

TO BE CONSULTED OR NOT? THAT IS NOT THE QUESTION!



European Center for
Not-for-Profit Law

During COVID-19, public participation in decision making is more crucial than ever because we need measures that respond with our actual needs. We need measures that do not affect the public disproportionately, in particular women and other marginalized individuals and groups. Participation builds trust in the tailored measures and higher compliance, as this is needed in our joint efforts to protect health and lives!



So far, we see measures being adopted without public consultations, including new laws and amendments not always linked to the pandemic. The UN and European standards recognize the right to participation and their guidelines underline that:



WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO TAKE PART IN DECISION-MAKING OF PUBLIC AUTHORITIES!

Through: accessible and inclusive consultative mechanisms, that consider those most affected, in particular women and other marginalized individuals and groups; supported with financial and human resources, empowered with media education and digital literacy programmes for general public and officials.

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO GAIN FULL ACCESS TO INFORMATION HELD BY PUBLIC AUTHORITIES!

Through: relevant, accurate and timely information about the process, draft documents, background papers, which are proactively disseminated online and through traditional media and post, accessible, clear, and practical.



WE CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES THAT ENABLE FULL PARTICIPATION, ESPECIALLY DURING PHYSICAL DISTANCING MEASURES!

Through: using different online consultation tools such as surveys, questionnaires on the draft proposals, webcasting, videoconferencing, smart phone applications, chats, for engaging before, during and after public decision-making.

REMEMBER: Authorities should create and maintain a safe and enabling environment for exercising the right to participate in public affairs. Read more in [Summary Participation Guidelines](#) and stay tuned for a new briefer on participation by ECNL and partners!



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