

Report on the monitoring of local administration – The city of Užice



Summary

The city of Užice won 144, out of a possible 262 points, and 3 as a final rating.

The City Administration of the City of Užice achieved the best results in the areas of "Accountability" and "Public financial management". In the area of "Accountability", the proactivity of the local government in publishing information on the official website was rated 5. In the area of "Public financial management", the City Administration of the City of Užice stood out in the field of transparency and accessibility of the budgetary documents, as well as in the field of Public procurement operations which comply with basic principles of equal treatment, non-discrimination, proportionality and transparency.

Weaker results were achieved in the area of "Public services and human resource management" and "Strategic framework for public administration reform". The worst results were achieved in the areas of "Service delivery" and "Policy development and coordination". The availability and quality of providing administrative services to citizens won 8 out of a possible 28 points and was rated 1.

In the area of „Policy development and coordination“ the weakest results were achieved in the area of transparency of council`s work and the preparation of drafts and proposals for decisions in local administration, and this indicator was rated 0. Weak results were also achieved in the area of inclusiveness and openness of policymaking in local administration and this indicator was rated 2.

The researcher would like to emphasize that during the conduct of the research the cooperation with the City administration of the City of Užice was extremely good. City administration officials were extremely cooperative and responsive. All information, data and documentation were provided to the researcher by City Administration officials in a timely manner.

Conclusions

The general impression is that the website of the City of Užice is structured in a very good way. On the one hand, the website contains a large number of documents, data and information. Data and information are usually easily accessible, in three clicks. The page content search function works great. On the website, there are special sections for the areas of the city budget, the problem reporting system and air quality. The content of the website is accurate, timely and up-to-date.



Strategic framework for public administration reform

Improving the work of the city administration is recognized at the level of a general priority in the current *Development Strategy 2012–2020*. Validity of this document was extended by the decision of the City Assembly, until the adoption of the Sustainable Development Plan. The researcher had no insight into the Sustainable Development Plan of the city of Užice, which is in the development phase. Consultations with civil society and interested parties were carried out during the preparation of this planning document. Local mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of the planning document have been formed, but they do not foresee the participation of civil society organizations. The inclusion of CSOs in local mechanisms was carried out in the form of an open competitive procedure. Local mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of the planning document have been formed and foresee the participation of civil society organizations. The inclusion of CSOs in local mechanisms was carried out in the form of an open competitive procedure.



Policy development and coordination

There is a section on the website where announcements are published, that is, information about City Council meetings. This information is easily available – in three clicks. Minutes from city council meetings are not published on the website. Drafts and proposals for decisions from council sessions are also not published on the LGU website. Resolutions, decisions and other acts adopted by the City Council are published on the website. There is no practice of informing the general public through summaries.

The city administration of the city of Užice has a special section on its website called "Together for good decisions" within the "E-usluge" section, which publishes information on public hearings, invitations, draft decisions and reports from held public hearings. Invitations and reports on public hearings are also published in the "Announcements" section, in the form of notices.

Consultations in the early stages were carried out during the process of developing the Sustainable Development Plan 2021–2028. The Report on the public discussion for the process of development of the Sustainable Development Plan was published on the internet presentation. There is no available information on the consultations carried out in the early stages during the process of drafting the budget, preparation of the planning documents and the general urban plan.



Public services and human resource management

Within the organizational scheme of the city administration, there is a Department for general administration and the affairs of labor authorities, which includes the Department for Human Resources Management. Personnel records are kept and contain all the elements provided by the Law and are prepared based on it, but reports on the number and structure of employees are not published.

Information about public competitions for filling executive positions is publicly available on the Internet presentation of the City of Užice. The ads are written in bureaucratic language. Advertisements contain requirements that represent special burdens for external candidates. Candidates were offered the choice of whether they would themselves obtain the data for which official records are kept, or whether the local government body would do it on their behalf. The competitions were conducted in accordance with the legal procedure.

Information about public competitions for filling the positions of civil servants is not available to the public. During the research, it was not possible to determine whether the competition committee equally treats all participants in the procedure, as well as whether the minutes kept by the competition committee contain all the data on the results achieved by the candidates in the election process.

The code of conduct for officers and officials has been adopted and is publicly available. Within the City Administration of the City of Užice the Complaints Commission was formed on February 21st 2017. The anti-corruption plan has been adopted and is publicly available. A local anti-corruption forum was formed. There is no annual report on the monitoring of LAF.



Accountability

The organizational chart and information on the prescribed competences of all organizational units within the municipal administration are available on the official website, the information is easily accessible, but not tailored to citizens. Information on the work of the city administration for 2021, City Statute, Rulebook on the organization and systematization of work positions, Annual public procurement plans, valid planning documents, as well as information related to the budget (Decision on the budget, Citizen's guide, Report on public discussion) have been published on the website. The contact information of the organizational units can be found on the official website, they are complete, up-to-date and easily accessible. The information is partially adapted to citizens. Apart from the Statute of the City of Užice, all documents are easily accessible and follow the structure prescribed by the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance.



Service delivery

There is no publicly available, adopted document that deals with increasing the quality of public services provided to citizens by local government. A Single administrative point was established and started operating on September 4th 2020. There is no information on the level of satisfaction with the work of the Single administrative point. On the *eUprava* portal, the services of registering a child in kindergarten and Information about the location are not available. Only the service of submitting a request for the issuance of a Birth Certificate is available. Persons with disabilities have access to facilities where administrative services are provided. The JLS website does not contain all the necessary and easily accessible information about services and the way the services could be provided to citizens.



Public financial management

The instructions for the preparation of the budget for 2022 and 2021 were submitted within the legal deadline. For 2022 and 2021, the local administrative body responsible for finances submitted the Draft Decision on the budget to the competent executive body of the local government within the legal deadline. The competent executive body of the local government submitted a proposal for a decision on the budget for 2022 and 2021 within the legal deadline. The city assembly made a decision on the budget within the defined period. The decision was submitted to the Ministry of Finance within the legal deadline.

The Decision on the Budget for 2022 did not define a gender-responsive goal. According to the decision on the budget, expenses and expenditures are shown by program classification according to all 17 programs. The average degree of deviation between planned and real income is 24.79%. The average degree of deviation between planned and real expenses is 30.98%. Budget decisions for 2022 and 2021 are available in three clicks from the home page. The following reports are available on the website of the local government of Užice: Decision on the final account for 2020 and 2021, six-month and nine-month reports for 2020 and 2021. All three types of budget execution reports contain data on expenditures according to the following classifications: economic, functional and programming. Reports on the use of funds from the budget reserve are not available as a separate document, but are included in the Decision in the final budget account under point 8. Report on the use of funds from the current and permanent budget reserve. The reports contain data on the use of budget reserves, but they are not easily accessible. Citizen guides through the Budget Decision are regularly published on the LGU website and are easily accessible. Reports on the execution of the budget for 2020, which are tailored to citizens, were prepared on a monthly basis from January 2017 to December 2020, but this practice was not continued in 2021. These reports can be reached in three clicks from the home page. Budget data is available on the Budget Plan of Cities and Municipalities portal, as well as on the Open Data Portal.

The city administration has adopted an internal act that more closely regulates the public procurement procedure in accordance with the Law on Public Procurement. An organizational unit was established in the City Administration whose scope of work is the implementation of public procurement. There are personnel capacities for the implementation of public procurement in accordance with the regulations. The city administration uses the public procurement portal to implement all public procurement procedures. The average number of bidders in public procurement procedures is 2.41. The share of public procurement procedures that were awarded to the only bidder who participated in the procedure is 41.41%. The share of public procurement procedures in which the Republic Commission for the Protection of Rights in Public Procurement Procedures issued a decision prohibiting the procedure, conclusion or execution of public procurement contracts is greater than 15%. Public procurement procedures are carried out by a competent commission in accordance with the Law on Public Procurement. Information on the initiation and outcome of the public procurement procedure is available on the JLS website.



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