

## Report//Local authorities in Moldova don't respect transparency rules

Local authorities are overdue in developing rules for participation in the decision-making process, informing citizens on matters of public interest and publication of asset declarations of elected representatives. It concludes the report "**Open Local Government for active and informed citizens**", presented on October 11, by the Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDIS) "Viitorul".

"We have conducted this research because we regard as important that local authorities to enlist the citizens' trust in what they are doing. There is no ideal locality. There is no ideal model, as each locality has its achievements and drawbacks. This report is aimed at promoting positive experience to become attractive for development partners. Local governments should be transparent, use instruments that would ensure people's trust. Without all this, the progress at the national level is impossible", said IDIS "Viitorul" Director, Igor Munteanu.

In turn, H.E. Ambassador of Slovakia to Moldova, Robert Kirnag considers *"Democracy cannot be imposed from the above, on contrary – only from the local level. There will be no democracy without open local government and without active and convincing citizens. During trips to Slovakia, we invite Moldavian mayors to visit small towns. We want to demonstrate that due to such policies of openness and transparency in decision making, life in these localities may be better than in the capital"*.

Attending the event, INEKO Director, Peter Golias talked about measures to reduce corruption through public control: *"The public needs information and the transparency is the basic condition for a successful public control. The objectives of our project are to identify corruption at the local level, to inform the public about the competitiveness of regions in Moldova and to have as many local authorities who implement anti-corruption measures"*. In the same context, Gabriel Sipos, Director of Transparency International Slovakia has presented best Slovak anti-corruption practices implemented at the local level.

Applying the Slovak experience, 50 largest municipalities in Moldova (38 towns and 12 villages) were evaluated and ranked in the following nine criteria of transparency: access to information, participation in decision-making, budgeting, public procurement, management of public property, professional ethics and conflict of interests, human resources, social services, investments, municipal companies and participation in companies. The maximum of the accrued points was 100. On this scale, Cimislia got 54 points, Chisinau – 53, Cahul – 49,8.

*"Efficient administration means transparency. This rating of localities has to create motivation for local authorities so that they to overcome problems in relations with citizens and to act openly, providing the access to information of public interest"*, said the author of the report, Viorel Pirvan.

According to the monitoring report, **best examples of respecting the access to information are Cimislia, Cahul and Drochia**, each of them accumulating 14.5 points of 16 possible on this criteria. At the same time, public authorities from **39 localities have not elaborated, approved and made public the internal information, consulting and participating in the process of elaboration and decision adoption in 2015**. Only the Balti municipality has published on the web the 2015 Report on transparency in form of statistic figures. As for public procurement, no village has any website archive of procurement outcomes of (at least) the last two years. However, **only the Calarasi Town Hall is publishing contracts of public procurement**, signed last year.

Only Chisinau published the number and names of candidates, who participated in contests of selection for vacant positions in 2014-2015.

A positive aspect is budgeting, where the 25 analyzed authorities published on the web the current budget of the administrative-territorial unit for the year 2016, **the best examples of transparency in budget preparation and execution are local governments of Cimislia, Falesti and Cahul.**

The author of analysis also notes the low interest of the local government to respect professional ethics and prevention of conflict of interest. **Statements of income and property of the mayor, deputy mayors and public officials have been published only by the Cimislia Town Hall.**

The report "Local Open Government for active and informed citizens" shows that a single local government namely the **Chisinau Town Hall informed on the web page the number and names of the candidates who participated in the selection contests for vacancies in the period 2014 – 2015** and none of the local governments have not made public on the website the processes - minutes of committee for selection of candidates for the vacancy. Among areas of activity of local authorities is the development and management of community social services. In this respect, **only local authorities from Cimislia, Basarabasca and Pelinia placed on the web the information about social institutions**, these municipalities being the best examples of transparency and accessibility on the social services existing in the administrative-territorial unit.

Other chapters analyzed are "public assets management" and "investment", where data show a much less encouraging trend. Thus, only eight municipalities public on the website the information on projects managed by the local administration. Also, 15 local authorities do not comply with transparency in the public proprieties management. **The best examples of transparency in public proprieties management are local authorities from Soroca, Falesti and Chisinau.**

Taking into consideration the current realities, **Viorel Pirvan recommends the following actions:** creation by local authorities of a website in new or the reconstruction of existing page; consulting projects of decisions with citizens and publishing the synthesis of recommendations; creating advisory councils and working groups involved in the decision-making process; development of a Regulation on public access to an public meeting; ensuring transparency at all stages of procurement, including publishing public procurement contracts; drawing up Codes of ethics for local officials and employees of local authorities.

Also at the event the transparency portal of local government in Moldova: <http://transparency.moldova.ineko.sk/> was launched. The website, available in three languages, shows the level of transparency of local government, the ranking of the most open authorities and an interactive map. The portal offers the possibility to compare more municipalities and even create an own ranking. The methodology took inspiration from a similar project run by the Transparency International Slovakia.

*The event was held within the project "Transparent, financially sound and competitive municipalities in Moldova" which is implemented by the Institute for Economic and Social Reforms (INEKO) in partnership with IDIS "Viitorul", with the support of the SlovakAid and the US Embassy to Moldova. The project aims to increase the financial accountability of local governments in 50 municipalities throughout Moldova.*

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