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"OPEN-GOVERNMENT: PRINCIPLES,
METHODS AND ICT OPEN SOURCE TOOLS"

26-28 JUNE
SKOPJE

CONCLUSIONS

AND

RECOMMENDATIONS

Општина Центар

ALDA
European Association
for Local Democracy

ABOUT THE EVENT

The international seminar titled "Open government: principles, methods, and ICT open source tools" was the first international event organized in the framework of the project RECOV - Rethinking Collaborative Values for public services. The objective of the event was to present good practices on the use of ICT tools for open government with a focus on new technologies.

The international seminar was held between 26 and 28 June 2018 in Skopje, the Republic of Macedonia. The event gathered around 60 international participants from 9 different European countries.

The participants learned about the meaning of open government and digital tools to foster citizen participation through different activities. The event included open conference, workshops and debates for raising awareness on the importance of new technologies in the work of the public institutions. In addition, the event included a study visit to the Department of cooperation with the NGOs in the City of Skopje.

The European Association for Local Democracy - ALDA organized the event together with the Municipality of Centar, the lead partner of the project.

The project was developed and it's implemented by 10 partners across Europe. It aims at creating a network of towns eager to work together on exchanging common problems, joint brainstorming and introducing concrete measures in regard to project specific objectives. The project is financed through the programme Europe for Citizens.

OPEN CONFERENCE

The international event titled "Open government: principles, methods, and ICT open source tools" officially started on 27 June 2018 in Skopje with an open conference.

Mr. Sasa Bogdanovic, Mayor of Municipality of Centar in Skopje

Municipality of Centar is the lead partner in the project RECOV - Rethinking Collaborative Values for public services. Mr. Sasa Bogdanovic, Mayor of Municipality of Centar opened the conference, pointing to the importance of involving citizens in creating policies and the need for cooperation between local authorities and civil society organizations.

"OPEN-GOVERNMENT: PRINCIPLES, METHODS AND ICT OPEN SOURCE TOOLS"

"The municipalities need to be a bridge between the citizens and the civil organizations in order to build greater capacities."

- Sasa Bogdanovik,
Mayor of Municipality of Centar

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He added that it is from great importance for the municipality to increase the participation of every citizen, especially young people in the decision making processes.

Mr. Dejan Pavleski, Deputy Minister of Self-Government

Mr. Dejan Pavleski talked about the pillars of good governance, which is the base for building a democratic country. He stated that citizens need to be familiar with the governing processes.

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"Trough the principles of good governance
to a better democratic society."

- Dejan Pavleski,
Deputy Minister of
Local Self-Government

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When it comes to the local authorities, laws aren't enough - strong political will is needed. Specifically, public administration needs to be better organized with qualified employees and the judicial system needs to be reformed.

Finally, the inclusion of every citizens and the civil organizations in the decision making would lead to a better society.

Mr. Pavle Bogoevski, Member of Parliament

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"The lack of communication is a problem that leads to raising barriers between the government and it's citizens"

- Pavle Bogoevski,
Member of Parliament

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Mr. Pavle Bogoevski talked about the bad sides of closed governments. Lack of transparency and communication leads to failure to address the citizen's needs.

This lack of communication only created barriers between the government and the citizens, he stated.

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THEMATIC PANEL I

"Open methods of governance – creation of a relationship and communication between citizens and the Governments"

The panelists in the first thematic panel were: Mrs. Gordana Gapik Dimitrovska, Ministry of Information, Society and Administration; Mr. Davide Corriga, Mayor of Bauladu; Stefania Carletti, Municipalities Union of Montiferru and Alto Campidano, Italy; Mrs. Rita Merca International relations coordinator Municipality of Rauna, Latvia; Mr. Miodrag Petkovic, Member of the City Council, City of Uzice, Serbia.

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"Citizen's participation in the decision-making process is one of the main elements of good and effective governance in the municipality."

- Rita Merca,
Municipality of Rauna, Latvia

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THEMATIC PANEL II

"ICTs creating a more networked society, enabling greater collaboration between government and civil society and citizens"

The panelists in the second thematic panel were: Mrs. Snezana Kamilovska Trpovska, Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation; Mr. Bardhyl Jashari, Director of Metamorphosis Foundation; Mr. Darko Aleksov, Director of Association MOST; Mr. Emir Coric, Municipality of Centar; Mrs. Aleksandra Ivanovska, European Policy Institute, WEBER Platform; Mrs. Tjaša Pleško, Project Manager, Intermunicipal Development Centre of the municipalities Grosuplje, Ivančna Gorica and Trebnje, Slovenia.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Open government is defined as a "governing doctrine which holds that citizens have the right to access the documents and proceedings of the government to allow for effective public oversight." Open governance is fostered through transparency, civic engagement, access to information and service delivery enabled by the governing bodies.

Mr. Sasa Bogdanovic, Mayor of Municipality of Centar agreed that it's important to involve citizens in the creation of policies. In addition, he pointed to the need for greater collaboration with the civil society organization and finding a way to support them in order to build greater capacities.

Similarly, Mr. Dejan Pavleski, Deputy Minister of Self-Government addressed the importance of including people and civil society organizations in the decision making processes for a better society. It's very important that people are familiar with the governing processes and to know their fundamental rights, he added.

Acting in the shadows should be avoided, Mr. Pavle Bogoevski, Member of Parliament, pointed out during the open conference. The lack of communication between the citizens and the government can create barriers and the government can't take into consideration the needs of the citizens when creating policies.

Open governance can reduce government corruption and enables societal progress. Governments can ensure greater citizen participation through several means, such as: digital tools, partnerships, open dialogue, involving everyone, providing access to documents and information to everyone.

Talking about OGP - Open Government Partnership as a toll for creating more transparent society, Ms. Gordana Gapik Dimitrovska addressed the need for access to information, better administration and data that's available to the public.

Several experiences were shared during the conference. Mr. Davide Koriga and Ms. Stefanija Karleti talked about the situation in Italy on a local level and shared positive examples of effective cooperation with citizens in their municipality.

Ms. Rita Merca, representative of Municipality of Rauna in Latvia introduced the concepts of direct and indirect participation and talked about some open methods of governing. There is a need to promote citizen's participation in the government's activities and to promote openness and accountability, Ms. Merca concluded.

Mr. Miodrag Petrovic from City of Uzice in Serbia presented the method of promoting citizen's participation through including them in the creation of the local

budget. In addition, he presented the system of informing the citizens in this municipality on a monthly basis.

Sharing the experiences of Municipality of Centar, Mr. Emir Coric talked about positive examples of open governing in the municipality:

- Open meetings with citizens;
- Easy online access to all documents for the municipality of services;
- Community center for the municipality as a bridge between the citizens and the municipality;
- Guide for the services and procedures of the municipality;
- Public debates;
- Local referendums;
- Civic and budget forums;
- Youth office;
- Online platform - Ideas for Centar.

This variety of tools can be used to achieve the same goal - including citizens in the decision-making process.

Other tools were introduced during the conference panels. Ms. Snezana Kamilovska Trpovska from Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation introduced the website www.ogledalonavladata.mk, the focus of which is to establish a detailed and objective system of monitoring of participation of civil society.

Mr. Bardhyl Jashari, director of Metamorphosis Foundation also talked about the positive effect of digital technology and the way it can be used to foster citizen participation. Ms. Tjasa Plesko, from Intermunicipal Development Centre of the municipalities Grosuplje, Ivancna Gorica and Trebnje, also discussed ICT tools for open government and their advantages.

Mr. Darko Aleksov, director of association MOST, introduced useful website that promote open governance in the Republic of Macedonia, including www.izbornapravda.mk, www.otvorenosobranie.mk, www.pravo.org.mk.
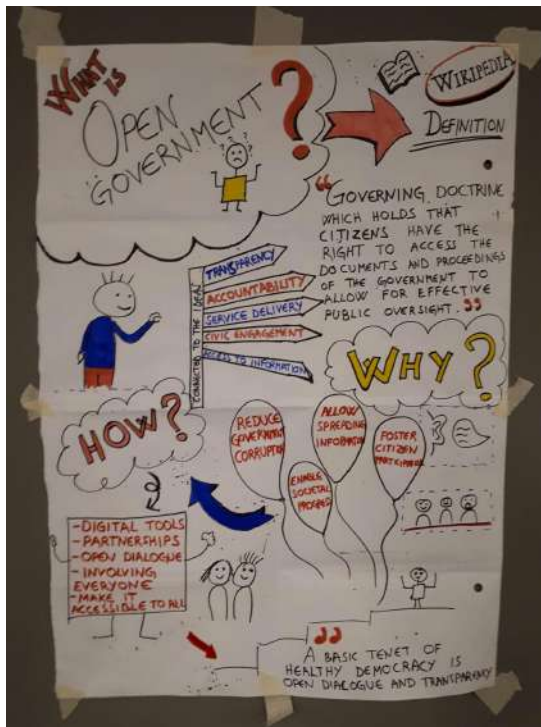
Ms. Aleksandra Ivanovska, representative of European Policy Institute, presented the WEBER platform, which has the aim to reform the public administration and help to strengthen the communication and cooperation with CSOs and provide clarity of available information.

WORKSHOPS AND STUDY VISITS

After the open conference, the participants attended a workshop to exchange ideas, tools and experiences on the topic of Open government. European Association for Local Democracy - ALDA facilitated the workshop.

During the workshop, the participants learned about the different interpretations of the term "open government", as well as the ideas connected to it. Then, they worked in groups and presented the idea of open governance using creative methods of presentations.

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On the last day of the event, the participants visited the Department for cooperation with civil society of the City of Skopje. The office executive introduced the work of the department and shared good practices from the past.

The participants had the opportunity to share their experiences with the staff and to discuss with them about the cooperation between the NGOs and local authorities.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

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