

# **EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION OF ELECTRICITY SECTOR INSTITUTIONS ABOUT CITIZEN PARTICIPATION POSSIBILITIES IN LITHUANIA**

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## **Abstract**

**Purpose** – to analyse the external organizational communication about citizens participation in the electricity sector.

**Design/methodology/approach** – the research was carried out applying the following general scientific research methods: comparative analysis, induction, deduction, analysis of scientific literature and case study analysis.

In the first place, the theoretical analysis of scientific literature was carried out in order to reveal the concept of citizens participation in the governance of electricity sector in Lithuania and to identify the external organizational communication for citizen involvement. In the second part, a case study was performed to assess how public sector institutions in Lithuania communicate with citizens and to discuss possible results of such communication.

**Finding** – citizen participation in electricity sector can be described from different perspectives, but most important, they can participate as customers, as producers and as stakeholders at the same time. To encourage this participation, it is important to ensure meaningful communication among public sector institutions and the citizens. Therefore, to ensure meaningful communication for citizen participation in electricity sector needs to take into account existing external organizational communication models and the unique environmental characteristics of the public and energy sectors.

The case study analysis reveals that there is poor or “inefficient communication” in Lithuania in electricity sector. It has a negative impact on citizen participation and satisfaction with public sector institutions, so changes are needed to create communication that could encourage citizen participation.

**Research limitations/implications** – the case study is based on an analysis of selected cases and may not reflect the overall picture of electricity sector, so further empirical researches are needed.

**Practical implications** – data from this study reveals several practical applications worthy of future study: it would be valuable to further examine how citizens (participating in electricity sector) see main gaps of external organizational communication, how external organizational communication meets the objectives of the public sector institutions working in this field and other issues.

**Originality/Value** – the active participation of citizens in the energy sector is one of the strategic directions of the European Union and Lithuania. It helps to create an energy-efficient culture, together with technological solutions and innovation initiatives. For this reason, public sector institutions establish in rules, norms, and regulations, which must be communicated to citizens. Meaningful external organizational communication forms new user skills, competencies, and it is also instrument for strengthening citizens trust in public sector institutions.

**Keywords:** citizen participation in electricity sector, public governance, governance of electricity sector, external organizational communication.

**Research type:** case study.

## **Introduction**

The changes in public administration happening since the 1980s and the transformations of the “pure” public sector through the creation of hybrid organizations (quasi-markets, agencies, various public-private partnership structures, etc.) have had a major impact on the development of all countries, the public sector and the services in an attempt to transfer the principles of private sector activity to public governance (Denis et al., 2015, p. 273). As noted by Ch. Pollitt (2014, pp. 4-5), Anglo-Saxon ideas in public administration terminology, methods of analysis, and ongoing reforms have been dominant over the past thirty years, however, there have been marked changes in both practice and research. According to him, governance and the proposed universal methods of public administration and the adoption of good practices in other countries in the public sector seemed to answer all questions and reduce costs for a long time, however, such aspects of public administration as networking, community consultation, inclusion of expert and academic training, and the existing public governance traditions of individual countries cannot be ignored. Therefore, the analysis of modern public management systems must take into account the activities and the principles of management organization structures, which promote various forms of citizen participation, with an increasing focus on direct citizen participation (Raipa, 2016, p. 127).

These changes are particularly evident when analysing the ongoing reforms on a practical level, and the governance of the electricity sector is no exception. Active citizens participation in energy sector is one of the strategic directions of the European Union and Lithuania, seeking to create an energy-efficient culture, together with technological solutions and innovation initiatives. For this reason, public sector institutions have to ensure effective external communication that encourage citizens actively participate in these activities, as well as to form new user skills, competencies, and could serve like an instrument to build trust between citizens’ and public sector institutions.

### **1. Concept of citizen participation in the governance of electricity sector**

Analysing the changes in public administration, G. Stoker (1998, p.18) emphasizes that the system of governance and the concept itself are based on “five main propositions, but each of them has associated with it a certain dilemma or critical issue:

1. Governance refers to a set of public sector institutions and actors that are drawn from but also beyond government.

2. Governance identifies the blurring of boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues.

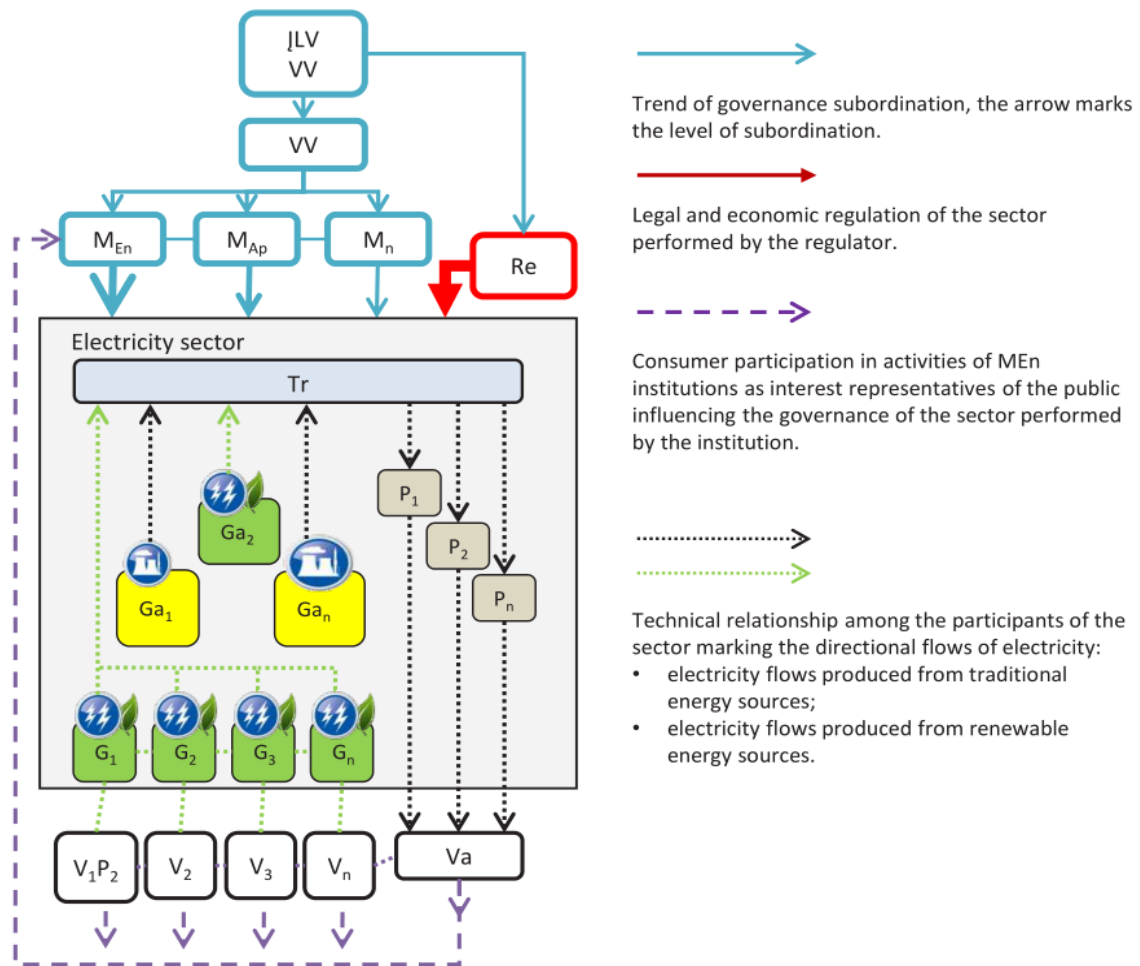
3. Governance identifies the power dependence involved in the relationships between public sector institutions involved in collective action.

4. Governance is about autonomous self-governing networks of actors.

5. Governance recognizes the capacity to get things done which does not rest on the power of government to command or the use of its authority. It sees government as able to use new tools and techniques to steer and guide”.

As a result of the reforms of the last decades, the change of the concept of governance itself and the changes in the structure of the public sector, has led to a combination of market and participatory governance. That is, the analysis of citizen participation increasingly refers to a governance structure based on a market model that is conditioned by the interplay of: (i) horizontal self-coordination among the public sector institutions and the other members in the market; (ii) control/management by the government of the market; (iii) ex-post control (mainly) by the government (Verhoest et al., 2005). This model allows a flexibility in the market, the involvement of different actors and evaluate their results through ex-post mechanisms, however, the “participation” itself is interpreted in a narrow sense, with very limited opportunities to influence policy formulation and implementation. The authors emphasize that market-based governance, that restricts broader methods of participation, is based on the representation of narrow interest groups and private business can be a kind of “dangerous activity” for post-communist countries, wherever its principles can be irresponsibly used in public sector, when seeking for personal benefits (Reinholde et al., 2020, p. 11). Therefore, combining different methods for citizens participation seek to create equal opportunities for all market participants and civil society to be involved in decision-making and to ensure their participation as active consumer in the electricity sector.

Analysing citizen participation in the energy sector and energy sector governance in general, participation might be examined on the basis of the logic of citizen participation in the governance of electricity sector in Lithuania presented in Figure 1, emphasising that the energy sector is presently facing a low level of citizen participation and only large electricity producers and stakeholders who have the relevant knowledge and expertise can influence policy formulation and implementation (Bileišis et al., 2018) with relevant data and competencies. The reason for this is that most of them operates in a regulated environment for extended periods of time and have adequate human and financial resources for meaningful participation. Meanwhile, consumers participation in the energy sector and in the governance of energy sector is relatively new, therefore there are no relevant competencies for this participation.



Notes: JLV – legislative power; VV – lead institution of executive power; Re – institution performing the regulatory role of the sector; M<sub>En</sub> – the Ministry monitoring energy policy implementation; M<sub>Ap</sub> – the Ministry monitoring environmental policy implementation; M<sub>n</sub> – other Ministries; Tr – electricity transmission networks and the supervising institution; Ga – commercial electricity producers; G – small producers producing electricity to partially meet their own needs; P – energy distribution networks; V – energy consumers (including households and communities) producing energy to meet their own needs; Va – other consumers of electricity.

Source: M. Bileišis, A. Stasiukynas, V. Smalskys (2018, p. 195).

**Figure 1. Model for increased citizen participation in the governance of electricity sector in Lithuania**

Analysing citizen participation in governance, it is common practice to distinguish between different levels of their involvement and / or to emphasize the intensity of their interactions (Arnstein, 1969; Osborne, McLaughlin, 2004; Nederhand et al., 2014). This categorization of participation into informing, consulting, involving or empowering civil society in public governance processes allows to identify the purpose for which the society is involved or involves itself, what mechanisms for their involvement need to be chosen, and what commitments are or should be undertaken while participating in the processes: continuously informing, consulting, exchanging information and ideas the public, committing to relay in information provided by public and stakeholders and provide feedback to them, and / or implementing jointly made decisions

Regardless of chosen the intensity of participation, it is emphasized that involving citizens in public governance poses challenges for achieving a balance between responsiveness, accountability

and effectiveness in the public sector, as, on the one hand, such a governance structure is conditioned by bureaucratic structure and, on the other hand, it requires respect for citizens and their preferences and a stable democratic regime is a necessary condition (Pedersen, Johannsen, 2018, pp. 662-663). Factors limiting the creation of collaborative values in such cross-sectoral governance structures lack of sufficient attention to the evaluation of partnership results, liabilities among partners, and lack of feedback and open communication between partners (Mikolaitytė, 2018, p. 133), thus, the scientific literature emphasizes the importance of mutual trust and communication as essential components of collaboration.

Citizen participation in the energy sector is fairly new process, that started with favorable changes in the energy system: smart solutions such as smart grids, smart meters, which create preconditions for active customers (Renstrom, 2019) and assurance of a favorable regulatory environment. In this context, completely different roles of citizens are distinguished (Devine-Wright, 2007; Goulden et al., 2014; Van Vliet, 2012):

- the active consumer or the co-provider – a customer who actively participates in the energy market;
- the passive consumer or customer – a customer who has a contact with the energy supplier, but does not actively participate in the energy market or contribute to the development of the energy system.
- the citizen-consumer– someone between active and passive consumer, who are concern about societal or environmental impacts of energy.

The energy system is most affected by active consumers, so it is important to ensure the availability of technologies (e.g. production), intermediation mechanisms (relevant products e.g. software, and services, e.g. energy production and consumption prediction, prices, etc.; Van Vliet, 2012). Promoting active consumers helps to create an energy-efficient culture along with technology-driven solutions and innovation initiatives, which means that citizens have the initiative to develop a smart energy system. Although the energy sector is based on non-public initiatives (business) that offer the tools for consumer active participation, it is emphasised that consumer involvement in the energy sector also depends on government decisions (Corsini et al., 2019) and encouragement early involvement in these activities through (Van Vliet, 2012):

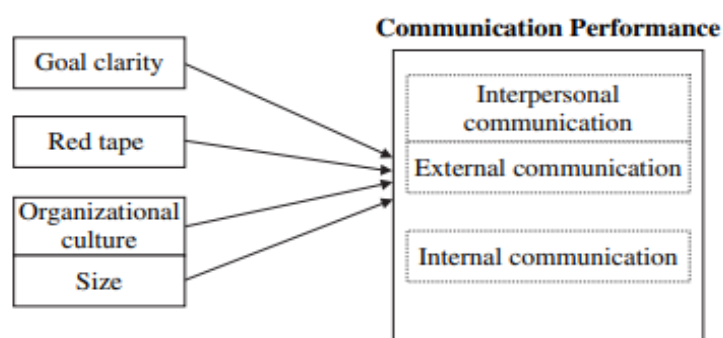
1. assurance of trust, transparency and awareness on applicable technological innovations and opportunities;
2. provision of appropriate measures (management measures) to encourage citizen participation in energy projects;
3. dissemination of best practice.

The factors mentioned above provide the citizens with new skills, competencies to use new technologies and to realize the opportunities (Strengers, Nicholls, 2017; Kettune, Makitalon, 2019). Therefore, public authorities play an important role in setting rules, norms values and communicate this information to citizens. For this it is important to ensure effective external organisational communication that builds trust among citizens and public sector institutions, ensures a proper communication climate, processes and networks.

## 2. Importance of external organizational communication for citizen involvement

The scientific literature defines communication as a process in which at least two individuals exchange information in order to exchange mutual points of view (Hawrysz and Hys, 2014; Pattnaik, Mishra, 2014), however, communication is also understood as a means to control and manipulate behaviour (Pattnaik, Mishra, 2014) in order to achieve a specific result (Subban, Singh, 2013). Communication efficiency, i.e. the likelihood that the recipient of a message will understand the information, mainly depends on whether this information will be meaningful for the recipient (Hawrysz and Hys, 2014).

According to Pandey, Granett (2006) communication efficiency mainly depends on 4 basic elements – goal clarity, red tape, organizational culture and organization size (Figure 2).



Source: Pandey, Granett (2006, p. 38)

**Figure 2. A Model of public sector communication performance**

According to Pandey, Granett (2006) goal clarity is important because in most cases, public sector institutions have multiple goals to pursue. Goal clarity affects attitude toward work and organizational performance. Red tape usually takes the form of rules and procedures that create certain barriers and do not meet the goals for which they were intended. Red tape reduces benefits to society, increases job dissatisfaction, and forms a riskier organizational culture. In scientific literature, organizational culture is often identified with the climate of communication and associated with the generalized perception that individuals have about the public sector institution. It usually depends on organizational structure, personal responsibility, support, reward and punishment, conflict resolution, performance standards, and organizational identity. The last element that forms effective communication is the size of public sector institution, which depends

on the number of employees, it means that communication is more complex in larger, complex, hierarchical organizations, but at the same time, such organizations often have more resources to communicate, such as experts, staff, budget for communication.

Liu, Horsley (2007) emphasize the uniqueness of organizational communication due to the need to deal with unforeseen situations (e.g., a nuclear power plant explosion) as quickly as possible and the unique characteristics of the public sector environment that must be taken into account when forming public communication and which often are not covered by standard communication models (Table 1).

**Table 1. Summary of five public relations models**

<i>Model</i>	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>	<i>Elements Applied to Government Communication Decision Wheel</i>
Model of the Government Communication Process	Addresses public sector environmental constraints; identifies when to select various communication vehicles for government communication.	Only allows for one-way asymmetrical communication; typology rather than a foundation for a theory.	Inclusion of public sector environmental constraints; concept of adapting communication strategy based on specific public sector environmental constraints.
Synthesis Model of Public Sector Crisis Communication	Addresses wide variety of public sector environmental constraints.	Only applies to crisis situations; only allows for one-way asymmetrical communication.	Inclusion of public sector environmental constraints.
Public Relations Process Model	Explains how organizations interact with their environment and change.	Biased toward corporate sector; need more detail on the subsystem dimensions.	Concept of supersystem and subsystems.
Two-Way Symmetrical Model	Combines mixed-motives and two-way symmetrical; explains how organizations adapt strategies to effectively meet the organization's and the publics' needs.	Does not allow for one-way communication; does not account for unique public sector environment.	Combining two-way symmetrical and asymmetrical communication; concept of organizations adapting strategies to effectively meet publics' needs.
Contingency Theory	Explains how the practice of public relations is contingent on factors that vary across time, environment, situation, and publics.	Only applied to conflict resolution; 86 factors predominately focus on private sector considerations.	Concept that there is no one-size-fits all approach to the practice of public relations.

Source: Liu, Horsley (2007, 385).

External organizational communication must be designed to inform the public about the services provided, and at the same time provide feedback, help achieve organizational goals, and implement the political agenda of government (Subban, Singh, 2013), as the image of public sector institution and the degree of trust in it depend on it. Public authorities must develop a communication strategy that:

1. Ensures that legal regulation is fit for its purpose: rules, regulations and procedures should fit the purpose for which they were created (Pandey and Granett, 2006);
2. Ensures the effectiveness of communication activities in public sector institution: external communication must form a positive attitude about the public sector institution and ensure trust among the public sector institution and citizens or stakeholders (Liu, Horsley, 2007; Valackienė, Trafimovas, 2015);

3. Takes into account the ability of the recipients of the message to understand the information: the message must be simple and correspond to the level of comprehension of the recipients (Valackienė, Trafimovas, 2015).

Thus, external organizational communication must provide information and know-how and at the same time to ensure formation of new competencies and fostering tolerance and mutual trust among the public sector institution and citizens or stakeholders, which increases the degree of citizen involvement in public governance processes.

### 3. Case study of external organizational communication in electricity sector in Lithuania

A case study was conducted to assess how public sector institutions in the electricity sector communicate with citizens and whether communication is effective according to the external communication indicators highlighted in scientific literature. Case study was based on analysis of press releases, information on the public sector institutions websites and internet news portals (further – articles), that: provides relevant information to citizens on issues of the electricity sector and were published in 2014-2021. According to articles analysis, two main electricity sector issues, directly related to citizens involvement have been identified: choice of independent electricity supplier and involvement of prosumers.

Assessment of external organizational communication in the electricity sector (Table 2) reveals that in both cases, the public sector institutions face the same communication difficulties: lack of trust, the information does not reach citizens as planned and the messages (received by citizens) are sometimes even frightening.

**Table 2. Assessment of external organizational communication in the electricity sector**

Criteria for external communication	Indicators for external communication	Does the communication meet the indicators of external communication?	
		Issue No. 1: Involvement of prosumers	Issue No. 2: Choice of independent electricity supplier
Expediency of legal regulation	Legal regulation serves the legitimate purposes they were intended to serve	Yes	
Forms of external communication performed by the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information is published in reliable sources;</li> </ul>	Yes	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information provided is not intimidating;</li> </ul>	Partly	Partly
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The uniqueness of public sector institutions is considered when formulating a report;</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External communication ensures the trust among the public sector institution and citizens or stakeholders;</li> </ul>	Partly	Partly
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timely communication about decisions and changes to be made</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes

Table 2 continues on the next page



Continuation of Table 2

Criteria for external communication	Indicators for external communication	Does the communication meet the indicators of external communication?	
		Issue No. 1: Involvement of prosumers	Issue No. 2: Choice of independent electricity supplier
The public sector institution considers the ability of the recipients to understand the information	• Appropriate skills and awareness of recipients are ensured;	Partly	Partly
	• External organizational communication is provided in direct and simple language, in a user-friendly form;	Partly	Partly
	• All parties understand, acknowledge and address the relevant topic or problem;	Partly	Partly
	• Communicates on a user-friendly platform	Partly	

### *Issue No. 1: Involvement of prosumers*

National Energy Independence Strategy sets ambitious goals for renewable energy sector for 2030 with the vision for 2050. For period till 2030 Lithuania are going to increase level of decentralization and to enable consumers to produce electricity by themselves - more than 30% (more than 510 000 of consumers) of electricity consumers in Lithuania will be prosumers (active consumers) by 2030. The scheme of prosumers formed in 2015 did not attract much interest (63 users took advantage of the newly created opportunities in 2015). The scheme of prosumers received more interest only in 2017 when more intensive support for investments and more active communication on activities of prosumers were provided (in 2017, 426 users took advantage of the opportunity to become prosumers; Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Lithuania, 2020).

Communication from public authorities in the beginning of prosumer scheme (2014-2017) was sluggish, technical in nature, justifying the choice of prosumer operating model. The Ministry of Energy in its external communication supported the legalization of prosumers scheme and the idea of such scheme, however there was uncertainty how this scheme will affect other consumers and whether this scheme will be attractive to electricity consumers (communication during consideration of legal regulation in Seimas; Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Lithuania, 2014; Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Lithuania, 2015). The information about prosumers scheme provided on the news portals (Verslo žinios, 15min, Delfi, etc.) also cast doubt on the benefits of this scheme: “<...> exchanging kilowatt hours is likely to result in fewer taxes being collected in the budget. It is alleged that there is a risk that part of income and profit of LESTO will not be accounted for in this way, as a result of which less VAT, excise and corporate taxes will be paid to the state” (vz.lt, 2014), and its relevance: “Bearing in mind that without investing thousands in any power plants, residents buy electricity from LESTO for about 12 euro cents, i.e.. only 3 times more expensive, it can be assumed that only few of those 300 applicants will invest” (vz.lt, 2015).

Communication changed in 2017, emphasizing the priorities of the Ministry of Energy and prosumers who are becoming traditional customers (vz.lt, 2017). Since 2017 more active communication on activities of prosumers have begun and clear goals were emphasized. It was expected that in 2020 the number of such prosumers will increase from the current 300 to 34 thousand and will account for about 2 percent of all consumers (Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Lithuania, 2017). To reach this goal the Ministry of Energy in its external communication emphasised the benefits of the scheme for consumers: “Creating an effective model of promotion, education and active involvement of consumers who can comfortably produce electricity for their own needs and thus reduce their bills is one of the top priorities of Government in energy sector.” (Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Lithuania (2), 2017). It should be noted that the legal regulation was also focused on improving operating conditions for prosumers and all consumers not only households could benefit from prosumer scheme. Moreover, Ministry of Energy have made an user-friendly memos with the main principles of prosumers activity in order to facilitate the prosumers establishment conditions and to ensure appropriate skills and awareness for its participation in electricity sector (Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Lithuania (3), 2017) and public consultations were carried out with target groups on the application of the scheme of prosumers in multi-apartment buildings (The Office of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, 2017; Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Lithuania, 2021).

Assessing the external organisational communication on the scheme of prosumer, it is noted that the legal regulation developed by public sector institutions meets the purpose for which it was created: legal regulation was constantly improved, its improvement was discussed with social partners, conditions for becoming prosumer was facilitated. Although the information was published in reliable sources (public sector institutions websites, social networks, news portals), doubts were expressed at the beginning of the scheme existence, and only then the communicated messages caused fear and uncertainty. It is believed that this situation was determined by the fact that the scheme was completely new and had not worked in the Lithuanian energy sector so far; therefore, there were many unanswered questions. The communication with the different messages by representatives of different sectors may have raised doubts and mistrust in the formation of the prosumers scheme. Therefore, communication could have been enhanced by clearer and simpler terminology aimed at the target group, a description of key operating principles, and an emphasis on the benefits to the prosumers.

Analysing the timeliness of the information and the comprehensibility of its presentation to the target group, it can be stated that the discussions on the prosumer scheme started before the entry into force of the legal regulation, i.e. in 2014, however, communication was unsecured during that period and cast doubt on the relevance of the scheme. Nevertheless, the expediency and

simplicity of communication, which started in 2017 increased the number of prosumers almost 7 times and kept the number of prosumers increasing to 9511 in March 2021 (Public Institution Lithuanian Energy Agency, 2021).

### ***Issue No. 2: Choice of independent electricity supplier***

Until 2021, the state-owned public supplier “Ignitis” supplied electricity to all household consumers in Lithuania, however, the aim of implementing market liberalization is to gradually abandon price regulation in the retail electricity market by 2023. As a result, household consumers must (will) have to choose independent electricity suppliers according to the approved stages (Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Lithuania, 2019). Analysing how external organizational communication was carried out in this situation, it should be highlighted that communication on how this process will be carried out and when and which household consumers can (must) choose independent suppliers was carried out by both national level institutions (Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Lithuania, State Energy Regulatory Council) and independent suppliers themselves, including the existing supplier “Ignitis”. Accordingly, the information was published on news portals and other information sources which usually directly reaches the population, thus, the content of information and how it was communicated often depended on the specific source.

Analysing external organizational communication according to the identified indicators, there is no doubt that in this situation the legal regulation was in line with the goals of the reform, the information was sought to be published in reliable sources, ensuring the user-friendly platforms, etc. Nevertheless, a number of key external organizational communication gaps can be identified: the information provided should not be a cause for concern, however, the information messages did not emphasize the benefits of choosing an independent supplier, but the threats and sanctions for not choosing them, e.g. “For thousands of people, the last day to choose an electricity supplier“ (15min.lt, 2020), “Those who do not choose will pay about 12% more for electricity.” (lrt.lt, 2020), “<...>If the consumer does not choose a new independent electricity supplier within this period, the guaranteed electricity supplier will acquire the right to terminate the electricity supply to the consumer” (State Energy Regulatory Council, 2020), etc. It is noteworthy that the liberalization of the market was presented in the most positive way by the Ministry of Energy (2019), emphasizing more opportunities and better conditions for consumers, lower prices, etc.

Analyzing the timeliness of the information and the comprehensibility of its presentation to the target group, it is necessary to return to the already mentioned abundance of communicating public sector institutions. The Ministry of Energy, as the public sector institution supervising the implementation of market liberalization, and a large part of other information sources based on its information provided a visually clear and simplified selection scheme, indicating the selection

stages and at which stage which residents need to decide on supplier selection (e.g. <https://pasirinkitietiejeja.lt/>). However, in the aforementioned cases where alarming messages were broadcast, this information was often not provided and the population wondered when and how to choose, and potential independent suppliers did not always provide full information on the terms of contracts or supplier selection (Delfi, 2021), which could result in difficulties and possible further communication disruptions.

Although comments in the public sphere cannot be considered an objective criterion for evaluating external organizational communication, reviewing the statements of registered commentators of information portals, the content of which conveys external organizational communication gaps, it can be concluded that this process is often considered forced, customers do not understand how the real change of supplier and equipment (meters) will take place, and the inevitable change of electricity prices is emphasized, etc. Thus, it can be seen that even those consumers who will choose an independent electricity supplier in the final stage and are provided with information in advance are not aware of how market liberalization is already taking place in practice and how it will be directly affect them. Therefore, when analyzing whether all parties in the external organizational communication process understand the problem being solved and whether trust is being built, we cannot assess the ongoing organizational communications as fully effective. The complexity and inefficiency of the external organizational communication process is shown by the numbers of consumers who have chosen an independent electricity supplier: by 2020 an independent electricity supplier was chosen by 87,200 consumers out of 98,000 who had to choose an independent supplier in the first stage, but as many as 118,000 consumers did not choose an independent supplier at the stage of liberalization in which they had to choose (Verslo žinios, 2021).

#### **4. Conclusions**

The changes that have taken place in the public sector in recent decades have also had a direct impact on the perception of citizen participation in the electricity sector. It, like other areas, has a combination of market and participatory governance, but still has a low level of citizen participation compared to other areas of public administration. This is because citizen participation in this sector is relatively new, therefore there are no established traditions of participation and competencies necessary for participation. Citizen participation in electricity sector could be encouraged through external organizational communication, which creates the conditions for building trust among citizens and public sector institutions, ensures the climate necessary for constructive cooperation and allows for consistent implementation of the set goals.

Public sector institutions in Lithuania on its websites provide relevant, timely and understandable information, however, these pages are specific, not everyone knows them or first

searches for information on them, therefore the information they publish does not always directly reach the target audience. Social media, on the other hand, often formed informational messages that provided fragmented information on the issues analysed, and the headlines they provided are inaccurate, highlighting negative aspects, or even intimidating in nature. As a result, public sector institutions face inefficient communication challenges and disruptions to implement the intended changes.

In order to ensure effective external communication, public sector institutions need to realize that modern society is changing and that it is important for them to have access to key information in a concise and comprehensible way, thus, the ways in which information is presented and the information channels themselves should be rethought. For example, the information messages of the public sector institutions meet the essential criteria of effective communication, but it is necessary to look for ways for them to reach the population directly and not through secondary sources.

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