The role of Information and Research Services in supporting civic participation in the decision-making and law-making process in the Senate of the Republic of Poland
Public consultation

Consultation is more than just access to information and sending a document to a number of selected partners hoping that they will not submit any remarks.

The aim of holding a consultation is to reach as broad an audience as possible and get to know its arguments.
Public consultation

The tools of public consultation:

- Examining petitions
- Organising seminars and conferences as well as committee meetings on specific themes
- Work of the Parliamentary Unit for Cooperation with Non-Governmental Organisations
What is a petition?

A petition is a letter addressed to the authorities, containing an appeal or request.

- Petitions are a form of citizens’ direct participation in the exercise of power.
- Petitions are:
  - individual or collective proposals referring to all types of matters related to public life,
  - requests submitted to public authorities according to their remit.

A petition to the Senate is:

- a citizens’ legislative proposal which has to reflect the competence of the House – i.e. concern proposals of passing amendments to legal regulations or enacting new ones.
Rules and Regulations of the Senate

Section Xa – Examining petitions:
• lays down the procedure of examining petitions by Senate bodies – the Marshal and the committees,
• extends the competence of the Human Rights and Rule of Law Committee to include examining petitions.

Chancellery of the Senate:

• creating a Petitions and Correspondence Department in the Office for Citizen Relations to assist Committees in examining petitions.
Correspondence addressed to the Senate

- Correspondence forwarded by Senate bodies
- Correspondence addressed to the Senate or the Chancellery of the Senate
- Correspondence forwarded by Senators

Office for Citizen Relations, Petitions and Correspondence Department

- Public information, replies based on a separate procedure pursuant to the Public Information Act (100)
- Petitions (24)
- Replies, explanations or referral to competent bodies (1900)

Petitions and Correspondence Department compiling Petition Background Information
For each petition, the Petitions and Correspondence Department compiles petition background information. It serves as auxiliary material for the committee examining the petition.

Every such document contains:

- presentation of the petition, description of the requests proposed by the petition’s author and their justification,
- analysis of the legal situation concerning the matters referred to in the petition and information on any legislative work in that area,
- information on the case law of the Constitutional Tribunal, courts of law or administrative courts, as well as on the government and stakeholder activity,
- summary and recommendations of the office.

The information package is supplemented with materials containing: a copy of the petition, selected legislative acts, court judgements, legislative bills, publications or information on actions taken in the past concerning the target area of the petition.
Petition examining procedure in the Senate

**PETITIONS**

- **MARSHAL OF THE SENATE**
- **CHAIR OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS, RULE OF LAW AND PETITIONS COMMITTEE**

**COMMITTEE MEETING**

- **REJECTING THE PETITION**
  - Submitting information on the Committee’s decision to the Marshal of the Senate
- **ADOPTING THE PETITION**
  - Motion addressed to the Marshal of the Senate to take legislative initiative (bill or resolution) concerning the subject matter of the petition.
  - Authorising a member of the Committee to submit a legislative motion in a debate on a given item of the Senate agenda
- **INFORMING MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE**
  - Submitting an opinion to the Marshal on the Senate’s use of its constitutional, statutory or regulatory rights

**SUBMITTING THE PETITION TO THE COMPETENT STATE BODY**

**NOTIFYING THE PETITIONER OF ACTIONS TAKEN**
Selected themes of petitions addressed to the Senate

- **social and health benefits** (disability pensions and allowances, pensions: rules of benefit indexation, initial capital, contribution periods, rules of paying the health premium, social allowance, family allowance, care benefits),
- the situation of war veterans and repressed persons (benefits for war-disabled and military-disabled persons, conscripts sent to work in the mines by communist authorities),
- **housing matters** (housing cooperatives, situation of tenants of former factory apartments),
- **penal law** (amendments to the penal code, request to anonymise personal data of witnesses in petty offence procedures),
- **electoral law** (single-mandate constituencies in elections to the Sejm),
- **labour law** (Sunday as a work-free day, with a ban on retail trading on this day),
- **health protection** (ban on trading in “legal highs”).
Information and educational campaign
Information and educational campaign
Dla samorządów

Ekspertyza

Mieczysław Szyszkiewicz

Komentarz

Małgorzata Jędrzejewska

Komentarz aktualizowany do art. 221. Kademu postępowania administracyjnego
Kampania Informacyjna

Po pierwsze, musimy dotrzeć do obywateli z informacją, że mają nowe prawo. Do tej pory było ono martwe. Musimy ich przekonać, że warto po nią sięgać. Po drugie, musimy poinformować organizacje pozarządowe, które dopomogą się o to prawo, jak można z niego korzystać. By wiedzieli, że można opinię publiczną mobilizować w określonej sprawie i że będzie to wyjątkowo proste. Po trzecie, władzom publicznym trzeba uświadomić, że warto się zajmować petycjami" - mówił senator Mieczysław Augustyn, przewodniczący Komisji Rodziny, Polityki Senioralnej i Społecznej.

Aby wykonać to zadanie, zgromadzili obywateli z ich poniem do petycji. Kampania Senatu rozpoczęła się z inicjatywą Sprą Publicznych oraz Biurem Rzeczpospolitych Praw Obywatelskich jako instytucję partnerką sztywnej na sektor obywateli przeprowadzenia społecznej kampanii informatyki edukacyjnej PETCJA - TWój PRAWO. Powstaje się, że po minie od 20 maja 2015 r. do końca listopada 2014 r. Często przed wyspami, w sposób dobroczynny, które dają obywatelom wiedzę na temat możliwości, które daje obywatelom ustawę o petycjach, a także o poinformowaniu zarówno władz i administracji publicznej, jak organizacji pozarządowych o możliwościach, których nigdy nie zgoźdzono się, będą zatrudnienia na Petycje.edu.pl.

Kampania ma charakter otwarty. Do udziału w niej zapraszamy wszystkich, którym zależy na szerokim udziale obywateli i różnego rodzaju organizacji społecznych w wyznaczeniach w tym sektorze. W ramach spraw są one opisane i zgłoszone, na podstawie spraw w sektory usuń i sprawy, na podnoszenie przez władze publiczne decyzji o tym kwestii, które nie dotyczą Sądów Miejskich lub sądów ogólnej trybunale.

Do tej pory do klasa promującego petycję przyszły: Centrum Edukacji Obywatelskiej Piekarskie Centrum Edukacji Prawnej oraz portal zmienmy.to.

Patronat medialny na kampanię PETCJA - TWój PRAWO objęły TVP INFO i Informażnia Agencję Radia. Naszym partnerem jest również Stowarzyszenie Polskich Redakcji.

Koalicja:

- CEO
- CENTRUM EDUKACJI OBYWATELSKIEGO
- zmień my.to

Organizatorzy
Patron mediań
PETYCJA
- DOBRZE ŚIE SKŁADA!

WWW.PETYCJE.EDU.PL
Main forms of activity

• workshops for journalists of regional media – a channel to spread information on the new Act to local communities
• training for employees of Senators’ offices, as they can provide information and advice to people they meet in the course of their official business
• open lectures and presentations in libraries, community centres, etc.
• workshops, classes, lectures for secondary school and university students
• conferences in the Senate and at the premises of the government coalition members
• supporting Senators in their initiatives taken in their constituencies.
Holding conferences, seminars and committee meetings on specific themes as a form of consultation with representative groups.
Holding conferences, seminars and committee meetings on specific themes as a form of consultation with representative groups.

A conference (seminar) as a prestigious and comfortable occasion to present ideas, opinions and positions of representative groups, such as self-governement bodies of the so-called professions of public trust.
Holding conferences, seminars and committee meetings on specific themes as a form of consultation with representative groups

Examples of initiated solutions:

- Senate Bill on amending the Payment Services Act
- Senate Bill on anti-communist opposition activists and persons repressed for political reasons
- initiating work on the Large Family Card
- initiating work on introducing the so-called care (senior’s) voucher
Parliamentary Unit for Cooperation with Non-Governmental Organisations as a tool to consult representative organisations

- Chair of the Unit – Marshal of the Senate Bogdan Borusewicz
- The traditions of the Senate’s cooperation with non-governmental organisations date back to the 1990s
- Tasks of the Unit
- Agenda
Parliamentary Unit for Cooperation with Non-Governmental Organisations as a tool to consult representative organisations.

Selected results of the Parliamentary Unit’s work:

• abolishing VAT tax on donations in the form of food offered for charity purposes;

• public debate on the institution of citizens’ petitions and introducing the Senate Petitions Bill to the Sejm

• amending the Public Benefit and Volunteer Work Act
Seeking the opinion of experts

• Formal cooperation on the basis set forth in internal regulations
• Methods of sourcing experts
• Status of an expert
Analyses and Documentation Office

- Employees of the Office compile analyses, expert opinions, information and statistics
- Principle of political neutrality
- Publicly available opinions and expert opinions, records/minutes of conferences, post-conference materials as well as bulletins documenting work of the Parliamentary Unit and Senate committees – in principle they are all made available online in real time
The working model of the information and research services is adapted to the growing need for specialist, processed information, which – in our opinion – affects the effectiveness and reliability of the Senate’s work.
Thank you for your attention