



## **Citizen empowerment in the domestic waste policy development in Lithuania**

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Lithuania offers an interesting case of lagging in terms of domestic waste recycling in the European context. Despite the adoption of all relevant EU regulation, including a pricing system, which is designed to be more conducive for recycling. One important group of policy instruments which in the application of which Lithuania needs to improve, is public participation in environmental governance. The objective of this study is to relate the means of public participation and the decision-making on waste management and recycling outcomes.

The study consisted of two stages. Stage one: key decision-making public agencies responsible for policy formulation and implementation of domestic waste management were identified. Later, an analysis of public available documentation covering decision-making in these institutions was conducted with the aim to measure the level of citizen engagement. Stage two: agency managers and staff responsible for citizen engagement were interviewed with the goal of evaluating their attitudes. Attitudes of officials are a crucial for a successful citizen engagement.

The results showed that officials recognized very little the value of citizen engagement. They perceived contribution as an the creation of additional challenges to be tackled with, rather than help to lower service delivery costs and improve policy effectiveness. This renders the government with a depleted number of options of improving domestic waste management to “top-down” measures and imposition of financial incentives or costs.