

# Critical analysis



INTRODUCTION Citizen participation in the decision making processes is a foundation of modern democracy and a starting point for construction of inclusive and fair society. Level of participation, models and types of citizens' organization depend on many factors, thus it is important that the state sets up institutional mechanisms for facilitation of citizens' access, which is the basic precondition and motivating factor for the increase of participation, and at the same time improvement of policies and service which suit the needs of target groups, and naturally increase transparency and responsibility of public sector. Participation can be individual but it can also imply activities through engagement in interest groups, associations and movements, i.

e. civil society organizations (CSO). In this research paper I use terms citizen-citizen participation and participation of civil society, as forms of associations and manners in which the citizens choose to participate and give contribution to decision making processes, and with that, to development of the society. This decision is based on a concept that different kinds of citizens' engagement and participation can fall under the civil society sector. Group of rights that a citizen has as an individual is based on fundamental principles of freedom, equality and equal rights, and universality. In a democratic state, an individual or a group uses its rights and requests responsibility from leaders, but at the same time ??? democratic policies provides its citizens with a distinctive ??? standing?? " one which involves certain basic rights with respect to the political domain, together with certain responsibilities.??? The fact that the rights that citizens have simultaneously mean obligation implies that every citizen who

expects fulfillment of its rights has to simultaneously feel an obligation to use them actively. Definition of citizen participation encompasses ??? forums for exchange that are organized for the purpose of facilitating communication between government, citizens, stakeholders, interest groups, and businesses regarding a specific decision or a problem???.

Forms of these public forums are public debates, public meetings, focus groups, research, citizens??™ advising commissions, referendums, initiatives, negotiations, etc. Citizen participation is a ??? voluntary acts engaged in by private citizens who seek to influence or bring about change in either a political or social context???. Citizen participation advances democracy, because democratic manner of decision making means knowledge of needs of the people to whom these decisions refer. At the end, citizens greatly benefit from participation ??“ it contributes to building stable and free society, increased interest, solidarity and ability for empathy and understanding necessary for the construction of bridges to the ones with whom it is necessary to work together.

Discussion on citizen participation is of utmost importance for understanding of good state management, a concept that became a center of discussions on development of society and democracy. Good management means patterns of decision making which occur in a bigger set of institutions, with greater circle of actors and processes and it implies much bigger space which can be best described through the value of participatory democracy which enables citizen engagement (directly or through interest groups) in the decision making processes and the articulation of their legitimate interests continuously, not only during the election period. In this sense,

participatory democracy makes the governmental authorities work more transparent and closer to the citizens.