1 per cent of Lithuanians and Belarusians, and 2 per cent of Ukrainians think they can have a lot of influence on government. Only 13 per cent of people in Lithuania, 17 – in Ukraine, and 10 – in Belarus can understand what is going on within the government, while 69 per cent in Ukraine and Lithuania, and 72 per cent in Belarus have only some impression of the governmental activities [Rose, 2005].

2 per cent of respondents in each country consider that most politicians care "what people like me think". 91 per cent of respondents in Lithuania and Belarus and 93 per cent in Ukraine do not belong to any sports, arts, community or charitable organization. At the same time 18 per cent of Lithuanians, 30 per cent of Ukrainians and 4 per cent of Belarusians identify themselves with some political party [Rose, 2005].

The situation may also be described in terms of trust to courts, political parties, parliament, president, police, and trade unions, to church and to "most people you know". The diagram below shows that in all the three countries people tend to rely upon church, other people and the president, rather than upon representative and civil society institutions (see diagram below, source: Rose, 2005)
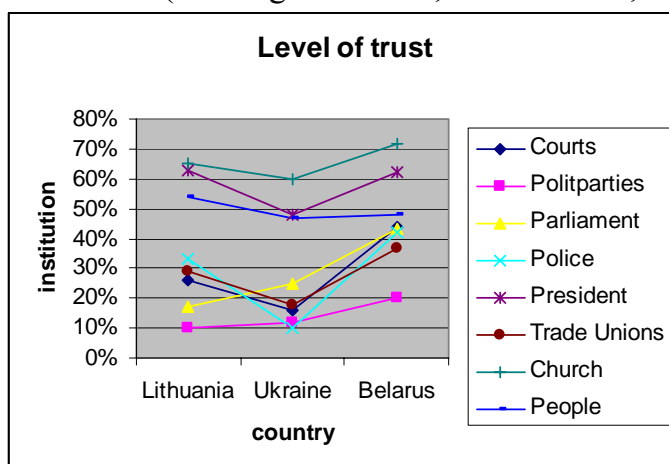
That creates a situation, when people do not trust parliaments, and at the same time, do not want to participate in the decision-making process (see diagram below).
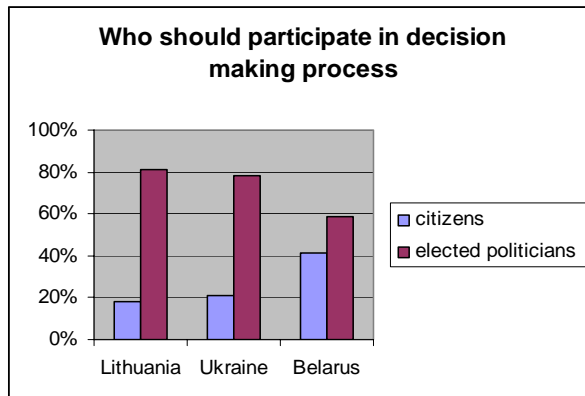
[Source: Rose, 2005]

One of the possible answers may be that they do not know how to do that, and they do not understand what is going on in the government. Citizens feel removed from the political process and thereby take limited participation in public policy, if suggested.

On the other hand, only citizens can provide the information needed to develop, maintain, and carry out an effective and comprehensive eGov planning. Professional planners and local officials need comments and ideas from those who know the community best: people who live and work there. Besides, citizen involvement educates the public about planning, it creates an informed community, which in turn leads to better planning. Furthermore, citizen involvement is an important means of enforcing efficiency and legitimacy of civic leaders' efforts to promote eGovernance agenda and to influence public policy.

However, if the importance of the citizens participation decision making at the levels of central power is conceived more and more clearly, and growing attention is paid to it allotting more important administrative resources[1], local government institutions still do not care much about consulting citizens. Local authorities represent the "central" power interests more than they represent the interests of local communities. On the other hand, citizens regard municipal institutions as "alien power", thinking that their efforts will be useless and that their opinion will not be considered [Masiulis, 2003, p. 16].

In 2000, a research on information society issues perception on municipal level has been conducted in Lithuania. According to the research, only 0.8 percent of population were participating in the process of preparation of the municipalities programs, 5.1 percent of population are familiar with such programs, 43 percent have heard something about them, and 39.8 percent of population never heard anything about them [Augustinaitis, 2000]. That means that in most cases citizens are not familiar with municipalities programs and do not conceive even the possibility of cooperation with local authorities. Nevertheless, answering the question whether they would like to influence certain

---

[1] Examples: an online consultation on the strategy for long –term development of Lithuanian economy until the year 2015 - "What do you think?" project at www.svarstome.lt (2001/2002); internet conferences conducted by Belarusian government on high-tech park project (2005).

decisions of the local government and to submit new proposals, the respondents answered in the following way:
- do not care about it - 20.8 percent,
- would like to but don't dare - 8.3 percent,
- would like to but don't have time - 7.1 percent,
- would like to but think that it would be useless - 55.8 percent,
- would like to but only together with other people - 20.2 percent,
- Other answers - 1.0 percent [Augustinaitis, 2000].

Based on the data obtained, the researcher comes to a conclusion that "in spite of evident absurdity of establishing dialogue with the authorities absolute majority of population would really want it. Only 20.8 percent of the respondents answered that they did not care about it, but the remaining ones would actually approve to the parity model of the collaboration between the citizens and municipalities. This is very impressive result demonstrating the creative potential of the society and unused possibilities of public administration. Unilateral relation is underlined in this case again proving that the population would want to change the communication type, but they do not expect an adequate attitude of the local government. One could think that the latter is just insufficiently competent in order such tendencies would be revealed and used for the common sake" [Augustinaitis, 2000].

That is why involving citizens into the municipal activities, capacity building and educating efforts are important to enhance civic participation.

3.4 Enhancing efficiency and legitimacy of participation

To be able to influence public policies on different levels and through different groups and associations, CSOs should seek for participation in different parts of policy process.

For instance, think tanks and Internet projects, mentioned above, can use information and evidence gathered, "to build momentum" behind an idea until it reaches a "tipping point", becoming an agenda. "They may need to crystallize a body of evidence as a policy narrative to create a window for policy change" [Pollard, Court 2005]. Such civic groups can be key agents in coining or popularizing eGovernance and citizens' participation agenda within policy debates. It should be remembered that shaping terminology is often more than just wordplay: it can be critical to ensuring which ideas and interests are noted and which are not. Through the discourses that they use, CSOs could frame the 'subjects' that social policy is intended to benefit, thereby framing the ultimate trajectory of this policy [Pollard, Court, 2005]. However, framing eGovernance terms and popularizing participatory approach goes far beyond capacities of single organization or think tank, and is impossible without joint CSOs' efforts.

The other important factor is awareness and capacity building. Dr. Segei Azarov, member of Ukrainian ICT Public Council, reflecting on the possible outcomes of the Parliamentary hearings on information society issues in Ukraine, stressed that low awareness of the whole range of information society issues was the main obstacle for effective lobbying in the sphere [Азаров, 2005]. The same holds true concerning

eGovernance discourse and other public institutions. That is why awareness building and advocacy campaigns may be regarded as *sine qua non* of eGovernance agenda setting.

Experience of local organizations and organizations carrying out eGov local projects is crucial for influencing implementation of policy. Practical knowledge of what is happening on the ground is a strong point of such organizations, but major associations often do not draw on their expertise to gain a nuanced understanding of local contexts.

To use this experience effectively, it is necessary to make it relevant across different contexts. Again, an assistance of experts from national an international organizations is needed to fulfill the task. Furthermore, CSOs also need technical expertise and experience in policy-making processes in order to influence policy. They need to be familiar with the key structures, procedures and personalities involved in the development and implementation of policy. This means that CSOs need to attract people with a working knowledge of policy procedures.

Monitoring practices are important for evaluation of current governmental policies. CSOs and NGOs in Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus have carried out a substantial number of monitoring and evaluation projects on eGov issues on local and national levels. However, that is not enough to influence policies. It is necessary also to collect, integrate and communicate evidence in a clear and definitive way, to attract interest of the media, external groups and public at large. In case these steps are undertaken, there are more chances for CSOs to participate in formulation of eGov policies. It is obvious that only close cooperation of different CSOs engaged in information society and eGov projects provides the ability to generate politically usable information quickly and credibly and to move it to where it will have most impact.

NGOs mentioned above represent only some sectors of civil society or advocacy groups. In many cases, even if they are included in policy process, they cannot respond accordingly and to prove that they articulate citizen interests to decision makers. Besides, CSOs effectiveness at intellectual persuasion is often hampered by their tendency to talk more about problems than solutions, while policy makers are interested in constructive and specific recommendations.

It is logical then that governments involve them into discussions on particular issues (telecommunications, rural development, local governance) and neglect their attempts to influence general information society and eGov issues. *CSOs are more likely to have impact if they work together on more constant basis, forming sustainable networks and not ad hoc coalitions.*

The other important factor in this context is involving citizens in deliberation process. If CSOs or networks of CSOs manage to do so, they could not only enhance their legitimacy, but will educate people and further citizens' will formulation.

In addition to that, the ability of civic leaders to influence public eGov policy and legitimacy of their proposals depend on support of a broad range of citizens, not CSOs member exclusively. In this context, much depends on civic leaders' ability to enhance citizens' will formation and reasoned social choice articulation on eGov issues. Though

direct citizens' participation in the deliberative process is a rare practice yet, it may play a catalyst role in citizens civic awakening in the three countries in case it is based on clear understanding of strategies, tactics, principles and results of the process (see table below)

Direct citizens' deliberation. Basic principles

Strategies	Tactics	Principles	Results
Education	Educative forum	A focus on specific needs Involvement of ordinary people affected by those problems and officials close to them Deliberative development of solutions to these problems	Individuals and community empowerment, will formation and articulation
Collaboration Persuasion	Participatory advisory panels		Develop linkages for 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

[Fung 2003,2004]

A combination of two approaches – CSOs' networking and citizens' deliberative participation on local level initiated and supported by such networks – will enhance legitimacy and efficiency of civil society attempts to promote eGovernance agenda focused on a freer flow of information between government and citizens; strengthening of intermediary democratic institutions, such as parliaments, local government, CSOs and independent media; opportunities for citizens to participate more directly in policy development. In addition to that, the combination will provide structured issue driven relations based on sustainable strategies instead of ad hoc opportunities or personal contacts.

Being organized in this way, civil society is better able to press its demands with governments that may have a modicum of political will but lack capacity to respond effectively [USAID, 2005, p.29]. In other words, civic leadership may become a crucial element of political will formation. If civil society actors manage successfully address this challenge, they will greatly enhance their impacts on eGov planning in their countries and do much more to trigger processes through which public (individuals, groups and organizations) take part in developing, administering and amending local and national programming and decision-making.

3.5 Guidelines for civic leadership to promote eGovernance agenda

In order to set an eGovernance agenda and to empower civic leadership in eGovernance programming, a system of capacity and awareness building strategies based on access to network tools, creating a cross-border institutional space, public interest campaigning and policy transformation advocacy are to be developed.

Networking. A key organizational capability for civil society groups that address issues of better eGov planning through the practices of monitoring, campaigning, bargaining, lobbying, and direct citizen participation in decision-making is the *ability to network effectively* – including across sectors and across countries.

Although the role of the state remains central in eGov programming in Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania, and although the state's position strongly shapes the possibilities for citizens and citizens groups participation, there remains an opportunity for a public space between community, social capital networks and those elements of government open to the possibilities of democratic participation using the medium of communication networks. Networks involve a pooling of civil society capacities. Through their links with each other, associations and individuals in a network share information and expertise. Cooperation can also circumvent duplications of effort and thereby generate savings on scarce resources. Networks encompassing different sectors of civil society can also be effective in promoting e-governance agenda. Access to network tools could create public spaces, in which new forms of relationship-building can circulate, and will allow for both the practical strengthening of grassroots democratic organizing and its growth and extension to new citizenship groups.

It's important that a collaboration be as inclusive as possible, including individuals from different agencies and organizations; different sectors of the community; and different levels of representation.

National coalitions (advocacy networks)
- develop a stronger public image,
- bring together diverse resources and ideas,
- help to avoid duplication of effort;
- have greater credibility than individual organizations and reduce suspicion of self-interest: seeing the breadth of groups the target bodies or policy makers cannot dismiss advocacy coalitions as "special interest groups."

Regional network as a cross-border institutional space, including wide variety of perspectives and constituents, could
- provide basis for sustainability in e-governance policies in spite of changing elites and governments in the three countries;
- create a broader, more comprehensive picture of eGovernance issues;
- facilitate developing and diffusing of best practices in the area;
- strengthen each country's position advocacy efforts before international bodies.

Furthermore, the emergence of regional network may provide space for a new role of civil society through regional blocks; CSOs can potentially gain grater influence with actors at the regional and global levels.

In order to be successful such a network should
- bring and share resources from different international partnerships;
- benefit from implementing common actions and from task-based learning dealing with the resolution of a local problems;
- play a 'catalyst" or "moderator" role bring together different forms of expertise – technological, business, economic and social;
- keep the momentum of the development process going without trying to rush matters;
- keep the focus on achieving sustainable pragmatic results;
- devise and use methodologies that facilitate dialogue, joint deliberation, decision-making and conflict resolution.

Networking is an essential precondition for effective monitoring, advocacy and policy transformation activities of CSOs in eGovernance sphere. Therefore, to achieve results Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian CSOs should work through coalitions and networks advocating for a new agenda and policy transformation at international, regional, national and local levels with different commonalities of constituencies.

Monitoring is the first step to be taken to increase CSOs activists' capacities and to analyze eGov and information society initiatives from the 'public interest" point of view. If civil society associations are to be effective public educators and campaigners on eGovernance issues, they need to devote considerable energy to determining: precisely what is going on in each country and in the region; exactly what they want; and specifically what should be done to reach the desired goals.

Monitoring and other research procedures expose problems and discrepancies, thus helping to develop effective advocacy strategies as it allow advocates to become fully aware of the nature and extent of discrepancies. Once an advocate is knowledgeable about the facts concerning eGov issues and understands what requires attention and reform, she can devise an appropriate plan of action.

Monitoring often requires joint efforts of different institutions and sharing knowledge and experience on regional and national levels. Therefore, networking and coalition building are important parts of successful monitoring efforts.

Advocacy. In order to promote the new agenda and to influence the policy decision making system, a deliberate and systematic process of advocacy should be launched, because

- it is necessary to demonstrate that citizen participation issues are important for eGov agenda and therefore should be considered by governments as well as by public at large;

- in order to promote an issue, some form of citizen engagement policies are to be taken seriously and get a seat at the policy making table;

- education and social mobilization could foster awareness building among stakeholders.

Thus, public interest campaigning and policy transformation advocacy becomes building blocks of CSOs strategies.

Public interest campaigning. Broadly defined, a campaign is any sustained effort to focus attention on an issue or message in order to persuade people to change their views or to take certain actions. For campaigns to raise public awareness on eGovernance issues, the target audience may be the media and, directly or indirectly, the public.

Creating inclusive and broad coalitions and networks that involve all or most of all actors interested in the issue strengthens a campaign by enabling it to exert far more political pressure than each organization acing individually could.

Successful public interest campaigning can result in the creation, adoption, and implementation of better strategies, laws and regulations. It ensures eGov policies that respond to the needs of the citizens. Moreover, what is more important, it educates both the citizens and their leaders, promotes transparency and accountability, and gives voice to the concerns of constituencies. Public interest campaigns also contribute to the cohesion of civil society by strengthening coalitions and networks and by fostering collaboration among organizations.

Bargaining (agreements on cooperation between not-for-profit sector and governments) in order to institutionalize civil society actors efforts becomes an important part of their policy transformation strategies. The ability of civil society actors to influence eGov planning depends considerably on their relationships with governing authorities. If official circles are knowledgeable about civil society groups and eager to involve them in policy processes, then the prospects for civil society are much enhanced. Yet if, on the contrary, ruling institutions are ignorant about civil society organizations, averse to engage with them and reluctant to allow them political space generally, then the prospects for democratization of the global economy via voluntary collective citizen action are substantially weakened [Scholte, 2004].

One of the principal reasons for the desirability of systematic cooperation between the public and the not-for-profit sectors is the institutionalisation of CSOs efforts, and concentration of resources and knowledge for reaching better eGov. CSOs and coalitions of CSOs may be initiators of innovative eGov practices on local and national levels. In this case, they should have a general agreement with government on what they want to do and how they want to do it. The main idea of the agreement is to fix general framework for cooperation between the third sector and national government in abroad sense.

Lobbying can be a significant part of eGovernance advocacy campaign. Public interest lobbying refers to direct contact with decision makers on a particular issue in order to promote and influence eGov related strategies. Such decision makers may include, for example, politicians, members of a parliament (MPs), government officials, mayors, governors, and members of local councils. Lobbying, sometimes referred to as legislative advocacy, can mean discussing an issue with a legislator before a formal vote is taken, but it can also refer to urging a bureaucrat to take a particular action. Lobbying can also include providing basic information or analysis about an issue to a decision maker— without seeking a particular decision on a piece of legislation.

Influence on specific projects through direct citizen participation. Engaging ordinary citizens in deliberations about eGov priorities can increase legitimacy of civil society organizations as well as government actions, bring crucial local knowledge, add resources, and enhance public accountability. Properly organized direct citizen deliberation campaigns may lead to some very important results:
- individuals and community empowerment, will formation and articulation;
- developing linkages for decision makers to transmit preferences after they have been articulated and combined into a social choice,
- involvement of ordinary people affected by the problems and officials close to them;
- deliberative development of solutions to these problems.

Dialogue with international bodies. Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian civil society actors, networks and collaborations often see international bodies and organizations only as donors, and tend to underestimate the importance of information sharing and dialogue in a modern global networked society. Meanwhile, aadvocacy before international bodies can become a powerful tool to exert pressure on national eGov policies. That is why it is vital for nongovernmental organizations to understand the opportunities presented by the UN, the CoE, D-G Europe, European Parliament and other international bodies for involvement by NGOs.

It goes without saying that CSOs can play only with an understanding of charters, treaties, conventions, and other agreement provisions and treaty obligations. Of course, there are important similarities and distinctions between the regional and international organizations, as well as among the mechanisms within a particular organization. Advocates must examine the relative advantages and disadvantages of each mechanism or instrument to determine which tool can best serve their goals, where and how these mechanisms have been used and consider the experience of other CSOs or individuals who have utilized such mechanisms or engaged in the advocacy process.

CONCLUSION

eGovernance as a qualitative concept is centered on empowered civil society, enhanced citizen participation, interactive and more transparent decision making. Current eGov projects in Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus, characterized by absence of a comprehensive concept of eGovernance, by prevailing a customer relationship management model, by administrative leadership and by emphasis on access, fail to address a qualitative concept of eGovernance as collaborative or networked governance.

The overarching goal for civil society actors in this context is to effect a transition to collaborative or networking eGovernance paradigm in eGov planning, focusing on
- a freer flow of information between government and citizens;
- strengthening of intermediary democratic institutions, such as parliaments, local government, civil society organizations (CSOs) and independent media;
- opportunities for citizens to participate more directly in policy development; in order to promote democratic values and principles of civic engagement.

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 ICT products supplier. Citizens organized groups are not recognized as valuable contributors to eGov agendas. Even in Ukraine, where civil society actively tries to win the place in the eGov agenda setting, the government remains the main player. The role of parliaments highly depends on individual will and capacities. Citizens occasionally are invited to discuss some eGov issues, but absence of established institutional framework for deliberative participation makes such initiatives vain and futile.

However, citizens' participation in agenda setting and programming 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 eGovernance 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.

Furthermore, since governments' attitudes to eGov issues are inadequate to provide society with qualitative eGovernance strategies, and since civil society is almost by

definition one of the main beneficiaries of e-Governance, then civil society actors could and should fill a vacuum of leadership and assume the role of a "democratic corrective" in formulating and implementing eGov agenda by campaigning for citizens' eGov awareness building; providing incentives for broader citizens' participation in eGov discussions; involving local governments, political parties, parliaments, and media into eGovernance debates.

To bring eGov policy into better alignment with good governance values, and in order to participate in a substantial sense, citizens and various citizen groups should organize themselves to provide civic leadership for
- formulating eGovernance agenda;
- promoting eGovernance agenda in order to make people more knowledgeable about eGovernance issues;
- promoting public debate in order to prevent any single policy framework;
- monitoring and checking government information society and eGov strategies against eGovernance issue, bringing their activities into public view;
- coordinating CSOs activities in order to enhance legitimacy and efficiency of their dialogue with authorities;
- demonstrating that if governments wish to reduce the tensions and to enhance legitimacy of their strategies, they should involve civil society actors in eGov programming.

A combination of two approaches – CSOs networking and citizens' deliberative participation on local level initiated and supported by such networks – will enhance legitimacy and efficiency of civil society attempts to promote eGovernance agenda and provide structured issue driven relations based on sustainable strategies instead of ad hoc opportunities or personal contacts.

Being organized in this way, civil society is better able to press its demands with governments that may have a modicum of political will but lack capacity to respond effectively. In other words, civic leadership may become a crucial element of political will formation. If civil society actors manage successfully address this challenge, they will greatly enhance their impacts on eGov planning in their countries and do much more to trigger processes through which public (individuals, groups and organizations) take part in developing, administering and amending local and national programming and decision-making.

In order to set an eGovernance agenda and to empower civic leadership in eGovernance programming, a system of capacity and awareness building strategies based on access to network tools, creating a cross-border institutional space, public interest campaigning and policy transformation advocacy are to be developed.

A key organizational capability for civil society groups that address issues of better eGov planning through the practices of monitoring, campaigning, bargaining, lobbying, and direct citizen participation in decision-making is the ability to network effectively – including across sectors and across countries.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Augustinaitis, A. (2000) Informacijos mokslai, T. 14.

Benchmarking e-Government: United Nations Division for Public Economics and Public Administration (2001) Benchmarking e-Government: A Global Perspective (Assessing the progress of UN Member States). Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: www.itpolicy.gov.il/topics_egov/docs/benchmarking.pdf [April 8, 2006].

Bimber, B. (2004) The Citizen in an Age of Electronic Governance. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: www.public-policy.unimelb.edu.au/ egovernance/ppts/BruceBimberKeynote.pdf [April 8, 2006].

Chadwick, A. (20030Bringing E-Democracy Back In Why it Matters for Future Research on E-Governance Social Science Computer Review, Vol. 21, No. 4, 443-455

Coleman, C., Mackintosh, A., Lalljee, M. (2004) What works? Key lessons from recent e-democracy literature. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: www.bristol-city.gov.uk/ council/pdfs/e_dem_what_works.pdf [April 8, 2006].

Coleman, C. (2004) Direct representation: a new agenda for e-democracy. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: www.public-policy.unimelb.edu.au/egovernance/papers/09_Coleman.pdf [April 8, 2006].

Curtain, R. (2003) What Role for Citizens in Developing and Implementing Public Policy? Part 1. *Canberra Bulletin of Public Administration* 5. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: http://www.apprn.org/pdf/Curtain_CitizenEngagementPart1.pdf [April 8, 2006].

e-Belarus: State Programme on informatization in the Republic of Belarus for 2003-2005 and up to 2010 "Electronic Belarus. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: http://www.bas-net.by/e-belarus/en-prog.htm [September 25, 2005]

ErshovaT., Hohlov Y. eds (2004) Promoting Enabling Environment for Information Society Development in the CIS countries. Moscow: Institute of Information Society

E-Ukraine project. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: http://www.stc.gov.ua/data-storage/660/doc660.rtf. [September 25, 2005]

EU (2004): European Commission. eGovernment Research in Europe. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL:http://europa.eu.int/information_society/programmes/egov_rd/text_en.htm [September 25, 2005].

Ghaus-Pasha, A. (2004). Role of Civil Society Organizations In Governance. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan019594.pdf [September 25, 2005].

Finger, M., Pécoud, G. (2003) From e-Government to e-Governance? Towards a model of. e-Governance. *Electronic Journal of e-Government*, V. 1, issue 19, 1-10. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: www.ejeg.com/volume-1/volume1-issue-1/ issue1-art1-finger-pecoud.pdf [April 9, 2006].

Fung, A., Wright E.O. eds (2003) Deepening Democracy: Institutional Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance. London: Verso Press.

Fung, A. (2003) .Recipes for Public Spheres: Eight Institutional Design Choices and Their Consequences. *Journal of Political Philosophy.* Vol. 11, No. 3. 338-67.

Fung, A. (2003) Deliberation Where You Least Expect It: Citizen Participation in Government" in Connections. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: http://www.archonfung.net/papers/FungConnections03.pdf [April 9, 2006].

Fung, A. (2004). Empowered Participation: Reinventing Urban Democracy. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: www.archonfung.net/home/resume.pdf [April 9, 2006].

Fung, A.. (2005) Varieties of Participation in Complex Governance. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: www.archonfung.net/papers/FungVarietiesOfPart.pdf [April 9, 2006].

Grönlund, A.. (2004) Introducing e-GOV:History, Definitions, and Issues. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems.* 15, 2004. 713-729.

Habermas, J. (1989) The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Heeks, R. (2001) Reinventing Government in the Information Age. International Practice in IT-enabled Public Sector Reform. London & New York: Routledge.

Heeks, R. (2003) Most eGovernment-for-Development Projects Fail: How Can Risks be Reduced? Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/NISPAcee/UNPAN015488.pdf [March 16, 2006].

Hemmati M. (2002) Multi-stakeholder processes for governance and sustainability. Earthscan Publications Ltd.

IDABC eGovernment Factsheet – Lithuania. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL http://europa.eu.int/idabc/en/chapter/403 [March 16, 2006].

IDABC E-government in Lithuania. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL http://europa.eu.int/idabc/servlets/Doc?id=21016 [March 16, 2006].

Kaminskas, A. (2005) Statement from Lithuania. WSIS Tunis 17 November 2005. Plenary Session 4. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: http://www.itu.int/wsis/tunis/statements/docs/g-lithuania/1.html [March 16, 2006]

Kubicek, H., Westholm, H., Winkler, R. (2003) Prisma Strategic Guideline -9. eDemocracy Information Societies Technologies Programme. Available on the Worlwide Web. URL http//www.prisma-eu.net [April 8, 2006].

Manuel, P.(2005) A Model of E-Governance Based On Knowledge Management. *Journal of Knowledge Management Practice*, 6. Available on the Worlwide Web. URL: http://www.tlainc.com/articl89.htm [April 8, 2006].

Matulis, A. (2004) The prospect of coordination of information society development process. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: www.infobalt.lt/docs/Prezentacija_2004_10_19.ppt [September25, 2005].

Masiulis, K. (2003) Communication between citizens and authorities. in Lithuania. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: europeandcis.undp.org/files/uploads/PAR_AC_Communications/LithuanianReport.doc [April 8, 2006].

Nagel, J. (1987). Participation. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

National Strategy: Ukrainian National Strategy of Information Society development for 2006-2015. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: http://www.e-uriadnik.org.ua/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=4054 [April 6, 2006].

NCLI: Information: Information on Activity of the National Center of Legal Information of the Republic of Belarus. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL:http://law.by/work/EnglPortal.nsf/Razdely/07?OpenDocument#Information%20on%20Activity%20of%20the%20 [April 6, 2006].

Okot-Uma, R. (2001) Electronic Governance: Abridged Definitive Conceptual Framework. Available on the Worlwide Web. URL: http://www.commonwealthdigitalopportunities.com/oldsite/gif/eGovernance.PDF [April 8, 2006].

OECD (2003) The e-Government Imperative. Paris: OECD e-Government Studies.

OECD (2001) Citizens as Partners: information, consultation and public participation in policy-making. Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development, Paris

Pasquali, A. (2003) A Brief Descriptive Glossary of Communication and Information (Aimed at Providing Clarification and Improving Mutual Understanding). Communicating in the Information Society. Ed. by Bruce Girard and Seán Ó Siochrú. Geneva. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL:http://files.crisinfo.org/cris/pasquali.pdf [April 6, 2006].

Pearce, L. G. (2004). Managing eGovernance Initiatives: A Phased Approach with Performance Measures. Available on the World Wide Web. URL: www.public-policy.unimelb.edu.au/egovernance/papers/28_Pearce.pdf [June 12, 2005].

Pharr, S; & Putnam, R; 2000, Disaffected Democracies: what's troubling the trilateral countries? Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Pollard, A., Court, J. (2005) How Civil Society Organizations Use Evidence to Influence Policy Processes: A literature review. Available on the World Wide Web. URL: http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/intro/general/2005/07evidence.pdf [April 8, 2006].

Popov, V. (2004) Speech to the Second Belarusian International Information Technologies and Law Conference. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: http://www.dmeurope.com/default.asp?ArticleID=4185 [November 12, 2005]

Reilly, K., Echeberria, R. (2003) The Place of Citizens and CSOs in E-Government. A Study of Electronic Government in Eight Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: http://www.katherine.reilly.net/presentations.html [June 12, 2005]

Riley, C. (2003) The Changing Role of the Citizen in the e-Governance and e-Democracy Equation. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: www.rileyis.com/publications/research_papers/cgr_thesis.pdf [April 8, 2006].

Richter, P. Cornford, J., McLoughlin, I. (2004) The e-Citizen as talk, as text and as technology: CRM and e-Government. *Electronic Journal of e-Government.* Volume 2, issue 3. 207-218. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: http://www.ejeg.com/volume-2/volume2-issue3/v2-i3-art7-richter.pdf [April 8, 2006].

Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992) Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992

Rose, R. (2005) New Europe Barometer 2004. Insiders and Outsiders. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: www.cspp.strath.ac.uk [April 8, 2006].

Roy, C. (2005) Accessibility. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: http://www.vecam.org/edm/article.php3?id_article=87 [April 8, 2006].

Sarker, P. (2004) Networked and e-Governance. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: http://www.vecam.org/article.php3?id_article=525&nemo=edm [April 8, 2006].

Scholl, H. (2001). Applying Stakeholder Theory to e-Government: Benefits and limits. Available on the the Worldwide Web. URL http://www.ischool.washington.edu/jscholl/Papers/Scholl_IFIP_2001.pdf [April 8, 2006].

Scholte, J. (2004) Democratizing the Global Economy. The Role of Civil Society. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/csgr/research/projects/englishreport.pdf [April 8, 2006].

Shaw, D. et.al. (2003) Baseline. Environmental Scan and Analysis. of Good Practice in *CRM by Local. Authorities.* Manchester:. Manchester Business School. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: www.ejeg.com/volume-2/ volume2-issue3/v2-i3-art7-richter.pdf [April 8, 2006].

Suh, S. (2005) Promoting Citizen Participation in e-Government (From the Korean Experience in e-Participation). Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan020076.pdf [August 24, 2005].

Tavgen, I. (2005) Implementation Experience with the ICT Projects of International Technical Assistance Based on Participants Partnership. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: http://confifap.cpic.ru/conf2005/eng/info/pr_s8_en.htmI [April 8, 2006].
.
USAID, 2005: United States Agency for International Development Bureau for Europe and Eurasia Office of Democracy, Governance and Social Transition (2005). The 2004 NGO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: http://pdf.dec.org/pdf_docs/PNADD432.pdf [April 8, 2006].

World Bank (2004): World Bank E*Government. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: http://www1.worldbank.org/ publicsector/egov/ [April 8, 2006].

Zailiskaite, L. (2004) E-government Implementation in Lithuania. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/NISPAcee/UNPAN017789.pdf [September 25, 2005]

Zimmerman, J. (1986) Populism revisited. *State Government.* 58, 172 -178.

Азаров, С. (2005) Информационное общество в Украине: будут ли услышаны парламентские слушания. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: http://www.e-ukraine.org.ua/index.php?mod=infsociety [April 8, 2006].

Ведяшкин, Ю. (2005) Электронное правительство. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: http://www.ua-tenders.com/article842.html [April 8, 2006].

Вестник связи International №4/2003

Жданенко, И.(1999) Проблемы отрасли связи: Вопросы и ответы. *Зеркало недели.* 18 сентября,1999.

Іванов, В. (1999). Інформаційне законодавство. Київ: Центр вільної преси.

Колодюк, А. (2005) Заявление. Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: http://www.e-uriadnik.org.ua/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=3272 [April 8, 2006].

Ладес, Г.(2005) Об основных положениях "Электронной мэрии" рассказала главный конструктор УП "ВЦ Мингорисполкома" Available on the Worldwide Web. URL: http://www.pravo.by/showtext.asp?1112960447158 [April 8, 2006].

.