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**ELECTRONIC PETITIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS:  
PROSPECTS OF LEGAL REGULATION****YANA SAPEGO, PAVEL SOLOVIEV**  
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*The article considers the petition as citizens' proposal coming to state bodies or to an official dealing with some issue, problem. The necessity of legal regulation of this phenomenon is justified, including electronic petitions.*

The legal institute of petitions from citizens and legal entities is one of the fundamental institutions in the constitutional law of the Republic of Belarus. Petitions can be of various forms: a complaint, a proposal, a statement. A petition is a kind of citizens' proposal coming to state bodies or to an official dealing with some issue, a problem.

The concept "petition" is not formalized in our legislation. By means of including a special chapter in the Law of the Republic of Belarus "On Citizens' Appeals" or by issuing a special Law "On Petitions in the Republic of Belarus", a petition would be recognized legislatively as a special form of citizens' appeal, and a system of its regulation would be created, indicating all the nuances in its filing. Along with the formalization of the institution of petitions, it is also necessary to legitimize the concept of "electronic petitions", which have become more and more common all over the world lately. This is due to the fact that science and technology do not stand still. Many countries introduced electronic innovations to the exercise of state power. This is not common for the Republic of Belarus, and this shows that our country is lagging behind the worldwide trends. It is necessary to change the situation by creating favourable conditions for its development. We live in the 21st century, where technology and gadgets make up one of the most important components of our life [1].

Besides issuing the law on petitions, we can consider the idea of creating a special state electronic resource where citizens will leave their proposals - petitions. Such sites are functioning on the Internet nowadays, however, they are not official. Consequently, the government does not pay any attention to the petitions posted there. Citizens could leave their petitions on a specially created website, knowing that they will be received by officials and state bodies, which means these proposals will be compulsorily considered, after which citizens will receive notifications about the consideration results. Besides supporting the petition, citizens will also be able to object to any idea. This can be done with the help of the well-known system of "likes" and "dislikes". A lot of negative reaction will make it clear that citizens do not need this innovation.

It seems at least 50 thousand signatures of citizens of the Republic of Belarus must be collected for priority consideration. This means this issue is really of great importance in the life of the society.

Speaking about the institution of petitions, it should be borne in mind that citizens have little involvement in the life of the country, they do show much initiative in resolving any issues or creating any innovations. This phenomenon in the country shows a low level of interaction between citizens and the government, and this indicates that people are predominantly keep aloof from politics. The Constitution of the Republic of Belarus says that "the Republic of Belarus is a unitary democratic social legal state" [2]. However, democracy is poorly manifested in our country. Not all citizens even take part in elections. It is necessary to change the situation in our state and try to involve citizens in active cooperation with the government.

In European countries, the population has adapted to use the Internet as a means of communicating with their government. In the EU countries, there is a legal institution called the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights. The European Civil Initiative is singled out from this institution.

The European civil initiative is one of the programs of the Lisbon Treaty, whose goal is the development of direct democracy in the countries of the European Union [3]. The essence of the European civil initiative is that EU citizens, in the amount of a million, have the right to apply to the European Commission to make proposals that apply to all countries of the European Union. This innovation was established on April 1, 2012.

To apply to the Commission, it is necessary to go through several stages, the key ones are:

1. To register the proposal on a special website on the Internet
2. To collect at least 1 million signatures of the population within one year as a sign of approval
3. Then the Commission considers this project together with the European Parliament
4. The answer, approval or rejection must be published on the website

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The European Commission accepted nine projects in this way.

The introduction of such innovations significantly influenced the society, as well as changed people's attitude towards the governmental authorities. People are ready to interact with their state. It is just necessary to create all the right conditions for this implementation. State power in democratic states should be based on the will of the population.

The use of electronic resources in the implementation of policies can significantly facilitate the activity of the government, state bodies and officials, as well as to take the political activity of citizens to a new level.

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