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**CITIZENS AND GOVERNMENT: NEW FORMS OF
COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION**

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1. Introduction

Cooperation of citizens and government is one of the foundations of democracy and civil society as only effective ways for the communication and cooperation between the government and society can help to create, protect and develop democracy and civil society. To determine ways of cooperation between citizens and government, we will first look at the state of the third sector in Russia and Poland. Next we will focus our attention on legislation, which specifies different forms of communication and cooperation between citizens and government. Then we will review the existing forms of communication and cooperation between citizens and government. Finally we will make some conclusions and recommendations.

Government cannot communicate and cooperate directly with every citizen. Legislation suggests only two forms of direct communication: elections and referenda. However, low turnout limits the extent to which these forms really promote effective communication. For example, only 22% of Yaroslavl voters took part in the most election of member or region legislation body in October, 2006.

Governments in Russia and in Poland understand that they cannot cooperate with all the people in direct ways. This is one of the reasons why governments pay great attention to cooperation with NGOs. NGOs unite many people, and they can represent their interests, becoming mediators between citizens and the government.

2. Overview of the Third sector in Poland and Russia

2.1. Polish non-profit sector

Poland's civil society is based on the traditions of the Solidarity trade union and other anti-Communist opposition movements of the 1970s and 1980s, as well as the social activity of the Catholic Church, which is by far the largest religious denomination. Frequent changes of governments in the 1990s helped to establish civil society structures: foundations and associations which include think tanks, analytical centers, watchdog organizations in which the current opposition is maintained until the political pendulum brings its members back to the mainstream of official life.

Civil society seems to be Poland's solid ground for defending democracy. It is active and quite widespread, with more than 55,000 associations and 8,000 foundations¹. Generally it is estimated that there are more than 20,000 active NGOs in Poland. The development of the civil society is reflected essentially not only in the number of NGOs, but also in the extent to which citizens participate in the activity of those organizations. More than 65,000 full time employees work in the sector, which also includes about 700 thousands volunteers. The total membership of non-governmental organizations in Poland can be estimated at about 7,5 million (data for 2005).

Although a vast majority of Poles (77%) are not involved in any organization, there is a group of individuals (23% of the sample analyzed) who commit time to public activity in a variety of fields. Poles most frequently join educational organizations (4.8% of the entire population are their members), followed by trade unions (3,9), charity organizations dealing with poor children

¹ Data taken from KLON/JAWOR report, 2005





(3.5%), sport clubs (3.5%), religious organizations (3.4%) and rescue organizations (3.4%). On the other hand, very few are involved in the work of local government-based (*gmina*) institutions (0.9 %) or borough and neighborhood organizations (0.8%), and there is negligible involvement in political parties and associations (0.7%)². These studies also demonstrated a rise over the decade in the citizen participation in organizations other than trade unions and political parties.

The main sources of financing are member dues, government and self-government donations, donations from private persons, and institutions. Major donors are the Polish American Freedom Foundation and the Stefan Batory Foundation.

2.2. Russian non-profit sector

There are about 450,000 registered NGO in Russia. Experts estimate that 20-25% of them are regularly active. The vast majority of organizations are engaged in social or charitable activities, though many are working to influence policy and are critical of the government.

The public continues to be largely unaware of NGO activities. The All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center survey conducted in November 2005 reported that only 3% of Russian citizens had had personal contact with an NGO, and 9% knew about NGO activities in their region, while 51% were completely unaware of NGO activities. Of those surveyed, 40% stated that NGO activities were unimportant for the majority of citizens.

Despite these numbers, 38% of respondents believed that NGOs protected citizens' rights and promote public initiatives to help solve specific issues. Of those that were familiar with NGO activities, 47% believed that the NGOs should work in the areas of child welfare and protection of parents' rights, while 30% favored their activities toward neighborhood improvement and work in education.

Among the positive developments, the adjustment of the civil society organizations and the government to the realities of an indigenous third sector could be noted. Although critical and suspicious about foreign funding of NGOs, the Russian government is emphasizing domestic philanthropy, declaring 2006 the "Year of Philanthropy".

As foreign funding continues to decrease, Russian NGOs have begun to rely more on local support, with varying degrees of success. Corporate philanthropy continues to grow as businesses invest in community and social development by supporting NGOs. Community foundations and local government funds also continue to support the NGO sector by providing more grant opportunities.

Government institutions have also begun to engage NGOs on matters of government policy and social services, although only on a limited scale. The centralization of power and policy making has limited the capacity of local governments for effective dialogue. Local governments take advantage of NGOs to promote policy, but do not include them in policy discussions on issues important to the local communities. As a result, the public perception of the NGO sector is still centered on its role as the advocate of social interests.

In many regions, government grants for NGOs that are service providers are becoming more common. In the Krasnoyarsky *krai*, the government has allocated 17 million rubles (US \$550,000) for grants to organizations that provide social and development services in rural areas. Similar to the corporate funding, however, government support is not distributed evenly across the country. Though government funding has brought positive results in some areas, in others, support is only provided to those organizations that have been established by the government or by the local political elite.

² Data taken from Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS), February 2006





3. Polish and Russian NGO Legislation

3.1. Polish Legal Framework: The Public Benefit and Volunteer Work Act of 2003

Political change in Poland in 1989 resulted in dynamic growth in NGO activity. According to laws adopted in 1984 and 1989, NGOs in Poland were allowed to take two basic organizational forms: foundations and associations. Many other systemic and legislative changes were also very important to the development of this sector in Poland. For example, transformations in the areas of free market mechanisms, independent management, public procurement, local administration, public welfare, education and culture policy opened up numerous new areas of activity to NGOs.

The Public Benefit and Volunteer Work Act was the legislation adopted in 2003 and came into force from January 1, 2004. It is called by many NGO's activists and experts as a «revolutionary» bill. It is the main legal act, which regulates cooperation NGO and government.

This Act introduced the option for the NGOs to register as «public benefit organizations», allowing tax breaks and 1 percent personal income tax donations but also stricter rules on salaries and an obligatory annual audit. Public benefit organizations were also provided with the possibility of free-of-charge broadcasting time to inform on their activities via the public media, and conscripts dispatched for substitute military services were granted the right to work for public benefit organizations.

The Act used the term „public benefit work" to refer to any activity for the benefit of the general public, in the area of public tasks, performed by non-governmental organizations, as well as religious communities and local authority associations. It should be noted that the scope of public tasks includes: social aid, charity work, activities aimed at people with disabilities, awareness-raising and advocacy work in the field of protection of consumers' rights, protection of natural environment and wildlife, protection of historic heritage, developing national, civil and cultural identity, activities aiming at ethnic minorities and some other areas.

The law also specified the terms and conditions of benefits provided by volunteers, and the rules governing the application of such benefits.

Important provisions of the Act included also the definition of the „non-governmental organization". According to the Act, the term "NGO" applies not only to foundations and associations, traditionally representing the third sector, but also to all corporate and non-corporate entities not forming part of the public finances sector, not operating for profit, and formed against separate legal provisions. NGOs operating in the area of public tasks involve into the public benefit work.

3.2. Russian Legal Framework

Situation in Russia presents a contradiction. On the one hand Russian government institutions have introduced several pieces of legislation to promote the financial stability of the NGO sector. The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade developed a package of legislative measures to increase the economic impact that NGOs have on social and community development, and ensure competition and openness in the social services market. A long-pending law on foundations, first passed in 1995, is currently being revised to provide more effective mechanisms for NGOs to access state funds. The Duma is also drafting another law on endowments, which will be important for the financial sustainability of the NGO sector.

The new Law on Self-Governance will also provide more opportunities for NGOs to participate in policy making at the local level. The law creates participatory mechanisms such as referenda, municipal elections, public hearings, legislative initiatives, community forums, and





citizen surveys. The law requires public participation in drafting the charters for municipal entities, planning local development and budgets, decisions in land use issues, and other activities. In regions such as the Jewish Autonomous Republic, Amur *oblast*, Primorsky *krai*, and others, NGOs have already entered into partnerships with local governments to encourage citizen participation. Very few organizations, however, have the knowledge and skills needed to conduct public awareness-raising campaigns and inform the population about the opportunities created by the new law.

On the other hand, in late 2005, the state Duma introduced and passed amendments to the legislation concerning the federal registration of NGOs and public reporting requirements; President Putin quickly signed the law in January 2006. The drafters of the law asserted that their intent was to establish a unified control over non-commercial organizations in order to provide stability to civil society and promote equality among those serving the public benefit. Critics, including foreign NGOs and governments, and the Council of Europe, argued that the law would make the registration process longer as well as more complicated and arbitrary, which would allow the government to regulate the sector more intrusively, thereby undercutting the long-term development of a free and open civil society.

The law imposed tighter registration requirements for NGOs, strict monitoring of organizations, extensive reporting requirements, and limitations on the participation of foreign citizens in NGOs. The law also permitted more intrusive means for government officials to scrutinize public associations, without any procedural protections. In addition, it endowed the state registration agency with broad discretionary powers to deny registration or to shut down an organization based on vague and subjective criteria. As a result, the legal barriers that NGOs face are now greater than those affecting the business community.

The tax law continues to impede the Russian NGO sector's financial sustainability, as organizations attempt to develop economic activities and diversify their sources of income. The tax system does not provide incentives to promote corporate philanthropy and organizations pay high taxes on their earnings. The Russian NGO sector continues to lobby for a more supportive tax system.

4. Comparison of the Ways of Cooperation and Communication

4.1. Critique of the Recent Polish Legislation

Polish Public Benefit and Volunteer Work Act of law places on public administration facilities an obligation to implement public tasks in cooperation with non-governmental organizations. The provision of greatest importance states that the local government offices must draft annual programs in cooperation with NGOs and other entities which are engaged into public benefit activities. Moreover, public administration units should consult drafts of regulations, and inform each other on planned activities. Implementation of these provisions should increase the effectiveness of collaboration between NGOs and public administration units.

We may propose that annual programs of cooperation with NGOs should consist of three parts. The first part could be called the ideology of cooperation. It refers to main principles of cooperation. The second part describes different kind of cooperation – financial and other forms of government's cooperation with NGO. The third part of the programs enumerates priorities of cooperation.

But there are few problems with the programs. According to the Public Benefit and Volunteer Work Act, the local governments must have annual programs of cooperation with NGOs. However, according to the KLON/JAWOR association, only 50% of them really have





such programs. The Ministry of Work and Social Policy considers that about 70% of local governments have such programs

The majority of Polish NGOs do not take part in writing annual programs. Some of them consider that they are not interested in such activities, or even deny opportunities to do so. Other NGOs have special relations with government, which guarantee state support for their activities.

Many NGOs fail to take part in writing annual programs because they lack a strategic vision of the future or the skills for organizing effective cooperation with government.

The most important element of cooperation between public administration units and NGOs consists of commissioning public tasks to organizations through open bid competitions. The Act defines obligatory elements of the offer to be announced by the administrative office, competition procedure and obligatory elements of the agreement to be reached with a non-governmental organization. Public administration units were granted with the appropriate controlling powers towards institutions implementing commissioned public tasks.

Most Poles declare their willingness to cooperate with local authorities in making decisions that affect the communities in which they live. According to sociological research, the majority of Poles would like to influence the management of their local community (*gmina* or town). Residents' willingness to participate in local community decision-making is universally accompanied by a feeling that the average resident's influence over the management of local issues is substantially lacking. This pattern reflects the fact that residents now have a stronger feeling of being the subjects of governance, which suggests a growing conviction that they can influence what is happening in their country and community.

This slow, but steadily growing public activity has also been a factor in the development of new relations between local governments and communities. The freedom of activity that was granted to the local governments and local residents revealed the inapplicability of existing models of these relationships to the present reality. Some councilpersons quickly understood that the public's evaluation of their performance, and by consequence, the result of the next election would largely depend on the adoption of proper system of communication and of the appropriate methods of consultation with residents on important decisions.

There are several main means of communication with the citizens, and every local government obviously makes use of some of them. Almost all the local governments (*gminas*) use local and regional means simultaneously. They rarely use the regional television channels, although considerable differences may be noted here: large *gminas* use it much more often than small *gminas*. Regional radio is generally popular, but *gminas* usually haven't their own radio station. Local authorities sometimes send printed materials to their residents. Leaflets are distributed in over half of the *gminas*, and all of them, except larger cities, have their own information boards. Some *gminas* make use of the courtesy of parish priests and disseminate information to residents from church pulpits.

Collaboration with NGOs in many cases is only in its early phase. Today it continues to develop, including a multiplying number of organizations and receiving increasingly positive evaluations from them. Cooperation of local authorities and NGOs continues to encounter numerous setbacks, including: assessment of local community needs, absence of procedures for cooperation and funding, legislative problems, psychological and institutional issues and problems relating to knowledge and education.

The majority of Polish local governments are not yet able to identify, measure, or prioritize community needs. Usually, there are no forums for consultation with residents, which frequently leads to disputes between NGOs and *gminas* over local governments' support for NGO objectives, as well as over the forms of the support. The absence of procedures governing the funding of NGO and citizen initiatives was another serious constraint, as these matters tended to be settled unofficially and arbitrarily. No procedures were found for the objective evaluation of NGOs and





their activities by local communities and authorities. These problems are a direct consequence of another category of barriers: namely, the lack of appropriate regulations for the entire NGO sphere.

The lack of mutual trust between representatives of NGOs and local governments presented yet another obstacle. Councilpersons and local government officials opposed reduction of their spending authority and their role in fulfilling public activities. The legacy of the former regime's treatment of the public activity as a threat to the state was another factor contributing to the lack of trust, although it also could be attributed to the partners' mutual negative stereotypical images. NGO activists generally perceived the local government representatives as bureaucrats who followed the vague priorities of their institutions. Conversely, gmina representatives viewed NGOs as organizations of irresponsible activists who did not understand anything except abstract ideas.

4.2. Impact of the Russian Legislative Framework

Russian legislation provides many ways of cooperation and communication between the government and citizens. There are bills about local self-government, public hearings, access to information, people's right to make a bill's draft, people's inquiries and etc.

Some regions (Yaroslavl, Brynsk, Vladimir, Orel, Moscow regions) have special bills governing the interaction between the government and NGOs.

The national and regional legislation provides different ways of government's communication with citizens. They are:

- consulting bodies and institutions,
- information exchange, informational and methodological help,
- forums of NGO,
- NGO's participation in the legislative process,
- roundtables, conferences, hearings and other kind of discussions,
- financial support,
- civic expertise,
- competitions among NGOs for programs. projects and grants.

Many Russian regional and local governments (e.g., Moscow and Yaroslav) have adopted special program of supporting civil initiatives. These resemble Polish annual programs of cooperation with NGOs. They consist of targets and principles of communication and support, determine financial and non-financial ways of supporting civil initiatives and activities.

An organization's ability to advocate on behalf of its constituency depends on its overall capacity and networking skills, as well as the government's position on the issue at hand. Despite the limited space for public debate on federal policy, NGOs have had numerous achievements in the fields of advocacy and public information, producing significant results over the past year. For example, a national campaign resulted in the inclusion of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Union of Business Associations into several existing laws including the tax code and laws regulating business licensing. This decision gives small and medium enterprises a tax break, allowing them to use a simplified tax system, which is likely to decrease the number of businesses that require licensing.

In the Perm Oblast, the NGO community institutionalized the process by which all social policy and draft laws are reviewed by the public. The Siberian Civil Initiatives Support Center in Omsk and Irkutsk are regularly asked by local and regional government officials to provide expertise on education, health care, and community reform policies. In Samara and Khabarovsk,





service organizations have worked with regional governments to amend the methods for implementing sensitive reforms that would replace pensioners' social benefits with cash subsidies.

5. Consulting councils and chambers as unique ways of cooperation and communication between central administration and NGOs

Considering the fact that consulting councils and chambers can be of assistance to the third sector, the governments usually initiate the formal channels of communication through the creation of different councils. However, only a few of them have played a significant role in building civil society and strengthening the cooperation and communication between the citizens and the government.

5.1. Consultative Bodies in the Polish Legislation

The Polish Public Benefit and Volunteer Work Act introduces the formation of the Council on Public Benefit Activities as an advisory analytical body assisting the minister responsible for social policy issues. The Council shall have 20 members; correspondingly to certain tasks, it shall have the following membership: 5 representatives of local government authorities, 5 representatives of governmental administration bodies, and of units supervised by or reporting to such bodies and 10 people representing NGOs and NGO unions and associations. The Council shall have a three-year term of office.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (in charge of social security issues) launched an online voting procedure for the candidates to the Council. It is a good example of communication of government with NGO and citizens.

The Council shall issue opinions on matters concerning the Act and on governmental draft laws in the field of public benefit and volunteer work.

The Council's tasks shall include the following, in particular:

1. issuing opinions on matters concerning the application of the Act;
2. issuing opinions concerning governmental draft laws in the field of public benefit and volunteer work;
3. offering assistance and issuing opinions in case of any dispute between public administration authorities and public benefit organizations;
4. collecting and analyzing information on audits performed and their results;
5. participating in audit procedures;
6. issuing opinions on issues concerning public tasks, on the process of commissioning such tasks to be performed by non-governmental organizations or other entities, and on recommended public task performance standards;
7. establishing - in co-operation with non-governmental organizations and other entities - mechanisms to distribute information on public benefit work standards, and on disclosed cases of such standards being violated.

The Minister responsible for social policy is responsible for overseeing the funding activities of the Council, provide administrative and office services to the Council, convoke its sessions, define the organization and direction of the Council's activities.

5.2. Consultative Bodies in the Russian Legislation

An institution similar to the Council on Public Benefit Activities was established in Russia too. It is the Public Chamber.



In September 2005, the Putin administration set up the Federal Public Chamber to increase public participation in the federal government. But many politicians and NGO's activists considered its creation as a buffer or control mechanism to manage the relationship between NGOs and the government. Critics fear it will instead hinder policy discussions and be little more than a "rubber-stamp" for government decisions.

The bill, which created Public Chamber, regulates, *inter alia*, its structure and forms of activities.³ According to the law Public Chamber have to provide cooperation citizens with government on federal, regional and local levels. The targets of this cooperation are: take into consideration needs and interests of citizens, protection their rights and freedoms, to control government's activities. Public Chamber can create and support civil initiatives, make examinations of laws and draft of laws, make recommendations to government.

The Chamber began its work in early 2006. Public Chamber created 17 commissions (such as commissions for regional development and self-government, for charity and volunteering, for culture development and etc.)

The Public Chamber has its own staff, money from federal budget, and independently organizes its work. It consists of 126 members, none of whom works in the government. 42 members were appointed by the President of Russian Federation V. Putin, following consultations with biggest Russian NGOs and civic organizations. Next, those Public Chamber's members elected another 42 members, who represent Russian-wide NGOs.

Following meetings of regional and interregional NGOs, over 80 candidates were recommended to the Public Chamber. At the end of 2005, 84 members of Public Chamber elected the remaining part of Public Chamber – 42 members, who represent regional and interregional NGOs.

Public Chamber's composition by profession is as follows: scientists (22 members), analysts in policy and economy (16); artists and media personalities (15 members); lawyers (14); journalists and writers (12); priests (8); businesspeople (7); doctors (5); teachers (4) and others (22). Most of the Public Chamber members are celebrities: among them are the businessmen V. Potanin, artist A. Pugacheva, doctor L. Roshal, lawyer G. Resnik, director WWF-Russia I. Chestin, leaders of all world churches, represented in Russia.

Critics consider this electoral process, which in their view is controlled by the government administration, and whose members represent the interest of the government rather than that of the NGOs. This is demonstrated e.g. in the research conducted by the research company ROMIR Monitoring.⁴ It showed that 39% people considered that Public Chamber would have real power, but that it will not have an opportunity to influence on government. 33% of people considered that the Public Chamber would be only a bureaucratic structure, and it would not have an opportunity to influence on government. Only 22% people were convinced that the Public Chamber would really control government.

The above overview indicates that formally the Russian Public Chamber is more democratic. However, the Russian society is more critical towards its Public benefit Works Council. It must be kept in mind, though, that the Polish Public benefit Works Council has been in active for more than two years, while the Russian Public Chamber only began its work. In that period, it launched two big advocacy campaigns – to protect rights of soldiers in the Russian army and to protect the rights of people, who live in the South Butovo neighbourhood of Moscow and of the people who lived in other areas with old dilapidated buildings.

³ <http://www.oprf.ru/rus/documents/article-2.html>

⁴ <http://www.rmh.ru/>





Public Chambers have also been created on the regional and local levels. While only few regions established them on the basis of regional constitutions (like the Smolensk region), others established them by special laws (like Kursk, Lipetsk, Moscow regions). Many regions linked the Public Chamber to governors (Kostroma, Belgorod, Rysan, Brynsk), mayors (Moscow) or legislative bodies (like Tver region).

In 2006 the Council of NGOs of the Central federal district was also created. Its objective is to organize the cooperation and communication among NGOs in the district, and between the NGOs with institutions of this district.

However, consultative councils are a more frequent form of institutionalizing the cooperation in the regions. The majority of them deals with:

- development of business and decrease of unemployment,
- development of scientist and education,
- architecture and construction,
- veterans and youth, family,
- development of agriculture, tourism, ecology.

Many such types of council were created for helping and developing NGOs.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

6.1. Assessment of the Current Situation

Transformation in the NGO sector in Poland and in Russia has been gradual, as two types of barriers needed to be overcome. First, the habit of using simple protest and opposition methods is difficult to break. Change in the general political and social context allowed immediately for freedom of action, but cooperation with the government and opposition groups, who largely perceived NGOs in a negative light, developed slowly. Second, during the transition period characterized by weak democratic institutions, subtle forms of activity were ineffective; instead populist and somewhat primitive protest methods are more effective. Consequently, NGOs focused on the comparatively easier task of mobilizing people to protest against factors in their environment than to contribute to constructive tasks. However, a positive evolution is growing more visible in the slow but determined maturation of the NGO sector.

Research data show that the Polish third sector has been more active than the Russian one. About 38% Polish NGO work actively as opposed to only 22.5% of NGO active in Russia. But on average one active NGO in Russia correlates with 1500 citizens, and in Poland – with 1800. At the same time one registered NGO in Russia correlates with 333 citizens, and in Poland – with 692.

Though NGOs do not have wide access to policymakers at the national level, they continue to enjoy formal relations with local and regional governments. Local NGO advisory committees, public hearings, and increased investment in social policy expertise have become common across Russia and Poland. NGOs now face the challenge of adapting these mechanisms so that they are effective in the new political environment.

Legislation mostly has established such forms of communication as consulting councils. But it only determines council's targets and their members without any real forms and ways of their work. As to the legislation its content is as important as the opportunities for its implementation. For instance, there are many laws, the main target of which is to «help» NGO. But the laws mostly include only such vague words as «assistance», «consultations». It is difficult to find bills which really help and support civic initiatives.



Reforms of local government have greatly contributed to the establishment of genuine ways of communication and cooperation between the citizens and government. But this process is only beginning, especially in Russia.

6.2. Recommendations

We can make several recommendations which can make communication and cooperation between citizens, NGO and government more successful.

- * First of all, the Russian authorities should establish the practice of launching programs of cooperation with NGOs for the different levels of the government. Public chambers can initiate them on the federal, regional and local levels. The experience of Poland as well as of some Russian regions can be very useful in this case.

- * Government should more often invite NGO to take part in creation annual programs of cooperation, more often take into consideration their suggestions. This program should consist real ways of cooperation like discussions, lobbying of civic interest and so on.

- * National government should adopt frame annual program of this cooperation. It will make creation of such programs more easy to local government. From another hand national government can organize some educational meetings for local officials. During these meetings they'll have an opportunity to get information about successful cooperation of local governments with third sector. By this way they can understand why they should cooperate with NGO so closely.

- * National government should use sanction (for example, economy sanctions) for that local government which don't adopt annual program. This will stimulate them to create this program.

- * It will be very useful to establish the possibility to donate 1 percent personal income tax to NGOs and to create very simple procedures for making use of this system: this could be applied both in Russia and in Poland.

- * NGO should understand that their active work with government is essential for creating good programs of communication and eventually the support of their activity on the part of the government. In turn, the Russian government should create a system of involving the NGOs in this process. For example, this could be presented as an opportunity for the NGOs to realize some of the most interesting parts of this program on their own with government's help.

- * Russian Government has to develop the practice of real supporting civil initiatives (for example by public tasks). It is in many cases more effective than consulting bodies. In turn, the Russian experience of creating Council of NGO in the Central federal district could be very useful for the Polish voivods.

- * However, the main objective is not to create these consulting bodies but rather for the governments of both countries to include them in the decision-making process. The governments should appoint to the bodies the most respected representatives of the third sector so that the consulting bodies become a mechanism of genuine cooperation and communication between the government and NGOs.

- * Polish NGOs have had very successful experience of inviting volunteers to the third sector. Volunteers' work can make NGOs more independent from government support, which makes this model a very useful one for Russia.

- * Polish and Russian NGOs should address the problem of their low recognition in the society. In many cases even if people work with NGO they do not identify them as NGOs and as a result fail to understand the great role that they play in society. Instead, people identify NGOs with leisure activities or political issues and structures, which help to get the power. NGOs should



work to demonstrate the great role that they play in helping people to solve their problems and satisfy their needs.