



# **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE DECISION- MAKING PROCESS**

Research Report

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2021



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## INTRODUCTION

**An active civil society is one of the preconditions for successful sustainable development and quality decision-making** in Latvia, as in any democratic state. In Latvia it is legally secured by a number of regulatory enactments, including, Clause 101 of the Constitution secures the rights of people to participate in state and local government activities. „The State must not only guarantee a citizen a formal right to participate, but it must also create preconditions (opportunity) for the citizen to be able to participate in the work of the State and local governments making this participation consciously and understanding the essence of participation.<sup>1</sup>” While such regulatory enactments, as State Administration Structure Law and the Cabinet Rules of Procedure, determine the public participation in the state administration, and methods for the participations – participating in task groups, advisory councils, participating in public deliberations, delivering opinions, proposals and objections in the process of drafting political and legislative instruments.

Although Latvian law and policy documents include different mechanisms for civil society involvement in the decision-making process, **the participation of organisations (associations and foundations) is low, as well as the diversity of representation of interests is often not ensured** in order to maintain the balance of interests in the decision-making process.

Therefore, the **Civic Alliance Latvia carried out research** with a purpose to clarify the actual situation in public participation mechanisms institutionalised at national level by non-governmental organisations (associations and foundations).

**Participation mechanisms analysed** in the research:

- participation in inter-institutional working groups and advisory councils, which is guaranteed by the Law on the Structure of Public Administration and Cabinet Regulations of 25 August 2009 No.970 "Procedures for Public Participation in the Development Planning Process";
- providing a written opinion on the development planning document at the stage of its development and preparing an opinion on the development planning document before taking a decision in accordance with the decision-making body guaranteed by the State Administration Structure Law and Cabinet Regulations of 25 August 2009 No.970 "Public Participation Procedures in the Development Planning Process";
- participation in the sessions of the Saeima commissions, which is guaranteed by the Rules of Procedure of the Saeima.

The purpose of the research was to obtain reliable data and information, based on scientific research methods, which would allow to identify quantitatively and qualitatively the existing practices for the involvement of organizations in the decision-making process and to identify the desired improvements.

Research **results to be achieved**:

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<sup>1</sup> Kusiņš, G. Basic Human Rights. Clause 101. From: Comments of the Constitution of the republic, Part VIII. Human Basic Rights, authors' team under scientific guidance of prof. R.Balodis. Riga: Latvijas Vēstnesis, 2011, p.376-394.

- (1) Analysed the involvement of organizations in the decision-making process - by participating in the sittings of the Saeima committees, working groups, councils and committees of line ministries, providing an opinion on draft regulations and laws in the process of their development;
- (2) Analysed the intensity of organization participation;
- (3) It has been clarified which profile of organizations has a regular representation model in the decision-making process or what is the profile of organizations - scope, place, issues, in which decision-making it is involved;
- (4) Surveying the organizations that have participated in the participation mechanisms analysed in the study in the last three years, finding out their participation experience in order to identify the preconditions and barriers to active participation.

To achieve the defined results, **the following research activities were implemented:**

1. In order to perform the analysis of report **on ensuring public participation during the public deliberation of draft legislative proposals**, data on draft legislative proposals announced at the meeting of State Secretaries for the period of 2020-2021 were compiled. Information was obtained from the sitting management system ePortfelis. Information was collected on a total of 1,636 draft legislative proposals proclaimed at the meeting of the State Secretaries. Information was recorded for each draft legislative proposal on the applicant and the date of application, as well as the date identified from annotations, when the information on the draft regulatory enactment was published on the institution's website, whether an advisory council was in the course of legal drafting, whether representatives of non-governmental sector participated in the public deliberation.
2. In order to perform the analysis of report **on practice of public participation in the work of ministries**, all ministries were asked to provide information on involvement of associations and foundations in public participation mechanisms (ministerial working groups, monitoring committees, expert commissions, steering committees and other public participation mechanisms set up by the ministry). Each ministry provided information on its participation mechanisms existing during the period 2018-2020, the regularity of their operation in each of the years, the objection of the operation and organizations represented therein. In total the ministries have provided information on 233 working groups, advisory councils, coordination boards, supervision boards, committees, etc.
3. In order to perform the analysis of report **on public participation in work of the Saeima commissions**, the information available on the Saeima website from the minutes of the sittings on the invited and participating organizations for the period from 1 January 2018 to 30 June 2021 was compiled. During the analysed period, a total of 3428 sittings had taken place in a total of 42 different commissions and sub-commissions. At the time of data collection (July 2021), no minutes of the sittings were available on the Saeima website for a total of 93 sittings, thus no information on the participating organizations is available for these 93 sittings.
4. In order to obtain the **opinions and assessments of the participating organizations about the participation process in Latvia**, in July 2021 a **quantitative survey** of the

participating organizations was carried out. Of the 720 participating associations and foundations identified in the previous research phases, for 664 the contact information was found by e-mail. These 664 associations and foundations were invited to complete a quantitative questionnaire. 88 organizations responded to the invitation and their views and assessments are included in this report.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC DELIBERATION OF DRAFT LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

### BRIEF INFORMATION

1636 – the total number of draft legislative proposals announced in 2020-2021

1499 – number of draft legislative proposals, which have annotations

81% of all are published more than 14 days before announcement in MSS (Meetings of the State Secretaries)

For 534 draft legislative proposals or for 36% of cases – it is determined that the public participation is not necessary

In 60% of cases, when the participation was necessary, it also took place – opinions/agreements are provided

For 40% of cases opinions are not received.

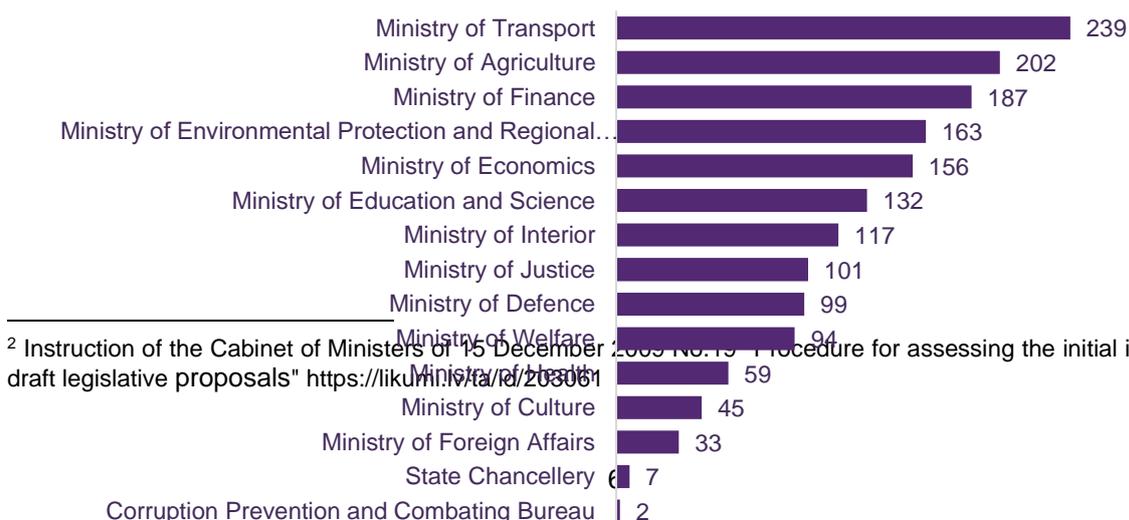
5% of cases – proactive consultations with advisory councils, working groups

26% of cases – proactive consultations with non-governmental sector

13% of annotations have detailed opinion formers and opinions themselves, on other cases very general and non-specific information

In order to perform the analysis of report on ensuring public participation during the public deliberation of draft legislative proposals, data on draft legislative proposals announced at the meeting of State Secretaries for **the period of 2020-2021** were compiled. Information was obtained from the sitting management system ePortfelis. **Information was collected on a total of 1,636 draft legislative proposals proclaimed at the meeting of the State Secretaries.** Information was recorded for each draft regulatory enactment on the applicant and the date of application, as well as the date identified from annotations, when the information on the draft legislative proposal was published on the institution's website, whether an advisory council was in the course of legal drafting, whether representatives of non-governmental sector participated in the public deliberation. 137 legal acts or **8% of all announced drafts, which do not have an initial impact assessment report (annotation)** must be separated<sup>2</sup>; these are plans, informative reports, conceptual reports. **The public participation is further analyzed for those 1499 draft legislative proposals, which had annotations.**

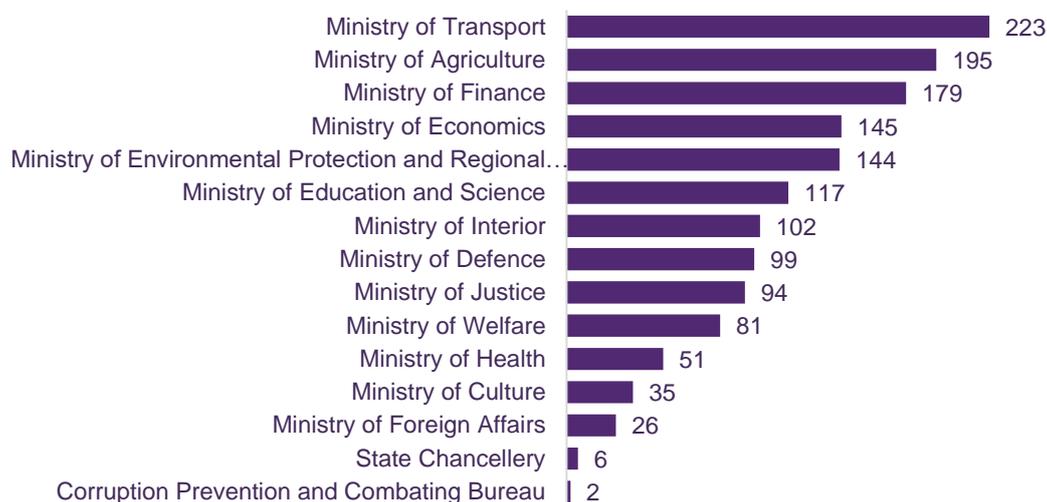
*Chart no.1 Number of draft legislative proposals submitted to the Meetings of the State Secretaries*



<sup>2</sup> Instruction of the Cabinet of Ministers of 15 December 2009 No.15 "Procedure for assessing the initial impact of draft legislative proposals" <https://likumi.lt/lt/2009/12/15/15>

allocated by applicants, Total for 2020-2021

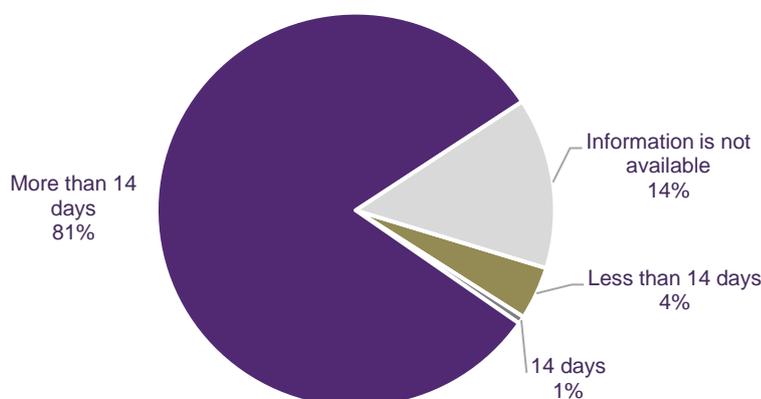
Chart 2 Number of draft legislative proposals with annotations submitted to the meeting of State



Secretaries allocated by applicants, for 2020-2021 in total

According to legislative requirements<sup>3</sup>, new projects must be posted on the website of line ministries and the State Chancellery 14 days before the announcement at the meeting of the State Secretaries. Data show that in **82% of cases the draft legislative proposals were published 14 or more days before the announcement at the meeting of the State Secretaries**. For 4% of cases the publication was less than 14 days before the announcement (in total 42 draft legislative proposals).

Chart 3. Publications of draft legislative proposals, submitted at the meeting of the State Secretaries, on

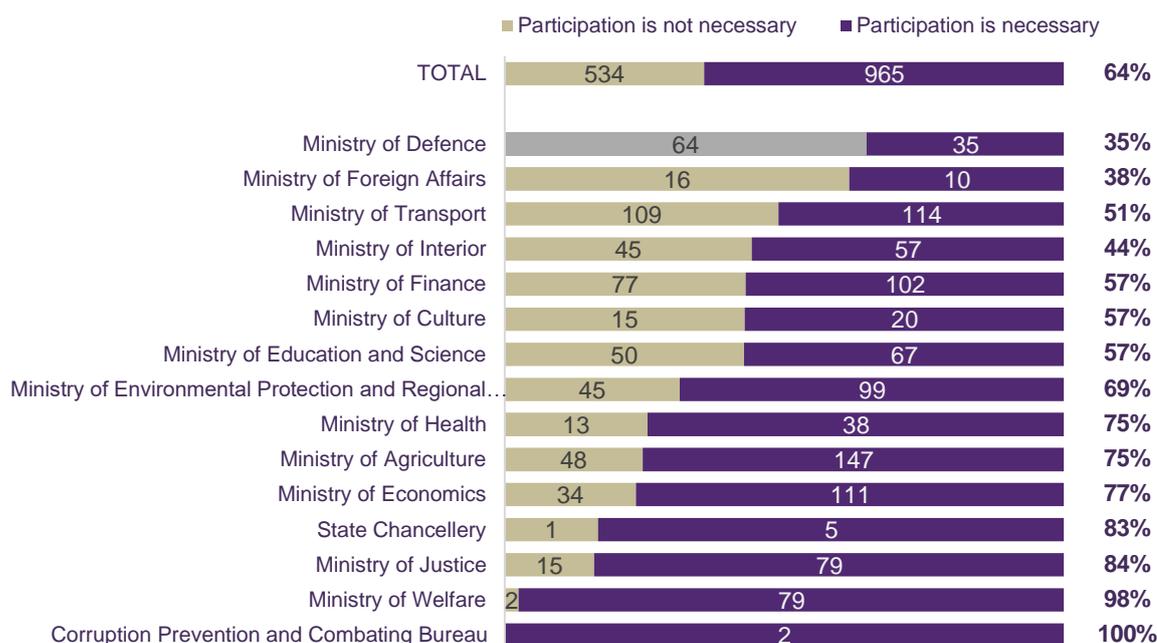


websites of ministries, for 2020-2021 in total (percentage)

<sup>3</sup> Cabinet Regulations "Procedure for public participation in development planning process"

In the event of 534 draft legislative proposals (of 1499 in total) or 36% the public participation was not necessary<sup>4</sup>. Most of such draft legislative proposals was for the Ministry of Defence (65% of all announced), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (62%) and Ministry of Transport (49%). **64%** of all 1499 draft legislative proposals, which have annotations, **had a necessity for public participations**. Most of draft legislative proposals, which had a necessity for public participation, were applied by the Ministry of Welfare (participation was necessary for 98% of applied projects), Ministry of Justice (84%) and Ministry of Economics (77%).

**Chart 4. Number and percentage of draft legislative proposals, submitted at the meeting of the State Secretaries, allocated by applicants and according to necessity of the public participation, for 2020-2021 in total.**



Note: the necessity for public participation is specified according to information provided by ministries.

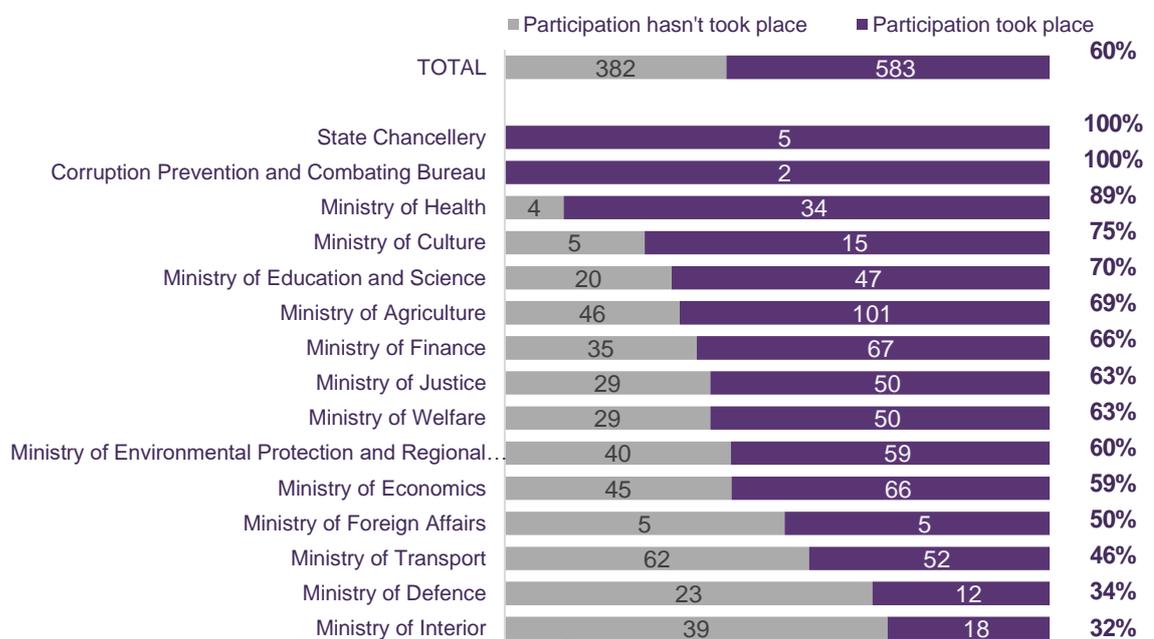
**For 60% (amount – 583) of the draft legislative proposals, in which the public participation, based on the ministry’s assessment according to necessity, was necessary (total amount 965), it was effective – organizations have provided opinions or agreements. For the rest of 40% cases the opinions of public representatives on draft legislative proposals have not been received.** Besides, the information provided in

<sup>4</sup> Most of draft legislative proposals are technical amendments, especially after the adoption of the Law on Administrative Territories and Settlements on June 10, 2020, as well as draft legislative proposals, which regulate the sale or transfer of the specific state real estate, or the transfer of real estate to state ownership.

annotations indicates that in some cases, in addition to the mandatory requirements to publish the draft legislative proposal in the section “Public Participation”, ministries have sent draft proposals to advisory councils, working groups and expert groups, but no comments have been received, of which it can be concluded that a low motivation and / or low capacity (resources) of organizations to participate in certain legal drafting processes has been observed.

It can be observed that public participation has been more active in the public discussion of draft legislative proposals, which were announced by the Ministry of Health (in 89% of cases opinions were received), Ministry of Culture (75%), Ministry of Education and Science (70%). Relatively less often the opinions on draft legislative proposals, which were announced by the Ministry of Interior (32%) and Ministry of Defence (34%).

**Chart 5. Public participation in deliberation of draft legislative proposals submitted at the meeting of the**



*State Secretaries, for 2020-2021 in total (number and percentage)*

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**In 48 cases of 965 draft legislative proposals (5%) an advisory council or working group has been consulted.** Relatively more often it was observed in cases of draft legislative proposals, applied by the Ministry of Finance.

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*Chart 6. Number of draft legislative proposals, submitted at the meeting of the State Secretaries, on which*



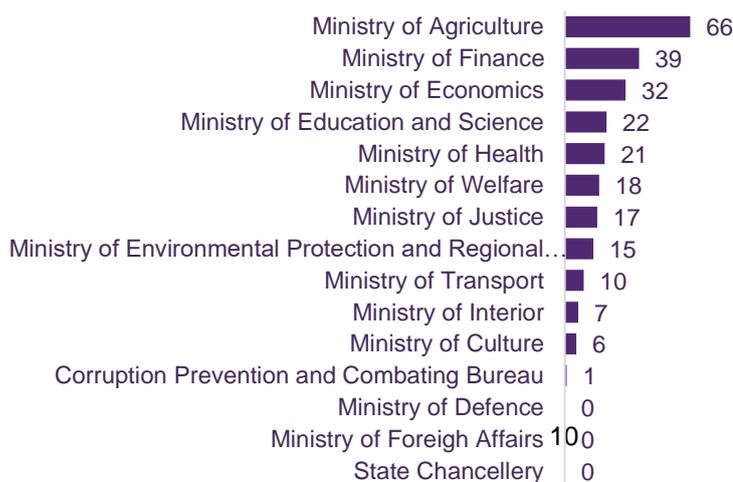
*advisory councils or working groups have been consulted, allocated by applicants, for 2020-2021 in total*

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**In 254 cases of 965 draft legislative proposals (26%) representatives of non-governmental sector have been consulted** – line ministries have asked particular industry organizations or associations to express an opinion (or consultations have taken place within working groups or advisory councils). This is relatively more often the case with draft legislative proposals, submitted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Economics.

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*Chart 7. Number of draft legislative proposals, submitted to the council of the State Secretaries, which*



*were consulted with representatives of the non-governmental sector, allocated by applicants, for 2020-2021 in total*

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**The information provided in the section of annotation “Public participation and communication activities” often doesn’t allow to fully judge the process and results of public participation.** There are very different practices in filling of this section – from very detailed and expanded descriptions of public participation to very general and non-specific ones. Especially it relates to the section “Results of public participation” – here is a welcome practice to set out in detail each opinion submitted and its assessment, and the practice of indicating in general terms that a particular number of members of the public have expressed their views without detailing any more specific information on the substance of the views. **The opinion formers, content of opinions and their consideration or refuse were detailed in 128 of 965 annotation cases only (13%). In remaining cases descriptions were general.**

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MECHANISMS OF SECTORAL MINISTRIES

### BRIEF INFORMATION

In general for 2018-2020 ministries have 233 participation mechanisms (working groups of ministries, supervision committees, expert commissions, steering committees and other public participation mechanisms, established by the ministry).

These 233 working groups, committees and councils had 1493 meetings.

The number of meetings has increased every year.

In total, 507 organizations have participated in 233 working groups, councils and committees of ministries during the last three years. 450 or 89% of them are associations and foundations. 27 or 5% are commercial companies.

Most of organizations participate in the participation mechanisms of the Ministry of Agriculture – 108 different organizations in total. A large number of organizations is also represented in the Ministry of Culture – 99. 65 organizations have participated in the participation mechanisms of the Ministry of Education and Sciences.

The most active organization is the Association of Local and Regional Governments of Latvia, which has participated in 77 participation mechanisms of 11 ministries. The second most active organization is the Employers' Confederation of Latvia, which has participated in 41 participation mechanisms of 11 ministries. While the Latvian Agricultural Organization Cooperation Council as the third most active in total has participated in 34 participation mechanisms of 4 ministries.

Most of organizations (313 or 61% of all) participate in the participation tool of one ministry only. Only 24 organizations participate in participation mechanisms of 3 or more ministries.

In order to perform the report analysis on the public participation practices in the work of line ministries, all ministries were asked to provide information on the involvement of associations and foundation in public participation mechanisms (**working groups, supervision committees, expert commissions, steering committees of line ministries and other public participation mechanisms, established by a ministry**). Each ministry provided information on participation mechanisms, existing during 2018-2020, regularity of their operation in each of the years, the objectives of their operation and organizations represented therein.

**In total, line ministries have provided information on 233 working groups, advisory councils, coordination councils, supervisory boards, committees, etc.** The information provided by the ministries sometimes included various other activities (e.g., thematic discussions, exchanges of views, think tanks, meetings, participation agreements, delegation agreements, memoranda of cooperation, seminars), but they are not included in this analysis when assessing the most common participation mechanisms - working groups, committees and advisory councils.

**The Ministry of Agriculture has the most of participation mechanisms** – in total 44 working groups, committees, councils. **The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development** has 34 participation mechanisms, the Ministry of Culture 28, the Ministry of Justice 25 and the Ministry of Finance 21. **The Ministry of Interior (1), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (3), Ministry of Economics (6) and Ministry of Defence (6) has the least number of such participation mechanisms.** The number of participation mechanisms is affected by the usual practice of the ministry / traditions of participation and the scope of the ministry operation.



**Chart 8. Number of public participation mechanisms in ministries, for 2018-2020 in total**

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During the three-year period **1493 meetings in total** have taken place in 233 working groups, committees and councils. The data evidences that **the number of meetings has increased every year**. If in 2018 in total 424 meetings took place, so in 2019 492 meetings, but in 2020 already 577 meetings. The **data differ by line ministries**. Annual **increase** in the number of meetings **is observed** in the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Science. While, the annual **reduction is observed** in the Ministry of Economics and Ministry of Interior. In other ministries the number of meetings has varied from a year to year.

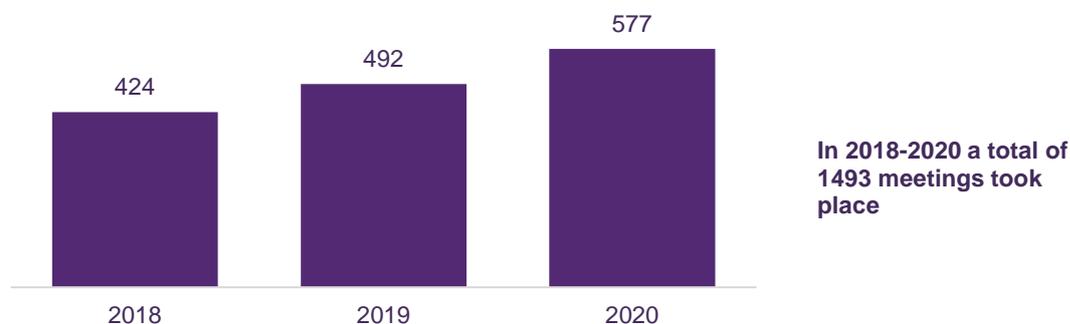
It should be noted that **for the 30 participation mechanisms, the ministries have not provided specific information on the number of meetings** (a general description is given, such as "meetings as needed", "regular meetings", etc.), most often the general description is provided by the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Justice.

Although the total number of meetings has increased, at the same time it can be observed that a total of 19 of the 233 participation mechanisms have not met once in the last three years, 18 have met once and 54 have met twice or three times. **There are 83 out of 233 participatory mechanisms where meetings have taken place more than twice a year**. Consequently, it can be concluded that some mechanisms have been formally established, but in practice they are not used and / or they have lost their relevance.

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**Chart 9. The total number of meeting times in public participation mechanisms in ministries, 2018-2020**



**Table 1. Public participation mechanisms in ministries and their total number of meetings, 2018-2020**

*Note: Detailed number of meeting times in each of participation mechanisms of a particular ministry you can find in an extended table in the annex.*

	2018	2019	2020	Total (18-20)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	0	7	8	15
Ministry of Defence	2	6	5	13
Ministry of Economics	21	17	14	52
Ministry of Finance	44	48	30	122
Ministry of Interior	3	2	1	6
Ministry of Education and Science	18	31	44	93
Ministry of Culture	66	79	131	276
Ministry of Welfare	48	54	54	156
Ministry of Transport	18	9	16	43
Ministry of Justice	26	38	69	133
Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development	58	69	55	182
Ministry of Health	30	44	49	123

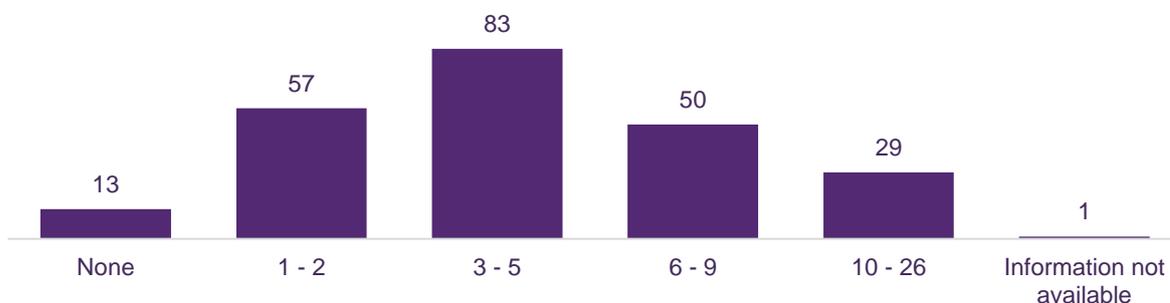
	2018	2019	2020	Total (18-20)
Ministry of Agriculture	90	88	101	279
<b>ALL MINISTRIES: IN TOTAL</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>577</b>	<b>1493</b>

Number of organizations involved in participation mechanisms is very different – there are such public participation provision mechanisms, where just one organization is involved, and there are such, where more than 20 organizations are involved. **In total none of organizations is involved in 13 participation mechanisms** (12 in the Ministry of Justice, 1 in the Ministry of Economics). 1-2 organizations are involved in 57 participation mechanisms, 3-5 organizations are involved in 83 mechanisms. **The total of 29 participation mechanisms involves more than 10 organizations.** Consequently, most of working groups, boards, committees, etc. involves just one organization.

*Chart 10. Number of organizations involved in participation mechanisms in ministries, for 2018-2020 in total.*

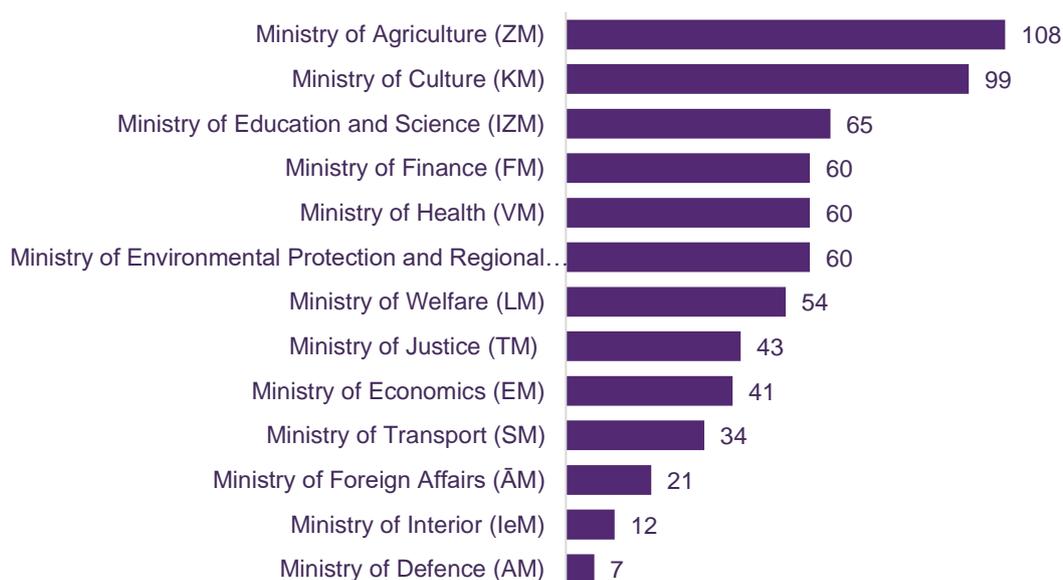
Example for data reading: No organization participates in 13 participation mechanisms.

1-2 organizations participate in 57 mechanisms, 3-5 organizations participate in 83 mechanisms.



**Most of organizations participate in participation mechanisms of the Ministry of Agriculture** – in total **108 different organizations**<sup>5</sup>. A wide range of mechanisms is also represented in the participation mechanisms, organized by the **Ministry of Culture** – 99. 65 organizations have participated in participation mechanisms of the Ministry of Education and Science, but 60 organizations have participated in mechanisms of the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development. **The least of organizations participate in participation mechanisms of the Ministry of Defence (7) and the Ministry of Interior (21)**. In general, a correlation is observed – the greater is the number of participation mechanisms in the line ministry, the greater the total number of organizations involved. Exception is the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Economics, with fewer participation mechanisms, but a large number of organizations involved (for example, Ministry of Economics has 6 participation mechanisms, but 41 organizations are involved therein).

*Chart 11. Number of involved organizations in public participation mechanisms in ministries, for 2018-2020 in total, allocated by ministries*



<sup>5</sup>In this section the denomination “organizations” relates to any legal unit – association, foundation, commercial company, public person, informal association, etc., which is involved in participation. Detailed information on legal status involved in participation is provided below.

**Table 2. Number of organizations involved in public participation mechanisms in ministries, for 2018-2020 in total**

*Note: Detailed number of organizations in each of participation mechanisms of a particular ministry you can find in an extended table in the annex.*

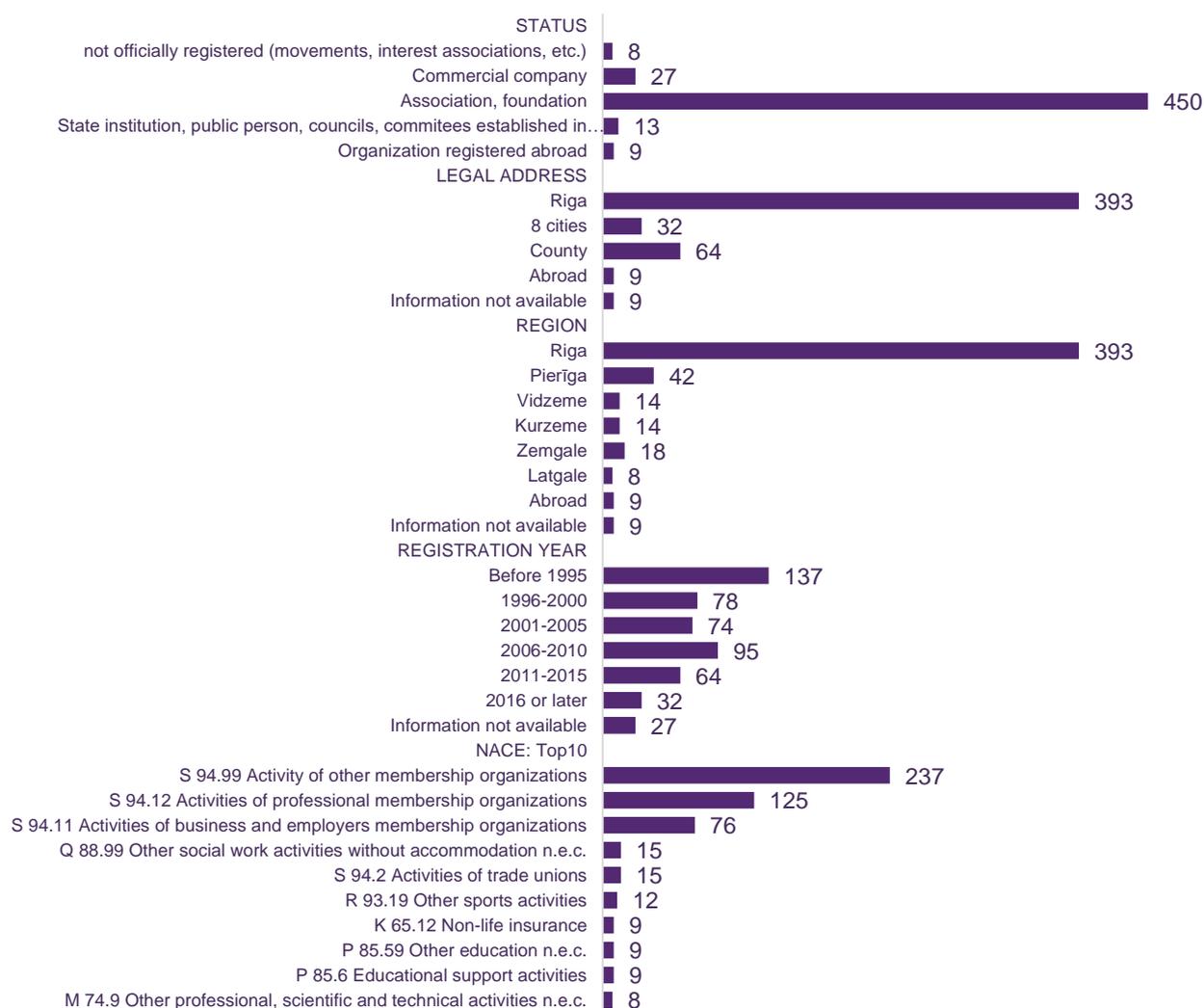
Ministries	Number of participation mechanisms	Number of organizations
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	3	21
Ministry of Defence	7	7
Ministry of Economics	6	41
Ministry of Finance	21	60
Ministry of Interior	1	12
Ministry of Education and Science	18	65
Ministry of Culture	28	99
Ministry of Welfare	17	54
Ministry of Transport	12	34
Ministry of Justice	25	43
Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development	34	60
Ministry of Health	17	60
Ministry of Agriculture	44	108

**In total, 507 organizations have participated in 233 working groups, councils and committees of line ministries during the last three years. 450 or 89% of them are associations and foundations. 27 or 5% are commercial companies. 13 or 3% are state institutions, public persons and councils and committees formed by them. 9 or 2% of the participants are organizations registered abroad. 8 or 1% of the participants are informal movements, unregistered organizations, interest associations.**

**393 organizations or 78% are registered in Riga and another 42 or 8% – Pierīga region. 32 organizations or 6% of all participants are registered in large cities. In turn, 64 organizations or 13% of the participants are registered in smaller populated areas.**

Assessing the duration of the activity, it can be observed that the organizations representing very different time periods of activity are represented in the participation. 27% are those established before 1995, 30% are those established between 1996 and 2005, and 38% are those established after 2005.

While in terms of activities (according to the NACE classification), 237 organizations are those whose activities do not have a specific classification code. **125 are professional organizations and 76 are employers' organizations.** Various other areas of activity are significantly less represented. However, it should be noted that, in total, the participating organizations represent **89 different NACE classification codes.**



**Chart 12. Characteristics (number) of involved organizations**

The most active organization in various ministry working groups, councils and commissions is the **Association of Local and Regional Governments of Latvia, which has participated in 77 participation mechanisms of 11 ministries.** The second most

active is the **Employers' Confederation of Latvia**, which has participated in 41 participation mechanisms of 11 ministries. While the **Latvian Agricultural Organization Cooperation Council** as the third most active has participated in total in 34 participation mechanisms of 4 ministries.

**The top of most active organizations** also includes Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (6 ministries, 28 participation mechanisms), association "Farmers' Parliament" (accordingly – 4 and 28), Latvian Federation of Food Companies (5 and 25), Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia (11 and 20), Latvian Association of Big Cities (7 and 20).

In general, it can be observed that **the majority of organizations (313 or 61% of all) participate in only in one participation tool of one ministry**. Only 24 organizations participate in the participation mechanisms of 3 or more ministries.

For some organizations, it can be observed that they participate in 1 or 2 ministries, but in a large number of participation mechanisms. For example, the Latvian Veterinary Society participates in 10 working groups, committees and councils of one ministry. The association "Zaļā brīvība", the Latvian Association of Agricultural Cooperatives and the Association of Heads of Social Services of Latvian Local and Regional Governments participate in 8 participation mechanisms of one ministry. Association "Rīgas Šprotes" participates in 11 participation mechanisms of 2 ministries, Latvian Medical Association - in 10 working groups, councils, committees of 2 ministries

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**Chart 13. Top 20 of the most active organizations in participation mechanisms**

*Note: For each organization, the number of ministries in which they participate in the decision-making process and the total number of participation mechanisms in which they are involved are indicated.*



Note: The full list of organizations involved in participation you can find in detailed table.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN WORK OF THE COMMITTEES OF SAEIMA

### BRIEF INFORMATION

A total of 3428 meetings took place in 42 different commissions and subcommittees.

For a total of 93 sittings the minutes of the sittings are not available on the Saeima website.

Organization representatives have participated in 1600 of 3428 sittings (47%).

For 16 of 42 commissions and subcommittees the organizations have participated in more than a half of the sittings.

The organizations have most actively participated in education, culture and science committee sittings (85% of the sittings held were attended by organizations), in sittings of the Public Administration and Local Government Committee (76%), in sittings of the Subcommittee on Demographic Development of Population of the Budget and Finance (Taxation) Committee (75% (need to note that only 4 sittings were held)), in sittings of the Sustainable Development Committee (73%).

A total of 514 organizations took part in the meetings of the commissions.

The widest range of organizations is represented: Education, Culture and Science Committee (133 different organizations participated in the four-year period), Social and Employment Matters Committee (127 organizations), Budget and Finance (Taxation) Committee (86), Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee (76).

41% organizations (it total 211 of 514) participated in the sittings just once. 20% of organizations (amount – 101) participated 2-3 times.

87% of organizations (447 of 514) have attended the sittings not more than 10 times in the four-year period.

The most active organizations were the following: The Association of Local and Regional Governments of Latvia (in total attended 639 sittings), Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (226), Employers' Confederation of Latvia (226), Finance Latvia Association (Association of the Commercial Banks of Latvia) (222).

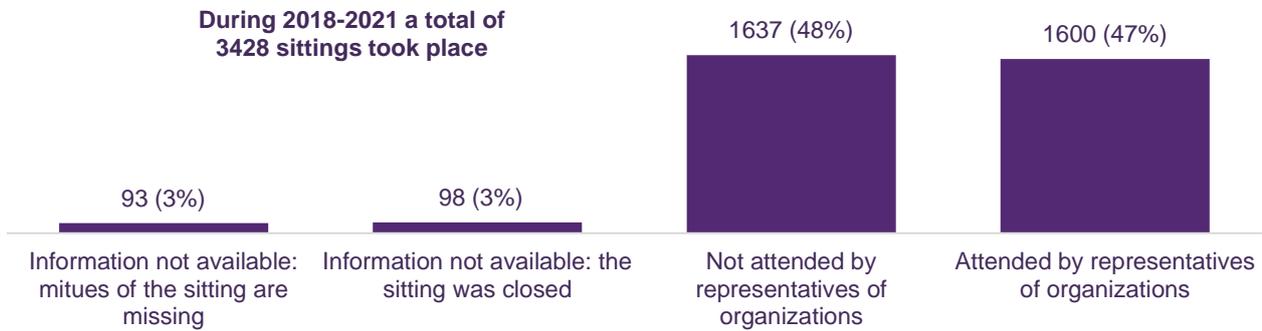
In order to perform the analysis of report on public participation in work of the Saeima commissions, the information available on the Saeima website from the minutes of the sittings on the invited and participating organizations for the period **from 1 January 2018<sup>6</sup> to 30 June 2021** was compiled. **During the analysed period, a total of 3428 sittings had taken place** (in 2018 – 990, in 2019 – 1163, in 2020 – 977, in 2021 until June (including) – 298) in a total of **42 different commissions and sub-commissions**. A total of **5787 issues were considered** at these 3428 sittings (the total number of issues dealt with, without distinguishing the cases where one issue was considered several times, namely, the number of unique issues dealt with is smaller).

At the time of data collection (July 2021), **no minutes of the sittings were available on the Saeima website for a total of 93 sittings** (for 2018 – 7, for 2019 – 4, for 2020 – 33, for 2021 until June (including) – 49), thus no information on the participating organizations is available for these 93 sittings. It should also be taken into account that the data and activity of the organizations have been assessed in accordance with the minutes of the sittings and therefore some inaccuracies are possible. For example, sometimes protocols contain inaccurate names of organizations (incomplete or misspelled) and it was not always possible to identify which organization was involved (especially in cases where there are several organizations with similar names and the protocol indicates the abbreviation of the organization). Sometimes the protocols do not include information on specific

<sup>6</sup> Analysis contains data for a whole year 2018, the 13<sup>th</sup> Saeima is not a reference point.

organizations, but provide a general description, for example, that organizations of a certain field have been invited and / or participated.

Chart 14. *Sittings of the Saeima Committees, during 2018-2021 in total, number*



During the whole period, a total of 1600 out of 3428 meetings (47%) were attended by representatives of organizations, but in 1637 (48%) representatives did not participate. Over the years, the proportion of meetings in which organizations have participated has changed: in 2018, a total of 48% of members of the public had attended, in 2019 the proportion of such meetings fell to 42%, the proportion increased to 49% in 2020 and to 50% in the first half of 2021, which could be explained by online meetings, making participation more accessible to members of the public, regardless of their location.

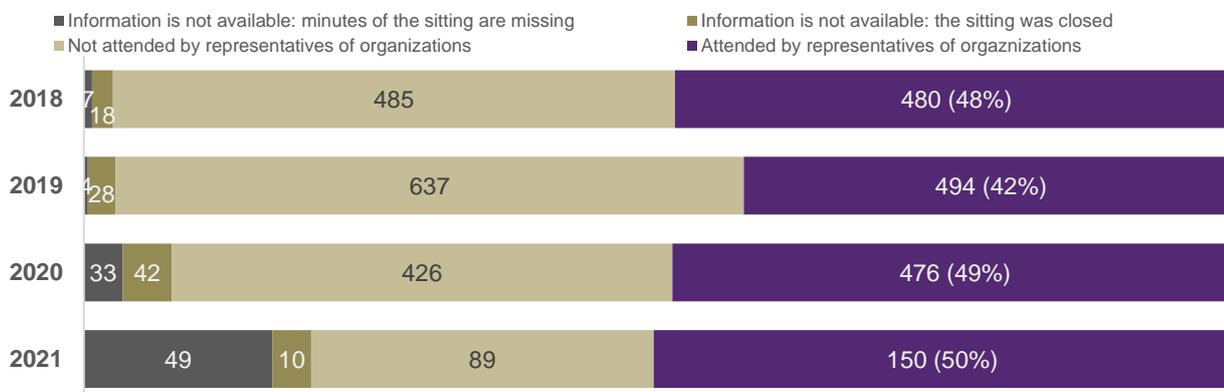


Chart 15. *Sittings of the Saeima Committees, during 2018-2021 allocated by years, number*

In 16 out of 42 commissions and sub-commissions organizations participated in more than half of the sittings. In 12 commissions the organizations participated in 25%-49% of all sittings held. In 5 commission sittings organizations participated in 10%-24% of cases. In 9 commission sittings organizations have participated less frequently, including in commissions - not even once.

The most active organizations participated in the sittings of the Education, Culture and Science Committee (organizations participated in 85% of the sittings), in the sittings of the Public Administration and Local Government Committee (76%), in the sittings of the Subcommittee on Demographic Development of Population of the Budget and Finance

**(Taxation) Committee** (75% (need to note that only 4 sittings were held), **in the sittings of the Sustainable Development Committee** (73%).

The committees, in which the organizations have never participated are: Artisan and Small Business Subcommittee, Tax Policy Subcommittee of the Budget and Finance (Taxation) Committee, Parliamentary Inquiry Committee in Signs of State Theft and Quality of Pre-Trial Investigation in Criminal Procedure No.16870000911.

Rarely organizations have participated in sittings of such committees as Foreign Affairs Committee (7%), Parliamentary Inquiry Committee (4%), Comprehensive National Defence Subcommittee of the Defence, Internal Affairs and Corruption Prevention Committee (4%), Baltic Affairs Subcommittee of the Foreign Affairs Committee (2%), National Security Committee (1%).

It must be considered that the total amount of sittings for committees is very different – from a total of 276 sittings in the Tax Policy Subcommittee of the Budget and Finance (Taxation) Committee down to 1 sitting in Artisan and Small Business Subcommittee. **If we evaluate only those committees in which at least 100 meetings have been held during the whole period (and they are 13), then the lowest participation of organizations was: Foreign Affairs Committee** (7% of sittings were attended by organizations), **Economic, Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Policy Committee** (13%), **Mandate, Ethics and Submissions Committee** (20%). The low participation in the Mandate, Ethics and Submissions Committee can be explained by the committee's functions, which affects the preparation of various Saeima reports and the review of ethical violations by Saeima deputies, as well as the review of citizens' collective submissions, namely, the public participation has mainly taken place in meetings where collective submissions were considered. While, the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Economic, Agrarian, Environmental and Regional Policy address a wide range of issues affecting various groups in society and issues in which the non-governmental sector has expertise, therefore co-operation with sectoral organizations should be encouraged.

**Table 3. Activity of organizations in sittings of Saeima committees in detail by commissions, for 2018-2021 in total**

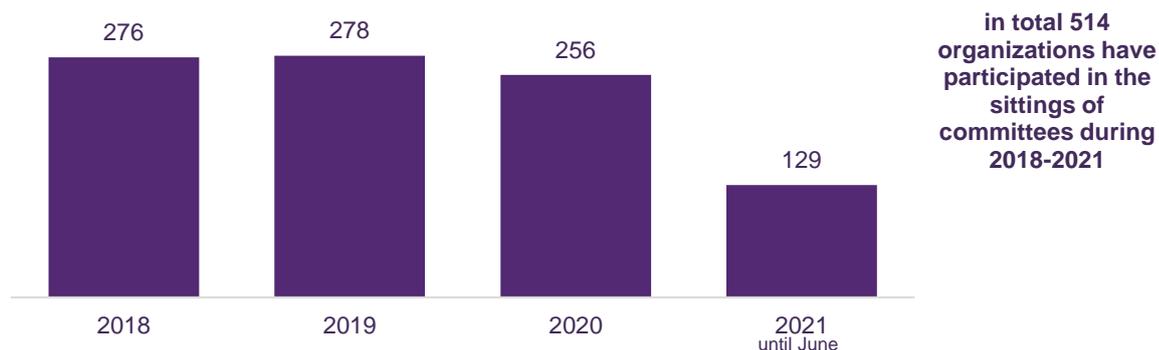
*Note: The committees are arranged according to participation activity of organizations in their sittings (the last column).*

	Total amount of sittings	Closed sitting	Information is not available: minutes of the sitting are missing	Not attended by representatives of organizations	Attended by representatives of organizations	Attended by representatives of organizations (% of all sittings)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3428</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>1637</b>	<b>1600</b>	<b>47</b>
Education, Culture and Science Committee	231			34	197	85
Public Administration and Local Government Committee	208		2	48	158	76
Subcommittee on Demographic Development of Population of the Budget and Finance (Taxation) Committee	4			1	3	75
Sustainable Development Committee	101		1	26	74	73
National Education and Youth Affairs Subcommittee of the Education,	10			3	7	70

	Total amount of sittings	Closed sitting	Information is not available: minutes of the sitting are missing	Not attended by representatives of organizations	Attended by representatives of organizations	Attended by representatives of organizations (% of all sittings)
Culture and Science Committee						
Administrative-Territorial Reform Committee	55		7	10	38	69
Local Government System Improvement Subcommittee of the Public Administration and Local Government Committee	16			5	11	69
Budget and Finance (Taxation) Committee	276	2	2	93	179	65
Public Health Subcommittee of the Social and Employment Matters Committee	68		7	17	44	65
Social and Employment Matters Committee	221		1	84	136	62
Legal Affairs Committee	234			96	138	59
Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee	186	3		76	107	58
European Affairs Committee	187	2	1	78	106	57
Corruption Prevention Subcommittee of the Defence, Internal Affairs and Corruption Prevention Committee	18			8	10	56
Housing Subcommittee of the Public Administration and Local Government Committee	23			11	12	52
Citizenship, Migration and Social Cohesion Committee	96	11	2	35	48	50
Media Policy Subcommittee of the Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee	39			20	19	49
E-governance Subcommittee of the Sustainable Development Committee	23		5	8	10	43
Employment Subcommittee of the Social and Employment Matters Committee	14			8	6	43
Higher Education, Science and Innovation Sub-Committee of the Education, Culture and Science Committee	41		10	14	17	41
Sports Subcommittee of the Education, Culture and Science Committee	38		5	18	15	39
Defence, Internal Affairs and Corruption Prevention Committee	206	4	3	124	75	36
The Latgale Region Subcommittee of the Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee	25			16	9	36

	Total amount of sittings	Closed sitting	Information is not available: minutes of the sitting are missing	Not attended by representatives of organizations	Attended by representatives of organizations	Attended by representatives of organizations (% of all sittings)
Public Expenditure and Audit Committee	175			114	61	35
Information Technology and Innovative Entrepreneurship Subcommittee of the Sustainable Development Committee	15		2	8	5	33
Financial Sector Supervision Subcommittee of the Budget and Finance (Taxation) Committee	28	4	9	7	8	29
Environmental and Climate Subcommittee of the Economic, Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Policy Committee	22			16	6	27
Criminal Law Policy Subcommittee of the Legal Affairs Committee	86			64	22	26
Mandate, Ethics and Submissions Committee	103		4	78	21	20
Economic, Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Policy Committees Artisan and Small Business Subcommittee	11			9	2	18
Economic, Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Policy Committee	208			180	28	13
Parliamentary Inquiry Committee	75			65	10	13
Judicial Policy Subcommittee of the Legal Affairs Committee	35		1	30	4	11
Strategic Communication Subcommittee of the Defence, Internal Affairs and Corruption Prevention Committee	23	2	4	15	2	9
Foreign Affairs Committee	123	13	5	97	8	7
Parliamentary Inquiry Committee	23		1	21	1	4
Comprehensive National Defence Subcommittee of the Defence, Internal Affairs and Corruption Prevention Committee	26	4	3	18	1	4
Baltic Affairs Subcommittee of the Foreign Affairs Committee	47		1	45	1	2
National Security Committee	86	53	3	29	1	1
Artisan and Small Business Subcommittee	1			1	0	0
Tax Policy Subcommittee of the Budget and Finance (Taxation) Committee	17		14	3	0	0
Parliamentary Inquiry Committee on Signs of State Theft and Quality of Pre-Trial Investigation in Criminal Procedure No.16870000911	4			4	0	0

**A total of 514 organizations took part in the sittings of the committees.** It can be observed that the number of organizations participating in the sittings decreases every year - if in 2018 a total of 276 organizations participated in the sittings, then in 2020 256 organizations, but in the first half of 2021 129 organizations. However, it should be noted that the number of organizations correlates with the total number of sittings. (the higher the total amount of sittings, the greater the number of participating organizations, and vice versa). Data shows that the **total participation of organizations has not changed significantly** - the circle (number) of organizations participating in the meetings is largely constant.



**Chart 16. Total number of organizations, participated in the sittings of the Saeima committees, during 2018-2021**

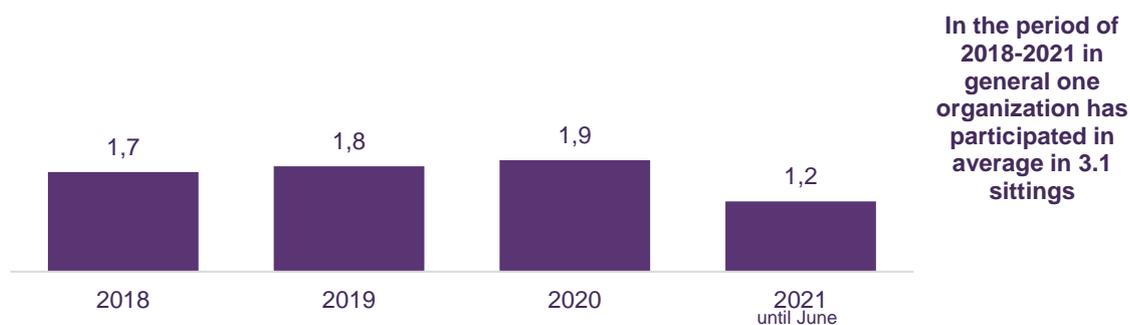
**Table 4. Representation of organizations in the sittings of the Saeima committees, during 2018-2021**

	Sittings (number)	Organizations (number)
2018	990	276
2019	1163	278
2020	977	256
2021 in the 1 <sup>st</sup> half a year	298	129

**In all four years period, on average, one organization participated in 3.1 sittings.** This is in line with the analysis below that most organizations participate in only a few meetings, and the proportion of organizations that regularly attend commission meetings is small.

In the period of 2018-2020 the activity of organizations gradually increased (from an average of 1.7 sittings in 2018 to 1.9 sittings in 2020), but in the first half of 2021 the activity of organizations decreased significantly (to an average of 1.2 sittings).

**Chart 17. Activity of organizations in the sittings of the Saeima committees: the**



*average frequency of participation per organization, during 2018-2021*

In terms of commissions and sub-commissions, the **widest range of organizations is represented in: Education, Culture and Science Committee** (133 different organizations have participated during four-year period), **Social and Employment Matters Committee** (127 organizations), Budget and Finance (Taxation) Committee (86), Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee (76).

**Table 5. Representation of organizations in sittings of Saeima committees in detail by commissions, 2018-2021**

*Note: The committees are arranged according to total amount of organizations participated in their sittings (the last column).*

	Sittings (total amount)	Sittings attended by organizations (amount)	Organizations (amount)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3428</b>	<b>1600</b>	<b>514</b>
Education, Culture and Science Committee	231	197	133
Social and Employment Matters Committee	221	136	127
Budget and Finance (Taxation) Committee	276	179	86
Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee	186	107	76
Public Health Subcommittee of the Social and Employment Matters Committee	68	44	65
Sustainable Development Committee	101	74	64

	Sittings (total amount)	Sittings attended by organizations (amount)	Organizations (amount)
Public Administration and Local Government Committee	208	158	55
Defence, Internal Affairs and Corruption Prevention Committee	206	75	52
European Affairs Committee	187	106	52
Legal Affairs Committee	234	138	48
Public Expenditure and Audit Committee	175	61	46
Citizenship, Migration and Social Cohesion Committee	96	48	44
Economic, Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Policy Committee	208	28	31
Mandate, Ethics and Submissions Committee	103	21	23
Higher Education, Science and Innovation Sub-Committee of the Education, Culture and Science Committee	41	17	21
Sports Subcommittee of the Education, Culture and Science Committee	38	15	20
The Latgale Region Subcommittee of the Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee	25	9	14
Media Policy Subcommittee of the Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee	39	19	14
National Education and Youth Affairs Subcommittee of the Education, Culture and Science Committee	10	7	14
Criminal Law Policy Subcommittee of the Legal Affairs Committee	86	22	14
Administrative-Territorial Reform Committee	55	38	13
Parliamentary Inquiry Committee	75	10	10
Housing Subcommittee of the Public Administration and Local Government Committee	23	12	10
Foreign Affairs Committee	123	8	8
E-governance Subcommittee of the Sustainable Development Committee	23	10	8
Subcommittee on Demographic Development of Population of the Budget and Finance (Taxation) Committee	4	3	7
Information Technology and Innovative Entrepreneurship Subcommittee of the Sustainable Development Committee	15	5	7

	Sittings (total amount)	Sittings attended by organizations (amount)	Organizations (amount)
Financial Sector Supervision Subcommittee of the Budget and Finance (Taxation) Committee	28	8	6
Corruption Prevention Subcommittee of the Defence, Internal Affairs and Corruption Prevention Committee	18	10	5
Employment Subcommittee of the Social and Employment Matters Committee	14	6	5
Environmental and Climate Subcommittee of the Economic, Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Policy Committee	22	6	5
Judicial Policy Subcommittee of the Legal Affairs Committee	35	4	4
National Security Committee	86	1	4
Local Government System Improvement Subcommittee of the Public Administration and Local Government Committee	16	11	4
Economic, Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Policy Committees Artisan and Small Business Subcommittee	11	2	3
Strategic Communication Subcommittee of the Defence, Internal Affairs and Corruption Prevention Committee	23	2	2
Comprehensive National Defence Subcommittee of the Defence, Internal Affairs and Corruption Prevention Committee	26	1	1
Baltic Affairs Subcommittee of the Foreign Affairs Committee	47	1	1
Parliamentary Inquiry Committee	23	1	1
Artisan and Small Business Subcommittee	1	0	0
Tax Policy Subcommittee of the Budget and Finance (Taxation) Committee	17	0	0
Parliamentary Inquiry Committee on Signs of State Theft and Quality of Pre-Trial Investigation in Criminal Procedure No.16870000911	4	0	0

By calculating the average number of times one organization participates in the sittings of a particular committee, it is possible to identify the diversity of the organizations represented in the committees - the higher the average indicator, the more often the same organizations participate in the committee sittings. Data show that the **frequency of participation is higher for organizations, which participate in the sittings of the Administrative-Territorial Reform Committee** (one organization participated on average 2.9 times), **sittings of the Legal Affairs Committee** (2,9 times), **sittings of the Public Administration and Local Government Committee** (2,9 times). However, it should be noted that, in general, these indicators are very low, so there is no reason to say that only a few most active organizations participate in the sittings of these committees. Rather,

this indicator can be interpreted as evidence that **these commissions have some very active organizations and, in addition, there are organizations that participate less frequently or only in certain cases.**

**Table 6. Activity of organizations in sittings of Saeima committees in detail by commissions, for 2018-2021**

*Note: The committees are arranged according to activity of organizations participated in their sittings (the last column).*

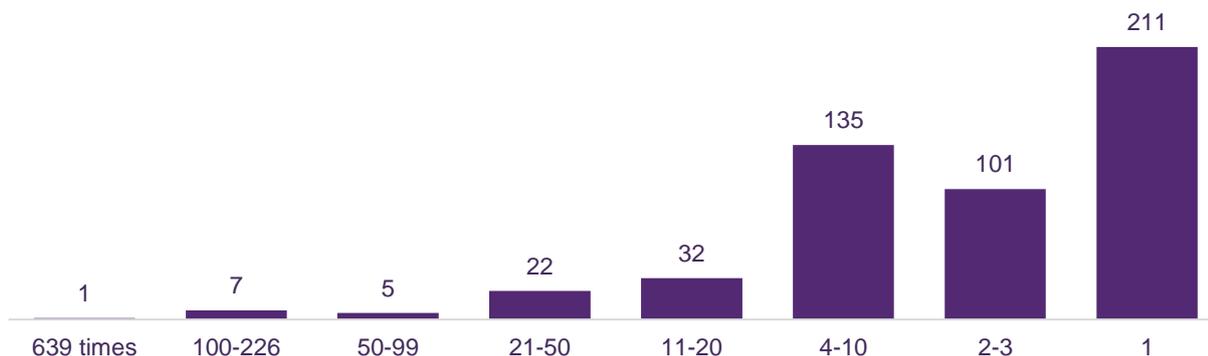
TOTAL	Number of participation times (sittings)	Organizations (amount)	Average number of participation times (sittings) per organization
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1600</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>3,1</b>
Administrative-Territorial Reform Committee	38	13	2,9
Legal Affairs Committee	138	48	2,9
Public Administration and Local Government Committee	158	55	2,9
Local Government System Improvement Subcommittee of the Public Administration and Local Government Committee	11	4	2,8
Budget and Finance (Taxation) Committee	179	86	2,1
European Affairs Committee	106	52	2,0
Corruption Prevention Subcommittee of the Defence, Internal Affairs and Corruption Prevention Committee	10	5	2,0
Criminal Law Policy Subcommittee of the Legal Affairs Committee	22	14	1,6
Education, Culture and Science Committee	197	133	1,5
Defence, Internal Affairs and Corruption Prevention Committee	75	52	1,4
Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee	107	76	1,4
Media Policy Subcommittee of the Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee	19	14	1,4
Financial Sector Supervision Subcommittee of the Budget and Finance (Taxation) Committee	8	6	1,3
Public Expenditure and Audit Committee	61	46	1,3
E-governance Subcommittee of the Sustainable Development Committee	10	8	1,3
Housing Subcommittee of the Public Administration and Local Government Committee	12	10	1,2

TOTAL	Number of participation times (sittings)	Organizations (amount)	Average number of participation times (sittings) per organization
Employment Subcommittee of the Social and Employment Matters Committee	6	5	1,2
Environmental and Climate Subcommittee of the Economic, Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Policy Committee	6	5	1,2
Sustainable Development Committee	74	64	1,2
Citizenship, Migration and Social Cohesion Committee	48	44	1,1
Social and Employment Matters Committee	136	127	1,1
Parliamentary Inquiry Committee	10	10	1,0
Foreign Affairs Committee	8	8	1,0
Judicial Policy Subcommittee of the Legal Affairs Committee	4	4	1,0
Strategic Communication Subcommittee of the Defence, Internal Affairs and Corruption Prevention Committee	2	2	1,0
Comprehensive National Defence Subcommittee of the Defence, Internal Affairs and Corruption Prevention Committee	1	1	1,0
Baltic Affairs Subcommittee of the Foreign Affairs Committee	1	1	1,0
Parliamentary Inquiry Committee	1	1	1,0
Mandate, Ethics and Submissions Committee	21	23	0,9
Economic, Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Policy Committee	28	31	0,9
Higher Education, Science and Innovation Sub-Committee of the Education, Culture and Science Committee	17	21	0,8
Sports Subcommittee of the Education, Culture and Science Committee	15	20	0,8
Information Technology and Innovative Entrepreneurship Subcommittee of the Sustainable Development Committee	5	7	0,7
Public Health Subcommittee of the Social and Employment Matters Committee	44	65	0,7
Economic, Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Policy Committees Artisan and Small Business Subcommittee	2	3	0,7
The Latgale Region Subcommittee of the Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee	9	14	0,6

TOTAL	Number of participation times (sittings)	Organizations (amount)	Average number of participation times (sittings) per organization
National Education and Youth Affairs Subcommittee of the Education, Culture and Science Committee	7	14	0,5
Subcommittee on Demographic Development of Population of the Budget and Finance (Taxation) Committee	3	7	0,4
National Security Committee	1	4	0,3
Artisan and Small Business Subcommittee	0	0	0,0
Tax Policy Subcommittee of the Budget and Finance (Taxation) Committee	0	0	0,0
Parliamentary Inquiry Committee on Signs of State Theft and Quality of Pre-Trial Investigation in Criminal Procedure No.16870000911	0	0	0,0

Data on the frequency of participation of organizations show that **41% of organizations** (211 out of 514 in total) **participated in sittings only once**. 20% of organizations have participated 2-3 times (number - 101), but 26% of organizations have participated 4-10 times (135). **In total, 87% of organizations (447 out of 514) participated in sittings not more than 10 times in a four-year period**. Thus, the absolute majority of participating organizations are those who have participated a small number of times, and those, who have participated very frequently are just few (13 in total, who have participated more than 50 times). The data show that, in general, the range of organizations participating in the sittings is relatively wide, but there are very few organizations that can ensure regular participation in the sittings, which is related to the low capacity of the organizations (for more details see the survey results). The data also show that in the sittings of the Saeima committees, similarly to other participation mechanisms analyzed in this report, regular participation or very wide participation from various organizations is ensured by industry organizations, mainly those representing business or local government interests. While the participation of organizations, representing democratic values and various vulnerable groups in society, is low.

*Chart 18. Activity of organizations in the sittings of the Saeima Committees according to participation frequency, during 2018-2021*



Note: representing the number of organizations, which have participated particular number of times.

One organization has participated 639 times, 7 organizations – 100-226 times, etc.

**The most active organizations** in the whole period (2018-2021), which have been participating in the sittings of the Saeima committees are the following: **the Association of Local and Regional Governments of Latvia** (participated in 639 sittings in total), **Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry** (226), **Employers’ Confederation of Latvia** (226), **Finance Latvia Association** (Association of the Commercial Banks of Latvia) (222). The following organizations have also been active: Latvian Association of Big Cities (162), Latvian Trade Union of Education and Science Employees (LIZDA) (149), the Student Union of Latvia (121), Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia (99). And another 4 organizations have participated in the sittings more than 50 times: Centre for Public Policy PROVIDUS (71), Latvian Medical Association (70), Civic Alliance Latvia (60), Latvian Broadcasting Association (51).

Analyzing the number of participations in sittings by years, it can be observed that **some organizations have been particularly active in one year, but not so active in other years**. This is likely to indicate that issues more relevant to specific organizations would be addressed in specific years. Among the most active member organizations are the following: Finance Latvia Association (Association of the Commercial Banks of Latvia) (47% of all participations were in 2018), Latvian Association of Big Cities (44% of all participations were in 2020), Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia (35% – in 2020), Centre for Public Policy PROVIDUS (35% – in 2019). This is also the case for most of the organizations that have participated in a small number of times - most of which have been in a particular year rather than evenly throughout the years. Analyzing the information available on the Saeima website about the invited organizations, looking at specific issues on the agenda of the committee, it is not always possible to get a clear idea, which organizations have been invited to the sitting, because “representatives of non-governmental organizations” are often indicated. In cases where specific organizations are indicated in the information about the sitting, it can be concluded that more active organizations are invited to the sittings, which do not always have the appropriate competence for the issue under consideration. For example, when looking at the issue of social enterprises, it was indicated that social partners and business representing organizations were invited, but the Social Entrepreneurship Association was not among those invited. Proactive addressing by committees to the sitting can encourage greater participation by organizations, as well as a better decision-making process in consultation with industry experts and the widest possible range of society. In addition, the timely involvement of organizations in addressing a particular issue would reduce confusion about the decisions taken.

**Table 7. The most active organizations in participation in the sittings of the Saeima committees (number of participation times), 2018-2021**

Note: coloured 10 the most active organizations in each particular year.

Note: The full list of organizations involved in participation you can find in detailed table in the annex.

	TOTAL	2018	2019	2020	2021
The Association of Local and Regional Governments of Latvia	639	181	205	183	70
Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry	226	63	52	79	32
Employers' Confederation of Latvia	226	71	48	70	37
Finance Latvia Association	222	104	48	33	37
Latvian Association of Big Cities	162	36	34	71	21
Latvian Trade Union of Education and Science Employees (LIZDA)	149	45	27	52	25
The Student Union of Latvia	121	30	38	38	15
Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia	99	33	25	35	6
Centre for Public Policy PROVIDUS	71	14	25	22	10
Latvian Medical Association	70	16	22	23	9
Civic Alliance Latvia	60	7	19	22	12
Latvian Broadcasting Association	51	9	16	24	2
Association of Private Higher Education Institutions	48	12	6	21	9
Alliance Against Corruption in Latvia	47	14	18	8	7
Latvian College Association	45	10	5	22	8
Association of Regional Development Centres	44	26	10	7	1
Foreign Investors Council in Latvia	41	13	7	11	10
Latvian Insurers Association	39	12	10	8	9
Association of International Research-based Pharmaceuticals Manufacturers	37	20	7	8	2
Latvian Information and communications technology association	35	16	8	7	4

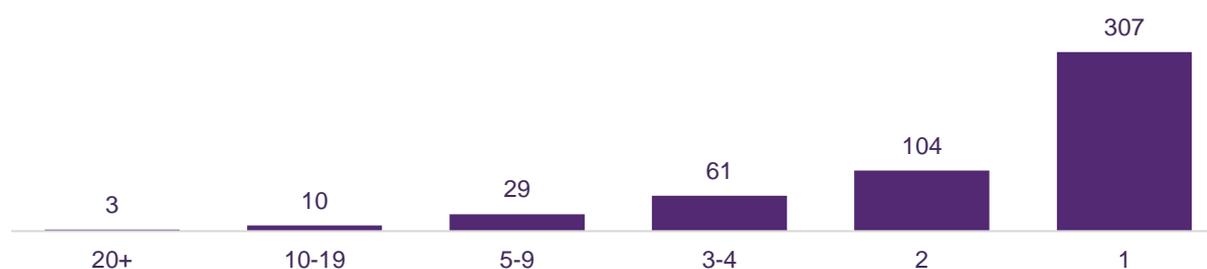
	TOTAL	2018	2019	2020	2021
The Association of Management and Administration of Latvian Housing	33	8	3	17	5
Latvian Association of Certified Auditors	33	5	6	11	11
Latvian University Association	32	2	11	16	3
Union of European Latvians	29	5	4	14	6
Association of Latvian Young Scientists	29	2	10	16	1
Partnership of Latvian Constructors	27	10	14	3	
Latgalian Culture Association	25	2	16	5	2
Latvian Independent Education and Science Association	25		1	16	8
Latvian Rectors' Council	25	2	1	9	13

Assessing in how many committees and sub-committees each specific organization participates, it can be observed that those **organizations, which attend the sittings more often, participate in the work of a larger number of different committees and sub-committees**. For example, the Association of Local and Regional Governments of Latvia has participated in total in 30 sittings (out of 42 possible) in different committees, Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry – 25 sittings in different committees, Finance Latvia Association – 21 sittings in different committees, Employers' Confederation of Latvia – 18 sittings in different committees.

In total, 3 organizations participate in more than 20 different committees, 10 organizations participate in 10-18 different committees, 29 organizations - in 5-9 different committees, 61 organizations - in 3-4 different committees, 104 organizations - in 2 committees, but **307 organizations have participated in only one in a specific committee**. Thus, 60% of organizations participate in only one specific committee and 20% - in two committees. Only one in five organizations participates in 3 or more committees.

**Chart 19. Activity of organizations in sittings of the Saeima Committees according to number of committees and subcommittees, 2018-2021**

Note: shown the number of organizations, which have participated in the particular number of committees. 2 organizations



have participated in work of more than 20 committees, 13 organizations have participated in work of 10-19 committees, etc.

**Table 8. Top 20 most active organizations in Saeima Committees (number of participation committees), 2018-2021**

Note: organizations are arranged according to the number of participation times (sittings).

Note: The full list of organizations, involved in participation, you can find in detailed table in the annex.

	Participation times (sittings)	Number of committees
The Association of Local and Regional Governments of Latvia	639	30
Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry	226	25
Employers' Confederation of Latvia	226	18
Finance Latvia Association	222	21
Latvian Association of Big Cities	162	17
Latvian Trade Union of Education and Science Employees (LIZDA)	149	14
The Student Union of Latvia	121	12
Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia	99	11
Centre for Public Policy PROVIDUS	71	14
Latvian Medical Association	70	10
Civic Alliance Latvia	60	13
Latvian Broadcasting Association	51	6
Association of Private Higher Education Institutions	48	2
Alliance Against Corruption in Latvia	47	9
Latvian College Association	45	1
Association of Regional Development Centres	44	8
Foreign Investors Council in Latvia	41	11

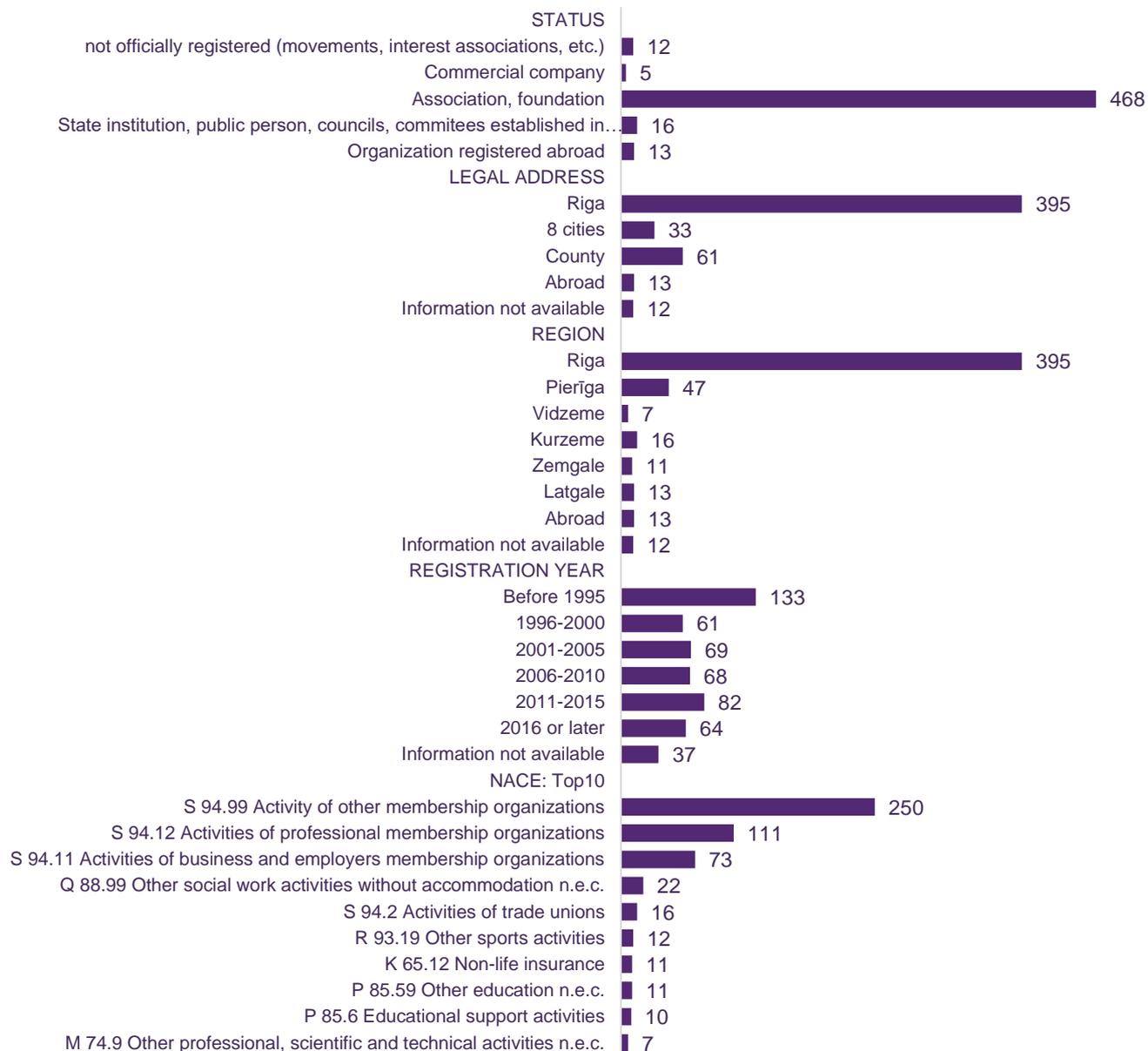
Latvian Insurers Association	39	7
Association of International Research-based Pharmaceuticals Manufacturers	37	4
Latvian Information and communications technology association	35	13

**468 or 91% of the organizations that have participated in the work of the Saeima committees are associations and foundations.** 16 or 3% are state institutions, public persons and councils and committees established by them. 13 or 3% of the participants are organizations registered abroad. 12 or 2% of the participants are informal movements, officially unregistered organizations, interest associations. 5 or 1% are commercial companies.

**395 organizations or 76% are registered in Riga, 61 organizations or 12% - in counties.** Large cities outside Riga are represented by 33 organizations or 6% of all participants.

Assessing **in the aspect of the duration of the activity**, it can be observed that very different organizations are represented in the participation. 26% are those established before 1995, 25% are those established between 1996 and 2005, and 42% are those established later.

While **in terms of field of activities** (according to the **NACE** classification), 250 organizations are those whose activities do not have a specific classification code. **111 are professional organizations and 73 are employers' organizations.** Various other fields of activity are significantly less represented. However, it should be emphasized that, in total, the participating organizations represent **72 different NACE classification codes.**



**Chart 20. Characteristics of organizations represented in the Saeima committees (number)**

## RATINGS AND VIEWS OF ASSOCIATIONS AND FOUNDATIONS ON THE PARTICIPATION PROCESS IN LATVIA

In order to obtain the opinions and assessments of the participating organizations about the participation process in Latvia, in July 2021 a quantitative survey of the participating organizations was carried out. Of the 720 participating associations and foundations identified in the previous research phases, for 664 the contact information was found by e-mail. These 664 associations and foundations were invited to complete a quantitative questionnaire. 88 organizations responded to the invitation and their views and assessments are provided below. In the data interpretation it should be taken into account that the responding organizations are considered to be active in participation, therefore the obtained data should be applied to the target group of organizations active in interest representation, and not to all associations and foundations in general.

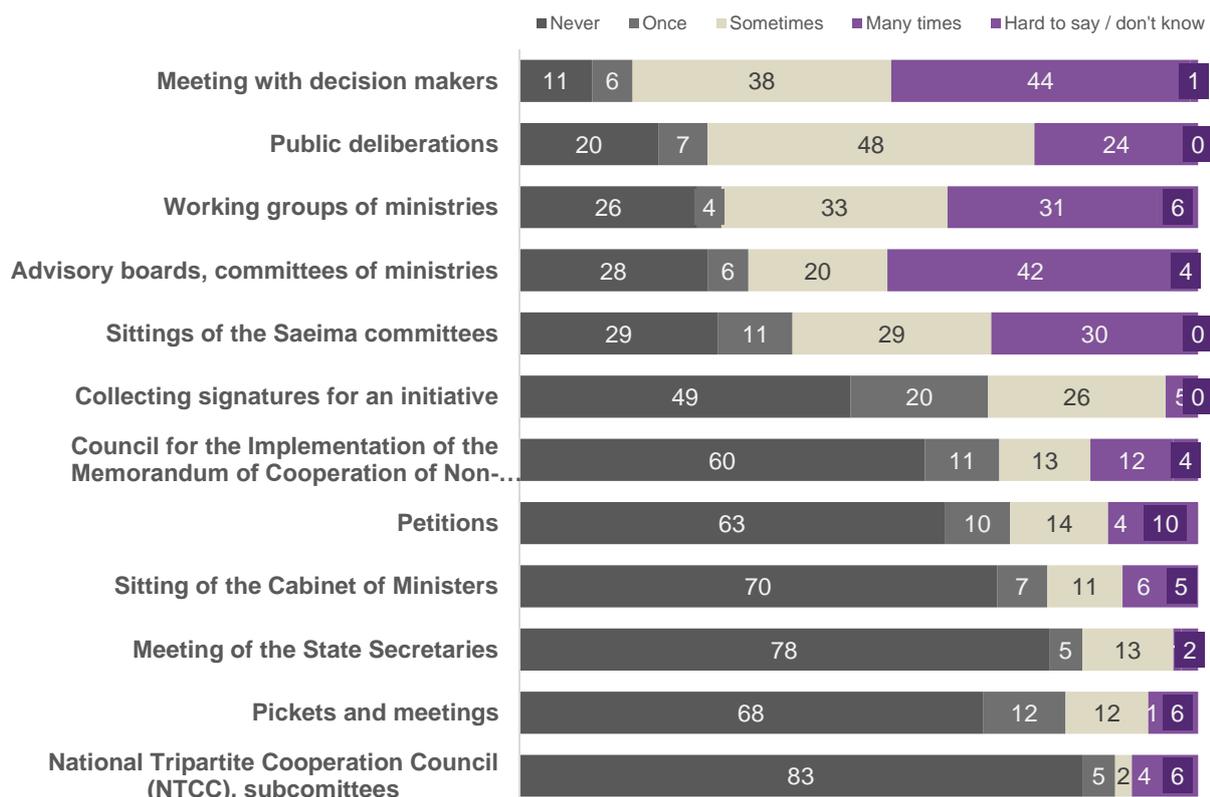
**The most often** organizations organize **meetings with decision-makers** in interest representation - 44% of organizations have done it many times and 38% sometimes - this is the most common participation mechanism used by organizations (88% have done so).

**The second most common** activity is **public deliberations** - 24% of organizations have participated therein many times and 48% sometimes, but 7% once.

Participation in **working groups of the ministries** and **advisory councils** is **the third most common** form of participation - 70% of organizations participated in working groups, 69% in advisory councils.

It is observed that **if an organization participates in a participation mechanism, then it does so regularly** (sometimes or many times). The only activity with a relatively high rate of one-off participation is **collecting signatures for an initiative** - one in five organizations has done so only once, but 26% sometimes.

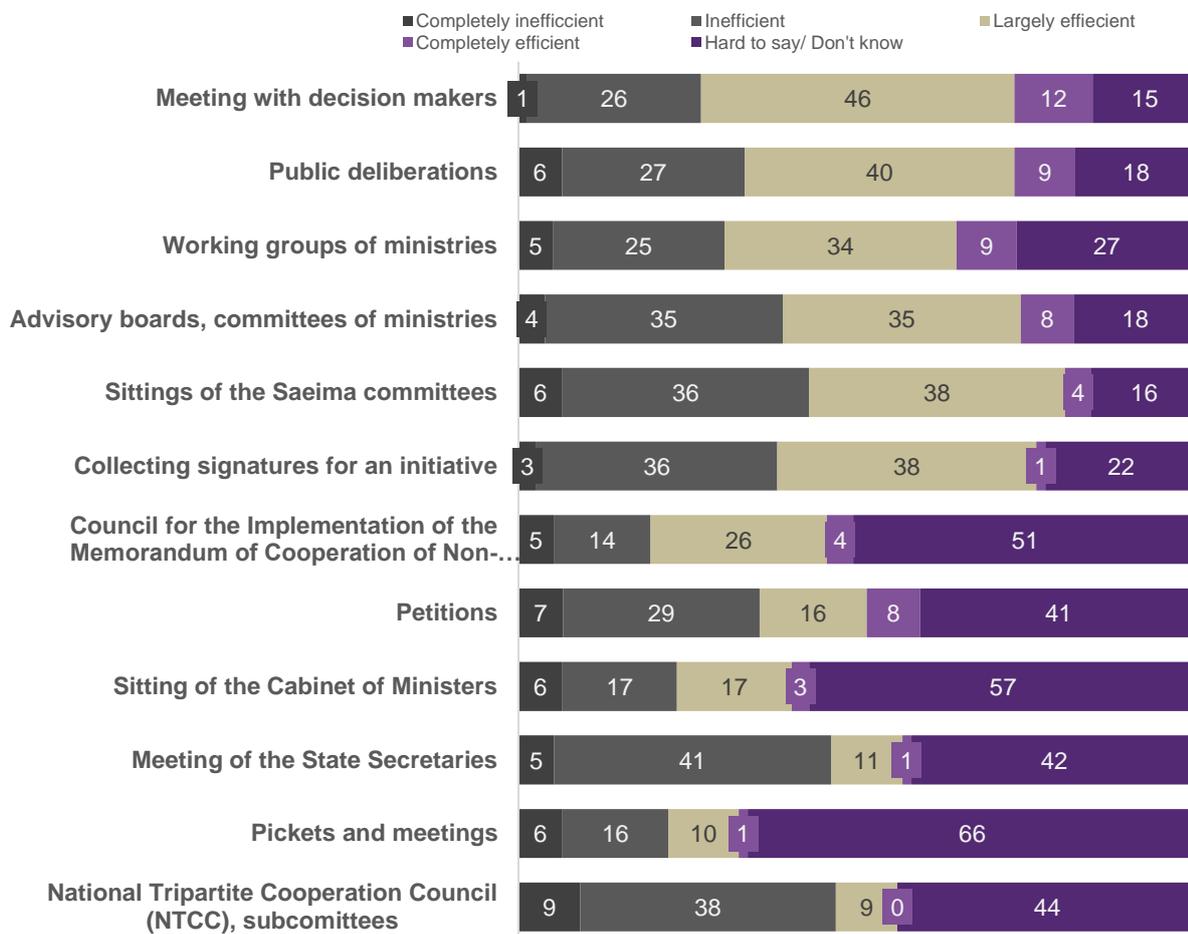
*Chart 21. How many times during the last 2 years your organization has participated in such participation*



Meetings with decision-makers are considered by most organizations to be the most effective participatory mechanism, with 46% believing it to be largely effective and another 12% believing it to be fully effective. Working groups of line ministries are also evaluated as an efficient mechanism - in total, 49% of organizations evaluate them as efficient.

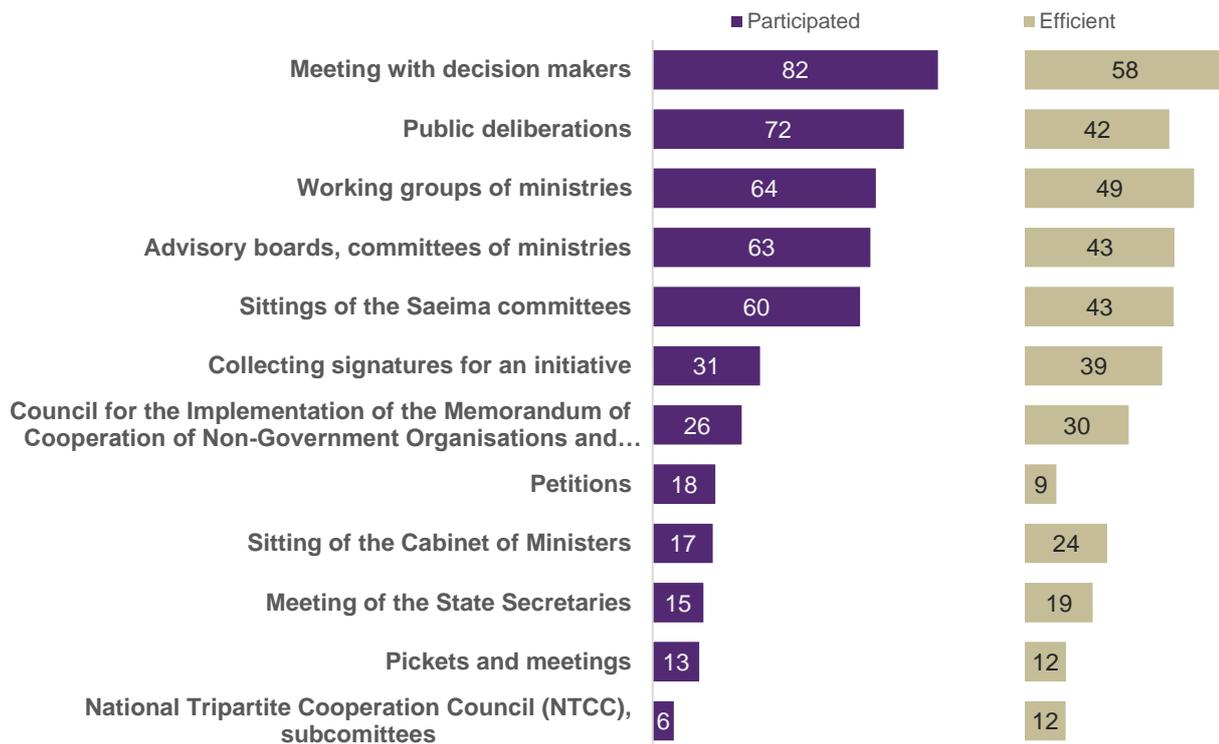
The evaluations of the effectiveness of other participation mechanisms are lower. The lowest efficiency ratings were for petitions (only 9% rated it as an effective tool), the National Tripartite Cooperation Council (12%), and pickets, rallies (12%).

Chart 22. How you would assess the efficiency of these participation activities? How



efficient they are to affect the decision taken in the national level? (%)

Comparing efficiency evaluations and participation rates of organizations, it can be observed that participation rates for almost all participation mechanisms are higher than their efficiency ratings. **Some of the organizations participating in these mechanisms themselves consider them inefficient.** This is especially observed for **public deliberations** - although 72% of organizations have participated in them, only 42% rate them as efficient.



**Chart 23. Participation mechanisms: involvement of organizations and evaluations of their efficiency (%)**

The **main reasons** why the participation mechanisms are considered inefficient by the representatives of the organizations are the assessment that these **participation mechanisms are formal and inherently incapable of influencing the decisions taken**. It is also often pointed out that **state representatives are rarely interested in the participation and involvement of the non-governmental sector**.

**Table 9. What are the main reasons why you consider these specific participatory activities to be ineffective or ineffective in influencing national decisions?**

1. Because of arrogant officials. 2. There is no high-quality and organized flow of information between decision-making bodies, which would promote informed decision-making. 3. Lobby of individual groups, politicians in making important decisions

During the activities, there is an opportunity to express the civil society's opinion, but in the further process of drafting these views a) are not taken into account or b) are modified (summarized by changing the initial original proposal). After the public deliberation, the discussions in the consultative meetings, the further process is non-transparent. And final resulting agreed document does not contain any specific proposals at all. Another important circumstance - for the representatives of non-governmental organizations, the protection of interests is based on the principles of volunteering. Participation in decision-making takes time both to participate in activities and to prepare for them. Members do this work in their free time, free of charge, so there are situations, when members are not able to attend all sittings, discussions and meetings, because they take place during working hours when members do their main job (paid work) and cannot devote time for volunteering. Also, organizations do not have the means to strengthen the competencies of their representatives in the quality of interest representation. It is often acknowledged that there is a lack of knowledge and experience to make full use of the right to participate. There is no practical training to learn how to prepare arguments, conclusions or opinions in writing, the basic principles and the procedure for meetings (what is the procedure for expressing an opinion, submit a proposal, to whom it should be addressed, how to follow the further progress of proposal, etc.), and such training is required according to the sector and target group of the organization, its binding policy documents and context.

The views expressed by organizations are often not taken into account, it is a formal procedure in the decision-making process.
We often do not receive feedback, there is no response to opinions, participation, comments. There is no information on the further process of the issue.
Proportionality of labour input and potential effect. Willingness / readiness of decision makers to listen. Unfortunately, more and more decisions are now being made at the political level, with little or no involvement of administration and experts (including NGO).
Effectiveness is largely determined by the politician's willingness to cooperate and listen.
Direct meetings are the most effective, as most decisions in the form of formal participation have already been discussed and in most cases it is only possible to initiate editorial changes, but not substantive changes, as they require a substantive conversation. Accordingly, only those NGOs that are "at hand" for policy makers and constantly work on behalf of defence of rights, have the greatest opportunity to influence. NGOs that are less well known to policy makers do not build trust and even if they are competent, their suggestions are mostly not considered on their merits (or at least NGOs do not receive any feedback that proposals are considered).
Long speeches, long sessions, wasted time and rarely made changes. The work of officials is judged by the time spent, not by the result obtained. For entrepreneurs, time is money. Loss of interest to participate.
Officials have too decisive impact in making, directing or blocking final decisions. As if decisions have already been made elsewhere!
"Where words like river run, you cannot find a work there." /Latvian proverb/
In the event of the unpopularity of the expressed opinion, the idea is not even heard.
If a decision is made at the political level, then there is a reluctance to go into the possible negative consequences of such a decision and there is a reluctance to change anything.
If a public organization works to achieve foreign-funded, hidden goals, it is impossible to (and should not) expect efficiency. The same relates to lobbying business groups through associations. Both of these observations distort the true essence of democracy and make decision-makers cautious. Or coincide with any of thereof impact through the parties - and then are efficient.
Because organizations are not invited as cooperation partners, but listeners.
Because in these formats decisions are not taken or proposals heard and supported, the decision-makers are different. And what is taken at these levels is often adjusted at the levels where the final decisions are made
When decision makers already know what they want to make, even if it is not a decision of the highest standards, unfortunately none of efforts and involvement helps.
Consultations are declarative. Decisions are made in another level.
The decision maker has actually made a decision already and it is no longer possible to amend it.
Decision-makers lack interest in taking views into account, often the processes are formal, known only to those who are close. Information is hard to find, it is very bureaucratic. The attitude of public administration institutions is very arrogant, often humiliating, there is a view "we know how to be better!", There is a lack of understanding of why it would be important to involve and build democratic processes. NGOs representing the non-governmental sector in the Memorandum Council do not, in principle, represent the views of all NGOs, but the narrow interests of very specific NGOs.
Decision-makers do not listen to the arguments of other "industry" representatives "in substance", but only because it's needed.
The decision-making process depends on the desire to listen - if there is a desire, cooperation is productive, but if there is no interest or if the decision is or will be made elsewhere, such as on a recovery tool, then communication is meaningless.

Participation is organized when a decision has actually been taken.
Very often there are situations when the opinion of an NGO is heard and recorded in the table of comments received, but in essence the proposals are not considered.
We have used many and varied participatory activities in the past and have realized that few of them work unless there are some additional mechanisms of influence, such as court judgments, which require changes in legislation or their application.
The ineffectiveness of mentioned activities is due to their disproportionately long organization (e.g. working groups), which is not commensurate with the administrative resources of NGOs to participate in this type of processes. Proposals developed within the framework of activities may be further adjusted inconsistently with the proposal, which may lead to the implementation of initiatives in an inappropriate, adjusted format and the loss of the true purpose / public interest of the initiative through inadequate implementation.
The ministry has its own settings and plans, and meetings can hardly change the ministry's goal of directing the issue in its own way. Little has been heard that great offers from the side are welcomed extremely enthusiastic and discussed with a passion at the Ministry. Usually NGOs are perceived as outside-world tools to be tolerated by courtesy.
There is no result, useless exchange of views.
There are two realities - the state and public organizations, on the part of the state it is a formal process.
Even if as a result of activities the importance of the problem and the need to solve / finance it, and even specific promises to plan funding in next year's budget are confirmed, in the end (most often) these promises are not implemented.
Suggestions made, vision are not taken into account.
EU institutions are at least responsible, but Latvian can't do even this.
For example, meeting with decision-makers is a long, iterative process of civic lobbying, and in our experience it does not achieve changes itself, but it is part of keeping the issue on the agenda when the "window of opportunity" for that change opens up. But even then, it will not be a separate meeting that will bring a change - it will be a more effective mechanism with a corresponding mandate, such as a collective submission. Or a participation point already lobbied and included in some national action plan - at the right moment, it can get real support, for example, as funding or as an institutional solution to actually be implemented.
Experience has shown that, in general, the view of organizations is simply not taken into account, i.e. officials deliberately ignore it.
Pickets, invitations, announcements are aimed at an unspecified general audience, thus ineffective.
Pickets, meetings are a waste of time because decision makers do not try to talk and involve their representatives in a discussion or exchange of views.
Public deliberation decisions are not mandatory, they are consultation rather than deliberation.
Public opinion is not taken into account.
For a narrow circle, publicity and false democracy. They often talk, smile and nothing happens further.
The government acts in the interests of its sponsors, so decisions against the needs of society can only be slightly delayed or softened, but after a short time the government tries to do the same again, sometimes changing form (e.g. OIK, marriage as a union of men and women, Latvian in science) and doctoral studies!)).

**80% of organizations assess that feel involved in decision making in the sector they represent**, while only 21%, 45% and 32% of organizations feel involved in decision-making at self-government, state or EU level.

However, 80% feel involved in decision-making of their sector, **only 52% assess that they have opportunities to affect these decisions** (which in general is a high rate!). At the same time **only one of four organizations assesses that it has opportunities to affect decisions at self-government or state level**, but in EU level – only 15%.

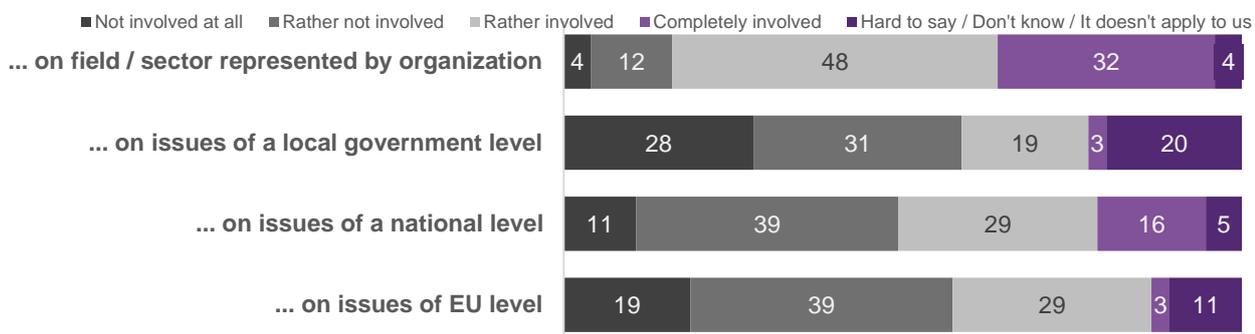


Chart 24. To what extent do you as an organization feel involved in decision-making... (%)

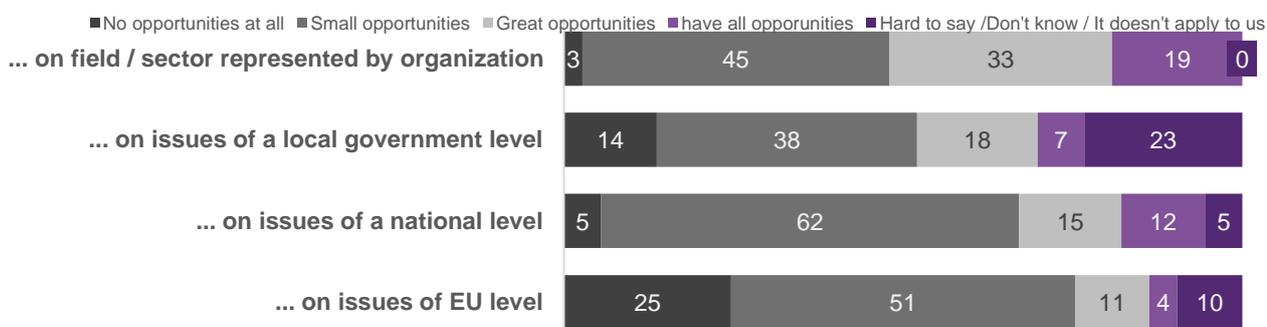


Chart 25. What are your organization's opportunities to affect decisions... (%)

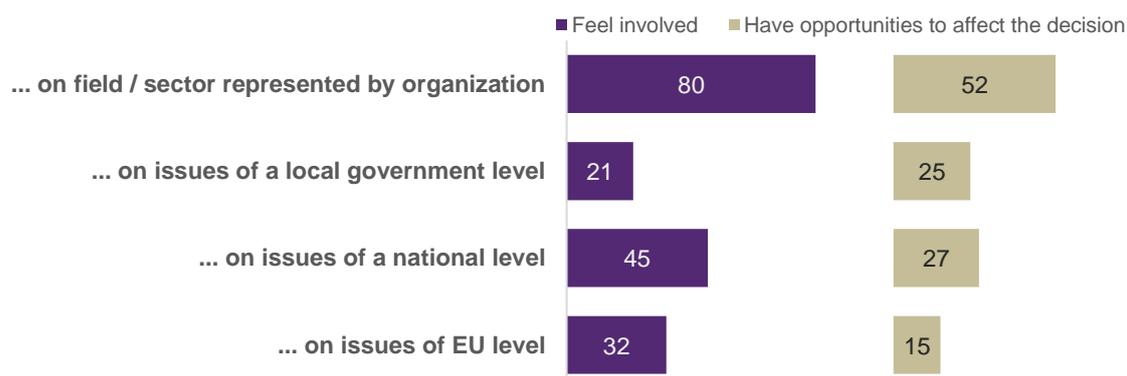


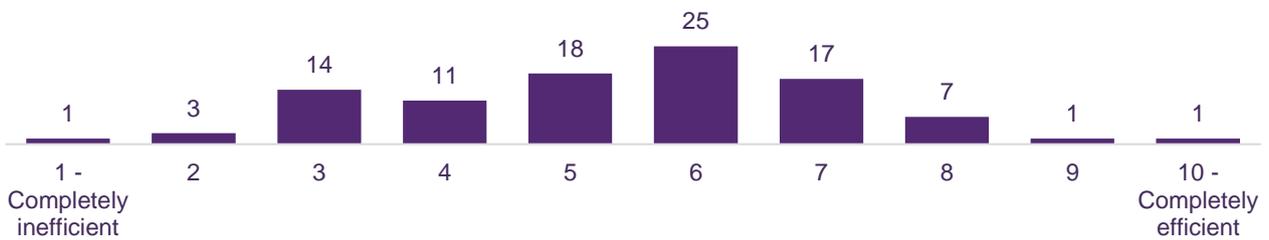
Chart 26. Involvement in the decision making and opportunities to affect decisions (%)

Asked to assess **how effective the participation of the non-governmental sector in decision-making** at the national level is in Latvia, **52%** of the representatives of organizations assess

**that it is rather efficient, but 48% that it is rather inefficient.** On a 10-point scale, respondents were the most likely to choose mediocre ratings for their effectiveness (5, 6, 7).

Substantiating the low and average efficiency evaluations, the representatives of the organizations **have argued it** with such opinions as: **the participatory processes are organized formally**; public **authorities are not interested in participating**, and participation mechanisms are considered a burden; participation is organized but the **views expressed are not taken into account**.

**Chart 27. In general how efficient or inefficient is participation of NGO sector in decision making at national level? (%)**



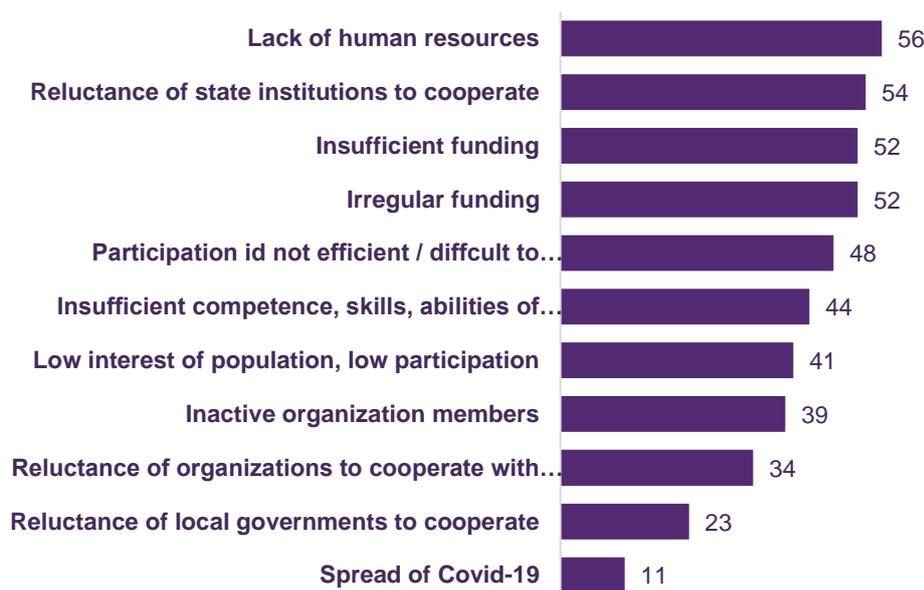
**Table 10. What are the main reasons why you assess that the participation of NGO sector in decision-making at a national level is inefficient?**

1. Officials' self-confidence and arrogance. 2. NGOs are not always represented by experts of the relevant field.
Blind obedience to European directives and instructions, without due regard for the national interests of local business. Allegation of lobbying the interests of economic operators in certain sectors, which are interested in obtaining a certain result in the adopted legislation.
This participation is often formally attracted by public authorities, and most NGO proposals are not taken into account. State institutions often do not take into account the justified arguments of NGOs, formally only include the existence of NGO participation in the legal drafting. That consultation has taken place, etc. A clear example is the consultation with NGOs on the European Union's Economic Recovery Plan and other EU funds, where a large number of NGO proposals were not supported, and well-founded arguments were not taken into account at all.
Many councils are at the level of presentations rather than looking for common solutions. Covid has shown that participation has reduced and everyone is doing as they want.
The main decisions are taken by a narrow circle of stakeholders, in the interests of banks and financiers (FRS, etc.), "covered" by state and / or trade secrets (sale of Parex, OIK, etc.).
Officials value their opinion higher than the opinion of industry experts.
Involvement is formal. There are formats - the NGO Memorandum Council, etc., but in essence, for policy makers at the national level any involvement seems to be a burden. Placing a draft legislative proposal on a website is not an involvement, it is a very passive way of informing. Advisory boards do not function on the merits or at all. It is not clear what the forms of influence of the advisory boards are and who would be directly responsible for implementing what the advisory councils recommend. There are a number of planning documents, but there is a lack of actual implementation in practice.
Participation is often formal and ignored or distorted in decision-making.
In my opinion, there is no single point of view; unclear regulations, rules at national level, that hinder the ability of different NGOs to cooperate and to promote uniform requirements; frequent changes in decisions, rules, plans; poor implementation of existing plans in practice.
Our votes have lack of importance and short of funding to develop and strengthen our organizations.
There is no interest to take into account.
There is no experience and training, unwillingness to get further education.

There are no results. Everything remains at the level of ideas, visions, without real funding to implement something.
NGO arguments too often stay unheard. Sometimes the ministry / politician offer another option to solve the problem raised by the NGO with a comment that it was done to solve the problem. However, the new option is not discussed, debated. If such a discussion took place, then NGOs would have the opportunity to argue why it will be ineffective, will not work.
NGO sector is also sufficiently politicized, sympathizing to one political party or another rather than to professionalism.
We are too little active, there is also lack of active and convincing, so called, "senior management".
Politicians do not want to listen to professionals at all. There are semi-professionals with basic knowledge, politicians will cooperate better with them. They do not dispute and mostly agree. Too much reliance on officials, who are not always professionals. There are also party interests that do not always correspond to the public interests.
It's not inefficient - it's generally moderately effective and with very excellent efficiency cases. However, the potential is also very high. NGOs with balanced and purposeful collective submissions could set the agenda of the Saeima even more thoroughly.
Failure of state institutions to take into account the opinion of NGOs.
The participation of NGOs in decision-making could be very effective and useful. But unfortunately, priority is given to those NGOs that are already regularly involved in decision-making. New organizations are not included. If there are any, they are lobbied by old organizations, which represent one ideology.

Asked to indicate **the main obstacles, which delay the participation of the non-governmental sector in decision-making** at the national level, the representatives of organizations most often pointed out: **lack of human resources** (56%), **reluctance of a state institution to cooperate** (54%), **insufficient funding** (52%), irregular funding (52%), participation is not efficient / difficult to influence decisions (48%), **insufficient competence, skills, abilities of employees** (44%). Thus, there are significant obstacles for both the participation process itself and the capacity of organizations to fully get involved there.

*Chart 28. Which are the most significant obstacles, which delay NGO sector's*



*participation in the decision making at a national level? (%)*

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In the survey, representatives of organisations were asked to indicate what they believed **should be done by public authorities to improve the involvement of the non-governmental sector in decision-making**. The most frequently identified aspects are:

- **Timely involvement of non-governmental sector**, sufficient time for consultations.
- **Feedback** on the further process of the draft legislative proposals.
- **Participation procedure** should be formed **on the merits**, not formal.
- **Involve** representatives of non-governmental sector **already in the initial phase of the decision-making**, not in harmonization only.
- **Strengthen capacity of organizations** (financial support, improvement of competences).

Respondents were also asked to indicate **what the organizations themselves should do** to improve the participation of the non-governmental sector in the decision-making process, and most often was indicated the following:

- **Strengthen capacity** – in financial aspect and also in terms of human resource competences.
- **To be more active** (with the provision that increasing activity within existing resources is cumbersome).
- **To cooperate with each other**, to unite within the sector, to cooperate.

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**Table 11. What should public authorities do to improve the participation of the non-governmental sector in the decision-making process?**

1) A clear mandate and priority for digital participation – Adoption of the "umbrella" law for digital democracy. 2) In accordance with the declared interests of NGOs, targeted timely communication with a call for timely comments on upcoming thematic draft legislative proposals; feedback on the final decisions thus consulted.
1. Officials are beginning to realize that they do not represent the "Ministry of Truth", but are in fact very far from real life. 2. For officials to learn and acquire tolerance, to abstract from their belief in the only and correct opinion.
1. Inform NGOs about the processes. Where, when and how NGOs can participate. Send information to NGOs, actively communicate and provide at least basic information. Making just one entry somewhere on the website in the "seventh subsection, eighth line, third appendix" is far too little. 2. To ensure the transparency of the decision-making process. Explain what will happen next with proposals and suggestions. What are the decision-making steps. 3. Provide binding information (presentations, summaries, documents related to agenda items) in a timely manner before the sittings, meetings. So that the meeting time can be devoted to decision-making, discussions and the evaluation of proposals, not to get acquainted with the information and to spend the last 10 minutes for voting. 4. To provide support of financial instruments for the participation of NGOs in decision-making processes, improvement of knowledge and skills in decision-making processes.
More often to set up working groups with industry representatives to solve issues more often. Providing feedback on how the issues raised evolved.
More often to organize consultations (in various forms) on issues important and topical for the industry.
Be more open and cooperative, less arrogant and more courage to explain your decisions and intentions.

Be more open, inform more often and more about participation opportunities, proactively address organizations to give an opinion.
Be more open to dialogue. But the experiences are very different in different sectors: for example, the VARAM is more open, the ZM and the IZM have not wanted to change anything so far. The Ministry of Agriculture even avoided cooperation.
To be willing to hear the NGO's opinion on the merits, not when the decision has already been made and you have to go through the formalities.
To listen to NGO sector and consider the suggestions.
Non-governmental sector organizations must be provided in advance with information on draft legislative proposals and changes in current laws and regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers.
To involve non-governmental sector in decision-making, document development.
To involve in working groups in the early stages of decision-making.
To involve already in the initial decision development procedure, not in deliberation or presentation of developed decisions.
Implement a systematic approach, ensuring a common approach and equal opportunities for all NGOs to participate. Perhaps a user-friendly online platform would be the solution.
Become more professional, which is possible if you pay better salaries and there is more competition for civil servant positions. Latvia needs a better civil service. In addition, a civil service should be introduced in municipalities.
In order for ministries and their nomenclature would be obliged to react, not only the regulatory enactment but also the norm of liability specified in the regulatory enactment must be relevant and specified, if an institution, organization, capital company does not answer specific questions, unsubscribe, if it doesn't resolve or substantiate the rejection of the solving of issues. The existing procedure of sending the whole nation to the court - appealing to a higher instance and in court is wrong, inefficient, expensive and long-lasting - the responsibility for the proposed solution should be applied to administration.
Organize scheduled meetings in a timelier manner and allow different organizations to cooperate before the meeting.
All associations representing the industry should be involved and consulted in the decision-making process, not at the discretion of officials.
Strengthen the role of public consultation and surveys in legislation.
Participation does not make sense if it is only formal. We often receive a request from ministries to give an opinion on an issue. The response time is usually very short, so it is either not possible to provide a full response due to lack of time, or all other work has to be postponed. In our experience, there are also cases when we have made significant objections to the regulatory enactment, but in the annotation we read that the issue has been agreed with a number of NGOs, including us.
Our NGOs have lack capacity - there is a lack of financial support, there is a lack of project competitions, there is no financial support from the municipality so that we as an organization can be more and regularly involved in decision-making. If there is no stable financial flow, there is no sustainability, there is no capacity to research and evaluate one issue in a long term.
Need for discussion, exchange of views. Because it is not always possible to present everything in written.
Ensure institutional succession / inheritance so that there is no need to start cooperation with each official from the beginning / alphabetical explanations. To ensure better information transfer from the Cabinet of Ministers to the Saeima, incl. automatic transmission of opinions and other documentation. Depoliticize issues, namely, more trust and involvement of administration and experts (including NGOs). Nationally promote and support a culture of participation and involvement, genuine dialogue.
The involvement of NGOs is often formal to meet the requirements. Sometimes the state institution indicates in the documents the NGOs that have been involved in the development of the document, mentioning the organizations that were not involved in any way at

all. We should build cooperation and really listen to the opinion and arguments of NGOs.

Provide a clear protocol of cooperation, develop ways of participation, provide feedback.

Send out invitations to meetings themselves, post common information on some joint portal.

Actively invite civil society experts to all decision-making bodies.

Take decisions only with a condition that it is supported by the NGO (s) representing the interests concerned.

Adopt a law on state institutions, which strictly (measurably) defines the role of the non-governmental sector in the decision-making process.

Involve the non-governmental sector for participation before the draft decision is submitted to the highest state institutions.

First of all, effective cooperation between state institutions and the NGO sector is based on the identification of mutual strengths / weaknesses. Within the resources they've been allocated, NGOs can relatively rarely develop extended letters of explanation on a day-to-day basis, address initiatives at the highest level of detail, which are then considered by a large, multi-person public body, while NGOs usually have just one, two or maximum three persons, who can respond to the mentioned request. Secondly, state institutions must not base their judgments on political arguments or improperly use positions of power to make the necessary references to the progress of proceedings. This is not in the public interest and at the core of organizations' professional activities. Thirdly, the involvement of NGOs needs to be planned to a large extent in a timely manner, which follows from the actual reality that NGOs work in a much-increased workload format and relocation of activities is a significant detriment to participation.

Before making decisions, consult with professional organizations of the specialists in the field.

Publish good examples from other countries / local authorities, where NGOs have succeeded in changing things, thanks to the active participation of the NGO sector in decision-making processes, as people do not believe they can make a difference because there is a lack of good examples to refer to.

Real listening, schedule, performance.

Organize think tanks with NGOs, officials from different ministries, and discuss current needs in the industry.

Cooperate with each other – so the NGO don't need to deal with cross-sectoral issues or become a hostage.

Follow the decisions made, the strategies described - their implementation.

Further develop the single opinion platform, incl. option to "filter" by topics / keywords. Create information in simple, easy-to-understand language.

Listen to other opinions as well and to be consistent with the decision-making process - agreements reached in the past are often "forgotten" or not taken into account in any way in the subsequent decision-making process. Explain how the decisions taken help to achieve specific long-term national goals. If this is not the case, it is fair to say that the main task is to "absorb the funds as painlessly as possible".

Improve communication process, informing on scheduled decisions, their deadlines.

Oblige every employee in public administration to obtain training on participation and organization of the participation process. A more informal approach to discussing issues should be introduced, communication should be proactive, not waiting for everyone to come to the state institutions, but mapping target audiences, forming focus groups themselves, conducting more frequent surveys on various issues, rather than just discussing issues in a narrow circle of 10-20 people.

Consider NGO as an equivalent discussion partner.

More listen and to be approachable for the industry.
More involve professional organizations and associations already in decision development procedure.
Focus more on consideration of issues in substantive rather than political way.
To listen more to the opinion of NGOs during the legal drafting, as well as to clarify them - at the same time being able to weed out rational NGO proposals and objections from those that are populist, declarative (i.e. without proposals for resolving the situation) or emotional.
Need a law on NGOs.
Public institutions should receive a salary for real improvements (indicator - satisfaction of the population, entrepreneurs with the progress of any work). This would create a personal interest in working, not being at work. People follow works, not words. Infidelity kills desire.
Public authorities should reduce the influence of politicians on legislation, information reports, etc. the document-making process, because otherwise the official takes into account the views of politicians and leaves non-governmental organizations on the background. Then the paradox is that before each discussion, contact the politician/politicians to agree on what to discuss in the working group. Not all NGOs have the opportunity to immediately identify persons concerned and perceive the official's motives, etc. Therefore, in the process of legal drafting, it is necessary to establish official working groups and coordination meetings of the ministry, which have successfully disappeared with the time of COVID-19. Also lobby openness law would help the situation. The short deadlines of the ministries, which do not allow to adopt the representative opinion of organization, also hinder it.
Public authorities need to reach a consensus with the industry or its opinion leaders on many issues, rather than ignoring solutions that are undesirable for officials.
To create / publish a perspective plan for solving / financing problems, actualized by certain NGOs. Once a problem has been identified as significant, there should be a time frame for solving it. Otherwise, no progress is seen and this causes people to feel absolutely powerless.
At least reconcile the most important things. In principle, all matters in which they are competent should be agreed with the professional associations. The views of industry should be taken into account if any decisions have a significant impact on the industry. Identify by sector or competence the NGOs with which coordination is mandatory.

**Table 12. What should organizations themselves do to improve the participation of the non-governmental sector in the decision-making process?**

Of course, you can always call for more activity on the part of the NGO itself, but, for example, our organization is very busy with many activities related to its core business. The second reason why we are becoming less active is the frustration and scepticism that has arisen from intensive cooperation with a number of ministries.
1. Seek support to enhance organizations' capacity for more effective involvement in decision-making. To increase members' knowledge and skills of decision-making processes.
Get involved more active.
Take a more active interest in and involvement in decision-making processes, make proposals, based on facts, real-life examples, so that the decision-making process does not place an additional burden on those working in the sector and society as a whole.
Remind about yourself more actively.
Acquire the skills of a civic lobby, or at least an understanding of it, and agree with other NGOs on a planned, purposeful civic lobby, either as much as possible or through a representation such as the LPA, giving it a clear relevant mandate. Actively use such a proven effective lobbying mechanism as collective submissions to the Saeima. Actively ensure the effective development of the collective

submission mechanism in local governments together with the new Local Government Law - so that it actually works, as well as other mechanisms provided therein - citizens' boards, etc. Lobby for the introduction of a collective submission mechanism also at executive level.

Find necessary resources (both human and financial) to make a "continuous pressure" on decision makers.

Grow your own capacity.

Be more active and insistent yourself, less lazy. Usually, the most active are already loaded with work. NGOs in related fields, established on a professional basis, in alliances or other formats should be merged. You should receive more information about the necessity to participate in specific activities. The centralized management must be more active.

Be more active, more persistent in defending own point of view.

Be more active, to form, create and express opinion publicly on issues of self-interest.

To be more active, but by attracting experts in the respective field, and not only "for the sake of a tick" by delegating one and the same person as a representative to discuss various issues.

Be more active.

Be braver, get involved more actively.

To be persistent, insistent. Involve new members in the activities of organizations. This especially relates to trade unions. In turn, the state should provide financial support to trade unions so that they can function normally. The state is interested in the activities of trade unions. Otherwise, dissatisfaction can turn into self-flow and disorder.

Plan budget for advocacy in project applications, engage proactively, providing views on a wide range of issues at national and European level.

Initiate adoption of such law and be more active.

Need to improve capacity to have hired staff, who can attend all meetings.

Umbrella organizations must involve a wider range of organizations in the consultation of opinions and conclusions, incl. representation, reducing the "one-man" aspect (e.g. involving competent organizations, councils, members, etc.).

Knock on all doors.

Make better organization, more to follow decisions.

So far, it has been observed that rarely an organization acts in the true interests of society and industry. Usually, an organization defends extremely narrow interests by fighting any innovation or, conversely, by pushing proposals that it wants in the name of narrow interests. Organizations should learn a culture of discussion and compromise.

Not to be afraid to express own opinion.

Not to be so fragmented, but more united. There should be more involvement in professional organizations rather than in small interest groups.

Legislation and solutions in an area should not be allowed to be developed and pushed only by concerned persons in that area.

Feel free to address politicians in person, which is of course not an example of good democracy, but seems to be the most effective way to reach about improvement / changes.

Don't lose patience and try again. Seek support in international organizations.
Definitely be more active in putting forward different initiatives for different levels of government.
NGOs should be more structured and united and go deeper into issues. It is desirable that NGOs cooperate more with each other and discuss important issues. At present, the NGO sector itself is very fragmented and often develops fruitless mutual discussions at meetings of state institutions, discrediting the image of NGOs as an important cooperation partner.
Organizations need to work on their decision-making infrastructure - creating positions and positions, etc., so that decisions can be made quickly and efficiently.
Increase the use of the media for public involvement when discussing forthcoming draft legislative proposals.
Express active readiness to get involved; to substantiate the view structurally.
Participate constructively and nationally - be able to get into the shoes of public administrations - understand, accept or at least respect the opinion of others - both public administration and other NGOs.
First, to purposefully understand the guidelines of public administration organizations and the procedure for addressing ideas / initiatives in order to provide information to public institutions closer to the format to be forwarded. Secondly, to strengthen, as far as possible, the capacity to participate fully in decision-making processes, as this requires significant administrative resources. Thirdly, involve other organizations in cooperation with each other if their operational objectives are similar and they can jointly support the initiative to be submitted.
Proactively show initiative, intervene with involvement, publicly demonstrate own position.
Provide your practical feedback with rational suggestions from practitioners regarding the identified decisions or their necessary amendments.
Work more aggressive.
Only the full-time employment of high-level experts can help here. All skilled people work and earn money during working hours. Who has time to walk through ministries during working hours for free of charge?
Improve capacity of human resources in order to get involved in procedures proactively. AIF and SIF NGO support projects are a huge step in this direction.
Take more initiative on issues of your industry.
To get more involved in the decision-taking process, not only criticize already decisions taken.
Get more involved.
To be more interested.
It should be a priority for your organization. Spend the time for this priority, and of course, without funding, it is sometimes difficult to ensure a long-term participation process.
Promote mutual cooperation and information flows. Should remember more often that civil servants and politicians are also people. To fight for more funds to defend interests. Tell more about your achievements and success stories.
To establish an NGO arbitration if something was promised and not fulfilled by the state.



## SUMMARY



**Summarizing the data** on participation in the mechanisms of public participation of ministries (in the period 2018-2020) and in the sittings of the Saeima committees (in the period of 2018-first half of 2021), it can be stated that **a total of 814 organizations have been involved in the participation.**

514 of them have participated in the sittings of the Saeima committees, but 507 - in the working groups and committees of the ministries.

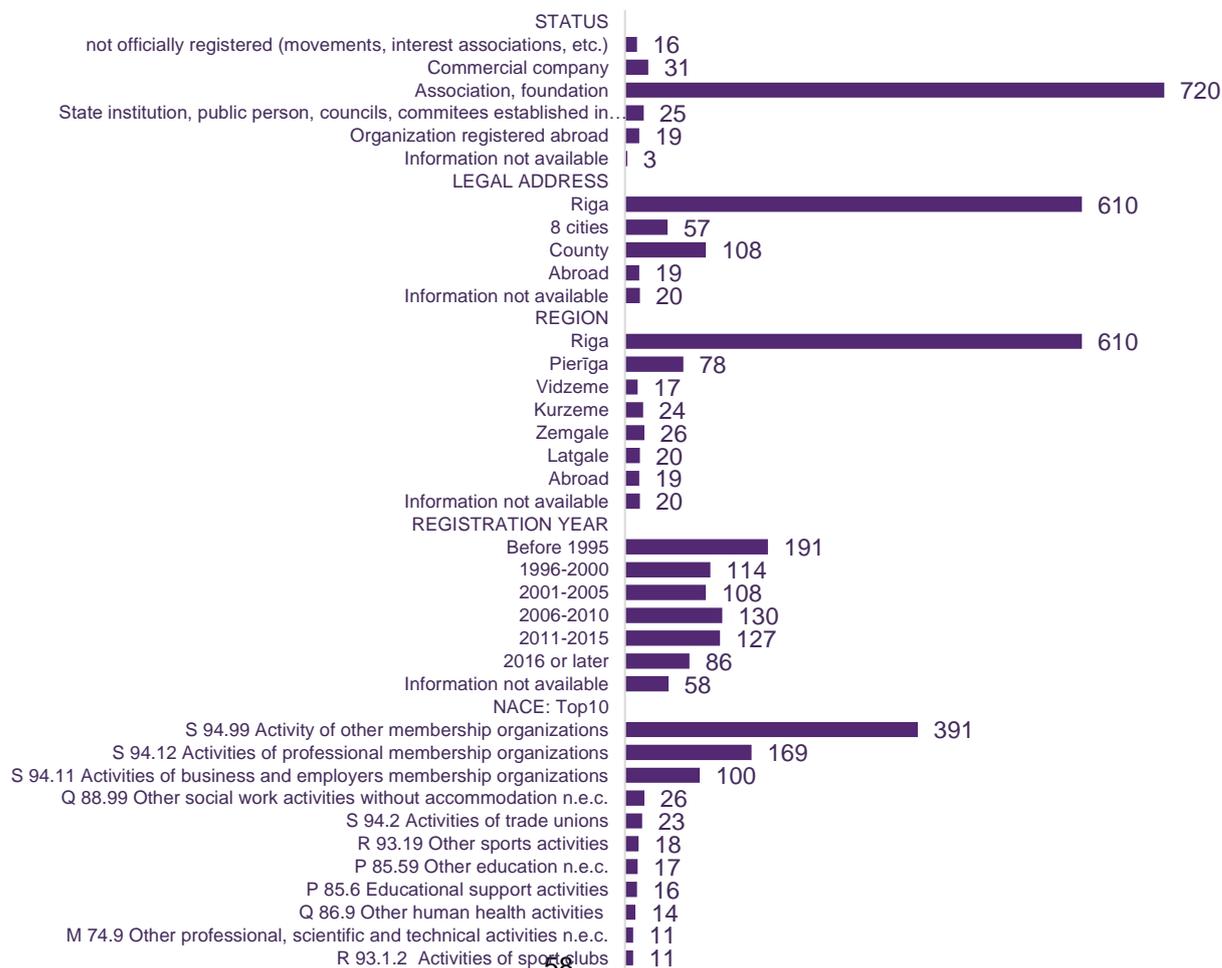
720 out of 814 organizations are associations and foundations. 31 or 4% – commercial companies, 25 or 3% – public authorities, 19 or 2% – organizations registered abroad, but 16 or 2% – informal groups of interests.

610 or 75% are registered in Riga, 57 or 7% – in other biggest cities, 108 or 13% – in regions.

48% out of organizations involved in participation are registered with NACE code as activity of other membership organizations (S94.99). 21% are professional organizations, but 12% – employers' organizations. **In total 108 organizations of different fields (NACE codes) are represented** (one organizations may represent several industries at the same time).



**Chart 29. Profile characteristics (number) for organizations represented in the**





The most active organizations in the participation mechanisms of Saeima and ministries are: the **Association of Local and Regional Governments of Latvia** (participates in total of 107 different participation mechanisms), **Employers' Confederation of Latvia** (59), **Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry** (53), **Latvian Agricultural Organization Cooperation Council** (43), **Latvian Association of Big Cities** (37).

The following organizations are also active (participate in more than 20 participation mechanisms): Association "Farmers' Parliament", Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia, Finance Latvia Association, Latvian Information and communications technology association, Latvian Federation of Food Companies.

**306 out of total 814 organizations have participated in the work of Saeima committees only and they haven't participated in working groups, councils or other participation mechanisms of ministries. While 296 organizations have participated in participation tools of ministries and haven't participated in the Saeima committees. Remaining 212 have participated in participation tools of both the Saeima and ministries.**

**Table 13. The most active organizations in participation mechanisms of ministries and/or Saeima committees, 2018-2021 in total**

Note: organizations are arranged according to the total number of participation mechanisms. There are shown organizations, which participate in at least 10 different participation mechanisms.

Note: The full list of organizations involved in participation you can find in detailed table in the annex.

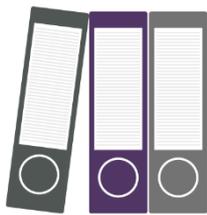
	Number of Saeima committees	Number of ministries	Number of working groups/councils	Total amount of participation mechanisms
The Association of Local and Regional Governments of Latvia	30	11	77	107
Employers' Confederation of Latvia	18	11	41	59
Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry	25	6	28	53
Latvian Agricultural Organization Cooperation Council	9	4	34	43
Latvian Association of Big Cities	17	7	20	37
Association "Farmers' Parliament"	5	4	28	33
Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia	11	11	20	31
Finance Latvia Association	21	2	9	30
Latvian Information and communications technology association	13	8	16	29

	Number of Saeima committees	Number of ministries	Number of working groups/councils	Total amount of participation mechanisms
Latvian Federation of Food Companies	2	5	25	27
Latvian Trade Union of Education and Science Employees (LIZDA)	14	1	6	20
Latvian Medical Association	10	2	10	20
Foreign Investors Council in Latvia	11	3	6	17
Centre for Public Policy PROVIDUS	14	2	3	17
Association of Regional Development Centres	8	3	8	16
Civic Alliance Latvia	13	1	3	16
The Student Union of Latvia	12	1	3	15
Centre MARTA	8	3	4	12
Latvian Association of General Practitioners	5	1	7	12
Latvian Association of Architects	3	5	9	12
Latvian Nurses Association	5	2	7	12
Latvian Traders Association	6	4	6	12
Latvian Cooperation Organization for People with Special Needs SUSENTO	4	4	7	11
Latvian Broadcasting Association	6	3	5	11
Latvian Veterinary Society	1	1	10	11
The Association of Heads of Social Services of Local and Regional Governments of Latvia	3	1	8	11
Association "Rīgas Šprotes"		2	11	11
Healthcare Employers' Association	5	2	5	10
Association "Zaļā brīvība"	2	1	8	10
Rural Family Doctors Association of Latvia	4	1	6	10
Association of Latvian Young Scientists	7	2	3	10
Association of Hotels and Restaurants of Latvia	5	3	5	10



According to the information provided by the State Revenue Service, a total of 18 712 associations and foundations had submitted annual reports for 2019. If a total of 720 associations and foundations have participated in the participation mechanisms of the ministries and the Saeima, **then it can be concluded that only 4% of all associations and organizations are active in the participation mechanisms at the national level.**

Survey data from participating organizations show that **most organizations consider meetings with decision-makers to be the most effective participation mechanism**, with 46% believing it to be highly effective and a further 12% believing it to be fully effective. **Working groups of ministries** are also assessed as an **effective mechanism** - in total, 49% of organizations assess them as effective. Evaluations of the effectiveness of other participation mechanisms are lower. **The lowest efficiency ratings** were for **petitions** (only 9% assess it as an effective tool), **NTSP** (12%), and **pickets, meetings** (12%).



Comparing efficiency evaluations and participation rates of organizations, it can be observed that participation rates for almost all participation mechanisms are higher than their efficiency ratings. **Some of the organizations participating in these mechanisms themselves consider them inefficient.** This is especially observed for **public deliberations** - although 72% of organizations have participated there, only 42% rate them as efficient. The **main reasons** why the participation mechanisms are considered inefficient by the representatives of the organizations are the assessment that these **participation mechanisms are formal and inherently incapable of influencing the decisions taken.** It is also often pointed out that **state representatives are rarely interested in the participation and involvement of the non-governmental sector.**

Asked to indicate **the main obstacles to the participation of the non-governmental sector in decision-making** at the national level, the representatives of organizations most often pointed out: **lack of human resources** (56%), **reluctance of a state institution to cooperate** (54%), **insufficient funding** (52%), irregular funding (52%), participation is not efficient/difficult to influence decisions (48%), **insufficient competence, skills, abilities of employees** (44%). Thus, there are significant obstacles for both the participation process itself and the capacity of organizations to fully participate in it.

