



COST Action CA17135
“Constitution-making and deliberative democracy”
What’s going on in Lithuania?

Lithuania: single-tier administrative system

I. NATIONAL LEVEL

CONSTITUTION: MANDATORY OR CONSULTATIVE REFERENDUM

- Accordingly, to Constitution, the most significant issues concerning the life of the State and the Nation shall be decided by referendum.
- Mandatory referendums shall be held if the question belongs to the list for mandatory referendum (some vital Constitutional provisions, as well participation in international organizations if this requires the partial transfer of national competence) or if the 300 thousand citizens having the right to vote or the Parliament (Seimas) decide so.
- Consultative (deliberative) referendums may be held if there is no duty to hold a mandatory referendum, but proposal comes from 300.000 citizens having the right to vote or the Parliament (Seimas).

PROPOSALS, INITIATIVES AND CHANGES:

- change the barrier for ‘referendum initiative’ – to reduce from 300.000 to 50.000 citizens having the right to vote;
- amend the Constitution, adding that the laws passed in the referendum are changed only by a new referendum;

II. MUNICIPAL LEVEL

PROPOSALS, INITIATIVES AND CHANGES:

- Forms of communication: more professional electronic platforms for citizens deliberations,
- FB discussions on local issues can be powerful;
- Options for participatory budgeting (not implemented yet!);
- Should deliberations meet consensus, or is it just a prelude for voting in elections?

DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY PRACTICES ON LOCAL LEVEL BASED ON PUBLIC REASONING:

- Limited variety of forms of deliberative settings and deliberative experiments.
- Problems in reciprocity: low levels of trust in municipal administration, political parties and council.
- The importance of ‘professional citizens’ and local leadership driven by self-interest or professional NGO organizations.
- Bargaining arrangements: municipal committees and boards with 50% of citizen mandates (NGO councils, Youth affairs councils, Councils of Culture): a hybrid of horizontal citizens deliberations and vertical legitimated power.
- Surveys of residents: small response rate, not trusted on citizen preferences.
- Neighbourhood initiatives based on territorial identity.