

Public Consultation, Participation and Administrative Reform: the Case of Greece¹

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Abstract

The lack of trust in democratic institutions and in the effectiveness of governments has led to the search of a new contract between governments and citizens. Citizens' participation in the decision-making process but also in the implementation of public policy through consultation mechanisms is nowadays considered vital. The last two decades a diffusion of public consultation mechanisms can be observed in Western societies (e.g. US, UK, Canada) and in supranational and international organizations (e.g. OECD, EU). In Greece, discussions about the importance of public consultation have also increased in the last two decades but its application has been limited up to now. The attempt to establish public consultation mechanisms and culture has reached a peak with the newly elected socialist government. This paper aims to analyze the types and examples of public consultation as well as the values behind it. Greece is an interesting case-study because similarly to many other countries implementing public consultation mechanisms has proven to be challenging. It is argued that establishing consultation mechanisms in Greece would signify a shift of administrative paradigm, given that the existing model is hierarchical.

Introduction

The lack of trust in democratic institutions and in the effectiveness of governments has led to the search of a new contract between governors and governed. Concepts such as deliberative democracy are increasingly part of the political and academic debate. The value of strengthening civil society and of increasing public

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participation is undisputable. More specifically, citizen's participation in policy-making processes but also in the implementation of public policy via consultation mechanisms is at least in the plans of most Western countries. In the last two decades a diffusion of consultation instruments can be observed in Western countries (e.g. UK, USA, Canada) but also in international and intergovernmental organizations (e.g. OECD, EU with COM, 2002/704).

In Greece, the discussion about public consultation has risen in the last few years and it has reached a peak with the establishment of the Open Governance platform by the newly elected Prime Minister (<http://www.opengov.gr/home/>). Nevertheless, the consolidation of public participation mechanisms is a challenge given that the Greek administrative system is hierarchical while citizen's participation is a characteristic of administrative systems that are less hierarchical and are better described via the policy networks framework. It could be argued that the substantial institutionalization of public participation as an inextricable part of the public policy cycle, in reality equals a paradigmatic shift for Greece.

The paper is divided into four parts. The first part analyses two public policy models in relation to public participation: the hierarchical model and the policy networks model. The second part is devoted to the definition and the prerequisites of deliberative democracy. In the third part, the relationship between New Public Management (NPM) and good governance with the enhancement of public participation is further explored in order to better understand the reasons why governments are starting supporting such measures. The different types and values of public participation are further elaborated. The fourth part is turning to examples of public communication and public consultation in Greece. The paper closes with some theoretical and empirical conclusions as well as some initial policy proposals

Hierarchies, Policy Networks and Public Participation

Understanding the Greek case can be facilitated by comparing the hierarchical model, which is the dominant model and the policy networks model which promotes public participation in a more direct way. The hierarchical model is initially characterized by a concrete and rigid rule of law which defines public administration jurisdiction and the solid boundaries of public sector accountability. This means that the responsible person, the particular tasks and the administrative procedures that

should be followed are determined. The concrete steps of the procedures and the time in which they should be completed are defined. The reason why this stringency exists is in order to avoid the abuse of public power and to facilitate the control of the actions and omissions of public officials. Another characteristic of this model is transparency of all administrative actions in order to make possible the information of citizens and their option to lay complaints in case they are dissatisfied. All this is taking place under the mantle of public purpose that assumes the existence of a cohesive society where working for public administration is a vocation and the purpose is to achieve the public interest (Lane, 2000: 194-197).

As far as the public sector control is concerned, the hierarchical model emphasizes oversight. Given that a concrete allocation of tasks exists between public officials as well as a specific set of rules that needs to be followed, it is possible to check their actions via austere oversight. As a result, in order to combat maladministration, the hierarchical model proposes the embedment of rules by strengthening the courts or by increasing the penalties for illegal action (Hood, 1998).

A theoretical model that opposes many of the assumptions of the hierarchical model is that of governance via policy networks. The policy networks approach focuses on the relationships between policy actors and on the informal aspects of policy-making and implementation. It is also interested in policy learning which refers to the way organizations and states learn from each other, either in a positive or a negative way (Parsons, 1995). Policy networks are closely linked with the concept of governance and with the idea of increased complexity of public policy processes. It is argued that hierarchical public services management, does not consist a solution to the problem but it is part of the problem. The solution is to find ways to “manage without managers”. Some proposed directions are communitarianism and participatory organization with the form of decentralized self-managed organizational units (Etzioni, 1993). Communitarianism made its appearance as an antidote to individualism and proposed values of participation and devotion to the community as well as the investment on the common cultural goods of each community (Sandel, 1998). The roots of this diversified school of thought can be found in the Athenian democracy, in the utopian socialists such as Robert Owen (1817) and Charles Fourier (Kanter, 1972), in Marxist thinking and in the propositions of the green and feminist movements.

An important dimension of this paradigm is maximum face-to-face accountability, according to which external control of organizations such as the control of citizens towards public officials takes place by a more direct imputation of liabilities. The starting point is that responsibility lies with the whole of the community and not only with those that have been elected or appointed to exercise power. As a result all public officials are under constant control from the community and the mechanisms of recall via elections are functioning. The most extensive control can be achieved via decentralized units in order for the citizens to be as close as possible to public officials (Hood, 1998: 120-144).

As far as consultation is concerned, it has to be noticed that the process is often considered to be more important than the result (Barber, 1984). This means that any possible delays due to time-consuming meetings or other procedures are preferred to less democratic processes that would lead to faster results but would alienate citizens. The argument is in favor of a society that is composed from rational and responsible citizens who via participatory processes and dialogue take the most optimal decisions for their community. Reforms towards the enhancement of participation are not without criticism. The strongest argument against participatory forms of governance is the non-representativeness of participation which means that even if citizens and lower civil servants think that they can define policies, this is not the case because all kind of power relations are still in place. Another dimension of the critique concerns possible conflicts and delays because of the participation of large numbers of agents during the design and implementation of public policies (Peters, 2001).

Deliberative Democracy

The crisis of democracy is translated in a lack of citizen's trust to the institutions and has led a number of analysts in Europe and the US to the formulation of propositions for the renewal of the democratic system and for the advancement of deliberative democracy. Deliberative democracy is an expression of the model of procedural democracy which is the most current model of democracy and represents a synthesis of the traditional liberal model of representative democracy and of the consensual republican model (Held, 2006). This section is not devoted to the analysis of the two classical models but will attempt to shed light to the two types of

deliberative democracy as classified by Rosenberg (2007): the Anglo-American and the European types.

The nature and values of the individual as a citizen is the basis of the Anglo-american approach of deliberative democracy which to an extent constitutes an answer to the economic theory of rational choice. The Anglo-american approach has been inspired from Rawls' contemporary liberalism and his analysis of political justice as well as from John Stuart Mill's classical liberalism and his loyalty to public dialogue. The central axiom is that human beings are rational, but additionally they have the ability to make decisions based on a feeling of justice. Even the analysts that query such type of citizens' abilities claim that their participation in processes of consultation will help them develop them. Just as important, equality between human beings and autonomy are seen as values that complement each other because they feed each other. In practical terms, this approach proposes consultation as an answer to the deficiency of elections and of referenda because it gives the opportunity for more meaningful participation and exchange of opinions (Rosenberg, 2007: 4-10).

The European approach differs as far as its epistemology is concerned, which means as far as the way human beings and their social life are defined and the way this affects the relationship between equality and autonomy. The key representative of this approach is Habermas (1996) and the main difference is that the rationality of human beings is considered to be directly linked to their socio-historical reality. This means that the beliefs and the preferences of individuals change in each historical period and thus their rationality is not universal. The cognitive activity of human beings is to a large extent the outcome of discourse and of the social interaction in which it takes place. According to this approach, the ability of individuals to think rationally is an achievement in a particular socio-historical moment in time and their autonomy is not a natural condition but a social construction. As a result, political relationships are conceived as social interactions that assist the development of the cognitive abilities of individuals and thus the improvement of the quality of their values (Rosenberg, 2007: 10-15).

Despite their differences, the two approaches of deliberative democracy agree on the necessary conditions for consultation in practice:

- In order to introduce consultation, regular activities should be suspended to create the necessary political space.

- The political space that will be created should be open to everyone.
- Consultation should be public in order to allow interested parties to get informed and react if necessary.
- The results of consultation should be binding for all participants.
- Consultation should influence one way or the other public policy.

Additionally, the European approach claims that the creation of 'free' public space is not enough and the consultations should be institutionalized in order for the citizens to realize their role and improve their communication. It is believed, that consultation will lead to more effective and just results, to the establishment of societies based on solidarity that respect differences between individuals and to the cultivation of a higher cognitive and social level of development of the citizens (Rosenberg, 2007). In the next section, the concept of governance and the prospect of adopting processes of public consultation are discussed.

Governance and Public Participation

The concept of governance has been widely used and as a result it is quite broad. Cleveland (1972) who is the first one that has used the term governance in order to distinguish it from government said: "What people want is less government and more governance". The basic parameters of governance according to Rhodes (2000: 54-90) are:

- New Public Management (NPM),
- good governance (efficiency, transparency, meritocracy and parity),
- international and inter-sectoral interconnection
- the growth of the importance of non-governmental forms of governance,
- the new political economy that pushes the state to regulate rather than to provide services,
- the existence of policy networks.

The above parameters refer to a more flexible and efficient administrative system that distances itself from the problems of hierarchical public administration. The first examples of reform towards a governance system can be found in the UK, New Zealand, Australia and US where emphasis is placed upon public markets and competition, participatory democracy, flexibility and deregulation (Peters, 2001).

In relation to public participation, which is the second term used in this section, a wide spread definition states, that it is a practice that aims at the involvement of citizens in the processes of agenda formulation, of decision-making and of the design of public policies. Depending on the flow of information three types of public participation can be distinguished: public communication, public consultation and direct public participation (Rowe and Frewer, 2005):

- **Public Communication:** The flow of information is from the government to the citizens and there is no direct participation of citizens given that their reaction to the information is not required and thus no such mechanisms have been developed.
- **Public Consultation:** The flow of information is from the citizens to the government through the use of mechanisms that the government has established. The possibility for a meaningful dialogue between the citizens and the government is limited.
- **Direct Public Participation:** The flow of communication is dual, which means from the government to the citizens but also from the citizens to the government. In this case, there is a better chance for constructive dialogue.

The adoption public communication mechanisms from governments, is the simplest and most common tool. The embracing of public consultation and direct public participation mechanisms can possibly follow.

Although the relationship between NPM and public participation is not always self-evident because public participation is mainly related with the values of deliberative democracy while the NPM is an outcome of the liberal tradition, as it was shown in the previous section deliberative democracy and liberalism are in fact closely related. Pierre (1998) observes that a lot of the innovation in public consultation tools has its roots in countries that have implemented NPM practices such as New Zealand. It can be argued that public consultation and NPM are actually two sides of the same coin. The transformation of politicians and bureaucrats to framework governors that steer rather than row decentralized, self-organized structures enhances the necessity for the adoption of public consultation practices (Agger, Sorensen and Torfing, 2008).

Another dimension of the enhancement of public participation within the NPM framework is linked with the increased need for specialized knowledge. The technocratic difficulties that characterize many of the policies (e.g. environmental policy, foreign policy) brings to the front of policy formulation, experts, consultants and research institutes (Ladi, 2005, 2007). The financial cost of knowledge combined with the complexity of social problems makes the idea of consultation with citizens attractive. Citizens of Western democracies by large have achieved a high level of knowledge, understand the problems quite well and can contribute to their solution (Pierre, 1998). The creation of formal and informal networks and partnerships has become common.

Two are the main questions that arise because of the enhancement of citizens' participation. First, does the increase of participation harms the effectiveness of public policy because of delays and second, do participatory mechanisms and networks that have been created are really democratic. Agger, Sorensen and Torfing (2008) claim that participation and effectiveness do not oppose each other and that they can actually promote each other as it has been discussed up to now. The tendency towards decentralized administration and the complexity of social problems make closed and non-participatory democracies ineffective, and not the other way around. As far as the second question about the democratic nature of participatory processes and of networks is concerned, criticism is more vigorous. There is evidence, that deliberative democracy faces the same kind of inequalities as parliamentary democracy. Even more, networks and partnerships often face a lack of accountability because of a lack of clear allocation of tasks and thus of responsibility (Papadopoulos, 2003). In a study of partnerships and networks in local government in the UK, Davies (2007) concludes that two types of threat exist as far as their democratic nature is concerned: the managerialism of partnerships and the cultural barriers and thus inequalities. He proposes an exit strategy for agents form partnerships and networks where they feel marginalized in order to push for substantial democratization of public policy.

Citizens' participation is also directly linked with the concept of 'good governance, which is one of the parameters of governance according to Rhodes (2000). The World Bank is one of the key organizations that have widely used and promoted good governance. In one of its documents, it outlines three central parameters of governance: a) the type of the political regime, b) the public

management of the financial and social resources and c) the ability of government to design, formulate and implement public policies (World Bank, 1994). The former UN General Secretary in a talk described good governance as an influence that strengthens respect of human rights and of law, reinforces democracy, promotes transparency and improves public administration capabilities (Weiss, 2000). The last decade the term good governance has been expanded in order to include much more than multi-party elections, an independent judiciary and parliamentary power. The areas of interest now include “universal protection of human rights; non-discriminatory laws; efficient, impartial and rapid judicial processes; transparent public agencies; accountability for decisions by public officials; devolution of resources and decision making to local levels from the capital; and meaningful participation by citizens in debating public policies and choices” (Weiss, 2000: 801).

Citizens’ involvement in processes of public policy formulation is considered to be an indication of good governance and thus is often stated as a government goal. Taking into account the roots and criticisms of public participation and in order to explore and to evaluate the situation in Greece, we first need to outline the international framework of public participation justification, values and types. According to OECD (2001:19-26), the goals that governments are aiming at through the enhancement of public participation are:

- The *improvement of the quality of policies* because governments are assisted in the collection of information, views and possible solutions in order to confront the challenges of designing policies in conditions of increased complexity, interconnectiveness and time pressure.
- The facilitation of reacting to the *challenges of information society*.
- The *integration of citizens’ views* during the formulation of public policy.
- The achievement of other goals such as *transparency* and *accountability*.
- The strengthening of *public trust* to government.

All attempts to introduce consultation at the national or supranational level start with the expression of similar values. These values have their sources in deliberative democracy and according to the EU include (COM, 2002/ 704):

- **Participation:** The quality of public policies depends upon broad participation in all stages of the policy: from design to implementation. This means that consultation processes should be also characterized by broad participation.

- **Transparency and Accountability:** Consultation processes should be characterized by transparency for the participants and for the public. In order to achieve this there should be a clear definition of the issues that are examined, the mechanisms and the participants of the consultation and finally, the rationale behind the formulation of the proposed policy.

As far as accountability is concerned the agents that participate should make clear the interests that they represent and the level of the representation.

- **Efficiency:** Consultation should be efficient and this means that it should start early. It is possible that there will be a need to conduct it in more than one stages. The aim should be mutual understanding. Finally, for the consultation to be efficient, proportionality should be taken into account, which means that its method and breadth should be proportional to the expected impact of the policy.

Finally, it is worth noticing that for every type of public participation, a variety of practices has been used. It is not possible to draw an exhaustive list because every country and every public organization adapts these practices in its own context but it is worth outlining the main practices. Rowe and Frewer (2005) have classified these main practices according to the type of public participation (i.e. public communication, public consultation, direct public participation). Following their classification the most common practices of public communication are: information broadcasts which refers to ‘publicity’ via television, newspaper and/or radio, public hearing and public meetings with questions and answers, drop-in centers, internet information and hotlines. Public consultation practices include opinion polls, referenda, electronic consultation, focus groups, study circles and citizens panels. Finally, although not widely used, public participation practices are action planning groups, citizens’ jury, task forces and town meetings. In the next section, the challenges but also the success stories of the introduction of public participation processes, values and practices in Greece are discussed.

Public Participation and Public Administration Reform in Greece

Citizens’ participation in formulation and implementation of public policy in Greece is limited and comports with the general image of weak civil society,

oversized public sector and dominant political parties (e.g. Mouzelis and Pagoulatos, 2003). Additionally, the prevailing hierarchical administrative model hinders the adoption of participatory practices that better fit an administrative model based on policy networks. Nevertheless, the international trend towards broader citizens' participation, Greece's participation in the EU as well as the need to comply with the values of good governance have opened up the discussion about the importance of public participation. The current government and especially the new Prime Minister seem to have realized the importance of public participation and are insisting in the importance of consultation before new legislation is passed. From the three types of public participation, as it is discussed in the rest of this section, public communication is the most developed followed by public consultation. Direct public participation is still weak in the agenda of either the government or civil society.

Before turning to the analysis of the attempts to implement public participation practices in Greece, the significance of the dominant hierarchical administrative paradigm should be stressed. It is argued that the austere hierarchical structure of Greek public administration obstructs the adoption of mechanisms for the increase of participation, given that such mechanisms are in conflict with the dominant value system of the hierarchical model. The successful adoption of participation mechanisms would signify a tendency for change of the administrative paradigm in Greece from government and hierarchy to governance and policy networks. Such a claim would be premature given that there is evidence that Greek public administration remains hierarchical and centralized as far as its institutions and control mechanisms are concerned. The fact that this hierarchical model is dysfunctional makes any transformation attempt more difficult (e.g. Spanou, 2001, Makridimitris, 2006). Following, the steps that have been made in the domain of public communication and public consultation are discussed, in order to have a concrete snap of the current situation.

Public Communication

Public communication concerns practices of information transmission from government and public organizations to the citizens. It is directly related with the transparency of governmental actions and with the citizens' right to access public information and in particular public documents. Transparency is a characteristic of

the hierarchical administrative model and a precondition for a transition to networks governance.

The right to information is initially protected by the article 5^A of the Greek Constitution according to which:

- “1. All persons are entitled to information, as specified by law. Restrictions to this right may be imposed by law only insofar as they are absolutely necessary and justified for reasons of national security, of combating crime or of protecting rights and interests of third parties.
2. All persons are entitled to participate in the Information Society. Facilitation of access to electronically handed information, as well as of the production, exchange and diffusion thereof constitutes an obligation of the State, always in observance of the guarantees of articles 9, 9A and 19”.

The Administrative Procedural Code (Law 2690/1999) supplements the Constitution by specifying that all citizens, and not only citizens that have a specific interest, have a right to access administrative documents. The implementation of the legislation for the right to information is over sighted by the Ombudsman who receives citizens' complaints for denial of access and by the Hellenic Data Protection Authority, when asked by a public organization or citizen in relation to a claim.

In practice, although some steps have been made to facilitate access to public information, shortcomings, delays and problems are often the rule and not the exception. The 2007 Ombudsman report (Greek Ombudsman, 2007: 145) states that: “a large number of citizens' complaints, who face the refusal of the administration to allow access to public or private documents that are at its disposal, are registered”. Many times the refusal is silent by not answering the claim of the citizens at all. Other times, the administrative nature of the document is questioned or the claim is classified as improper, or it is argued that the citizen should have a legal interest in order to ask for the document (although such legal obligation does not exist). Other reasons for denial that are put forward include other laws that limit the access to specific documents, the confidentiality of tax information and the protection of personal data. A similar picture exists in relation to environmental information which according to the Aarhus Convention and the EU directive 2003/4/EC should be characterized by transparency. Even in this case, no effective implementation of the legal obligations can be observed (Greek Ombudsman, 2006).

A positive development is the Citizens Service Centre that functions in the model of one-stop-shops and provides citizens with easy access to information as well as the corresponding website (<http://www.kep.gov.gr/>) and hotlines that offer a 24

hours service. Public communication from the government to the citizens is common via media advertisement but this normally refers to messages that government wants to transmit to the citizens and not too detailed information. Nevertheless, the discourse of the new government (October 2009) is in favor of transparency and increased access to information. Compared to other countries although Greece lacks in implementation, it has a full legal framework in place (Banisar, 2006). The outcomes of the new policies remain to be evaluated.

Public Consultation

The use of consultation mechanisms in Greece is sporadic but increasingly there is an agreement that they should be enhanced in order to achieve better regulation but also to improve the quality of public policy decision-making and implementation. Up to now, the main steps that had been made were the establishment of the Economic and Social Council of Greece (ESC) drawing upon the model of the European Economic and Social Committee, the organization of consultation for specific issues, normally with a European character, such as the Lisbon Strategy and the conduction of consultation by particular public organizations (e.g. local authorities or the Hellenic Telecommunications and Post Commission). The introduction of the Open Governance platform since November 2009 by the current Prime Minister is the most holistic attempt up to now (<http://www.opengov.gr/home/>). In the rest of this section, the most important of these initiatives are discussed in more detail.

The ESC was created in 1994 and it constitutes a platform of social dialogue mainly on issues of economic and social policy. Since 2001 and the revision of the Constitution the ESC has become a recognized institution of the Greek state. According to its introductory law (2232/1994), the ESC has as its goal the expression of justified opinion on issues of significant importance related to labor relations, social security, tax measures as well as the social and economic policies as a whole, specifically on regional development, investments, exports, customer's protection and competition. It is worth noticing that the ESC is not expected to express an opinion in relation to the budget. In principle, the importance on the ESC for the maturing of consultation in Greece is obvious, especially because of its goal to promote social dialogue in order to develop commonly accepted positions on topics that are

important for the society. In practice, it is difficult to argue that the ESC has managed to play a catalytic role in Greek politics. To succeed that, a broader strategy and not a single institution would be necessary.

Another interesting initiative towards the same direction is the New Code for Local Authorities (Law 3463/2006) which provides the opportunity to citizens to participate to special meetings of the local council regarding the finance and the administration of the local authority as well as the implementation of its action plan (article 217). Every citizen of the public authority has the right to comment on the statement of accounts and actions during this meeting. It is still early days to evaluate the impact of these participatory initiatives of the New Code. Nevertheless, the adoption of consultation mechanisms at the local level as a first step before a more universal application is common. A good example is the UK where consultation mechanisms were first developed at the local level (Lowndes, Pratchett and Stoker, 2001).

In 2006, the former Prime Minister's circular on regulatory policy and on the evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of regulations and laws, emphasized the importance of social consent and participation as a precondition for better regulation. In particular, it underlined that for the achievement of greater social consent and participation, the timely information of interested groups and of civil society and the invitation of their representatives for social dialogue and consultation, is critical. The circular clarifies, that the consultation should take place with the participation of the interested parties that are invited by the agency that is proposing the new regulation. New technologies and any other useful medium such as the internet or television and radio should be utilized. The Open Governance initiative taken by the new Prime Minister respects the principles of this circular and pushes them forward.

Just after his election, in November of 2009, Prime Minister George Papandreou launched the Open Governance initiative which aims to promote the principles of transparency, consultation, accountability and decentralization by using electronic means. The initiative, for now, is mainly based on a web site which has a dual role. First, the announcement of job opportunities in government even for high profile posts that wouldn't normally be announced at all, because they are considered to be political and thus decided behind closed doors. Second, the provision of a platform for electronic consultation on proposed legislation before taken to Parliament (<http://www.opengov.gr/home/>). The reception of the new initiative has been hesitant

because although people find it difficult to trust the government and they feel their opinion won't be heard, they use the platform in order to apply for posts and to comment on draft laws. It will take some time before a meaningful evaluation will be possible.

The consolidation of consultation practices in Greece is not only a matter of regulatory framework but also of a shift of administrative model. There should be an agreement that the spread of information, social consent before regulation and thus better implementation of the laws are advantageous for the society. Political will that promotes public consultation practices by public organizations should also exist, in a traditionally confrontational society. No examples of direct public participation can be found in Greece nowadays, as neither the government nor civil society, seem confident enough to promote them.

Conclusions

The necessity of increasing citizens' participation in public policy processes has been discussed in the literature and is by large accepted internationally and in Greece. The main reasons that have led to this favorable reception of increased participation include the decline of citizens' trust for their governments and political parties and the need to boost public policies' effectiveness and thus to improve the capacity of information gathering for real problems. The integration of citizens' opinions during public policy formulation is considered to be important for the creation of consensus, not necessarily for the content of the policy but at least for the decision making process. Consensus is regarded here as a prerequisite for easier implementation. Public communication and public consultation have acquired the reputation of a promising reaction to the above challenges.

In Greece, the dominant administrative paradigm is hierarchical and as a result, transparency via the use of information diffusion mechanisms is quite developed, while public consultation which is a characteristic of the governance via networks paradigm, is less developed. As it was argued in the paper, in Greece even the traditional hierarchical paradigm malfunctions given that although the regulatory framework for public communication is in place, in practice problems and delays in retrieving public information is often the rule and not the exception. The use of new

technologies can help to a better classification of public documents, to easier access and indeed to wider diffusion of public information.

Improved access to public information is a precondition for the consolidation of consultation principles and mechanisms. A more holistic strategy for the spread of consultation principles and practices is necessary because the sporadic use of such a tool is not likely to be effective. The current government is moving towards this direction with the establishment of the Open Governance platform. It is important, that consultation mechanisms that are now introduced, are in accordance with the values of deliberative democracy. The results of consultation processes should be made public and should be taken into account as much as possible in policy decisions in order to enhance participation and trust to the institutions. There is always the danger that a limited or fake use of consultation can lead to less trust and more apathy.

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