

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



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Summary

After the conducted research, the biggest impression is a closed and negative attitude of the City Administration of the city of Valjevo towards the research we are conducting. From December 2021 until June 2022, researchers sent a large number of requests to the City Administration for free access to information of public importance. The city administration responded to only one of the requests, several months late, and even that request was not fully answered. We are of the opinion that the overall rating would have been higher, as well as the individual ratings by area, if the City Administration had provided the information requested from it. In addition, we would get a more complete picture, which would result in a greater number of recommendations for improving the work of the City Administration. However, the information that the City Administration did not provide for us is also useful information, as well as a message addressed to the citizens. Because if the City of Valjevo does not fulfill its basic obligation prescribed by the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance, an obligation whose non-compliance leads even to financial sanctions, it is difficult to expect that it will act proactively, enable a greater degree of citizen participation in decision-making, and that the administration's work will be more transparent.

The area of *Public services and human resource management* stands out as the worst-rated, while, on the other hand, the best-rated area is *Accountability*, which analyzes the proactivity of the local administration in publishing information on the official website of the City, although the City Administration could significantly improve the situation in this area as well.

Conclusions

The findings of the research showed that the City of Valjevo won a total of 91 points (out of a possible 262), that is, that **the analyzed indicators in all 6 areas of public administration were met by 34.73%. Also, the overall assessment of the situation in all six analyzed areas of public administration is 2, on a six-point scale 0–5.**



Strategic framework for public administration reform

Within the first area – **Strategic framework for public administration reform**, it was established that the City administration of the City of Valjevo ensured the participation of the civil sector and interested parties in the consultation process that followed the development of the *Local Anti-Corruption Plan of the City of Valjevo*. It is a document that, among other things, foresees the improvement of the work of the city administration. However, we found that the local mechanisms for implementing and monitoring the LAP do not function, nor the annual reports on its implementation are being published.



Policy development and coordination

In the second area – **Policy development and coordination**, the findings show that the work of the City Council is not public, that the public does not know when the sessions are held, what is on the agenda, minutes from the sessions are unavailable. In addition, the City administration of the City of Valjevo does not show sufficient inclusivity and openness in the creation of public policy documents.



Public services and human resource management

In the third area – **Public services and human resource management** – since the City administration of the City of Valjevo did not provide the requested information, it is difficult to elaborate on the current situation. It is positive that the *Local Anti-corruption Plan*, the *Code of Conduct for Officers and Officials*, and that the *Complaints Commission* was formed. However, it remains an open question to what extent in practice the officers are protected from unwanted political interference, whether the recruitment process is transparent and how much has been done to prevent corruption, given that even more than two years after the adoption of the *Local Anti-Corruption Plan* in Valjevo, the body that will monitor the implementation of this document was not formed.



Accountability

Within the fourth area – **Accountability**, we note that the City administration has published a large number of requested information about its work (*Statute, Rulebook on the organization and systematization of work positions, contact information of organizational units, Annual Public Procurement Plan, documents related to the preparation and implementation of the budget*). What spoils the impression to some extent is that valid planning documents are not easily available on the website, and that incomplete and non-updated information is found in the *Information sheet*.



Service delivery

Within the fifth area – **Service delivery**, what is positive is that people with disabilities have access to the City Administration building. Also, the website contains all the necessary and easily accessible information about services and the way these services are provided to citizens. However, we believe that the services provided by the City Administration must be more accessible on the *eUprava* portal. In addition, we believe that it is necessary to establish a Single administrative point. There is an information that certain steps have been taken in this direction and that certain funds have been received for this purpose from the Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government – what is encouraging.



Public financial management

Within the sixth area – **Public Financial Management**, we conclude that the budget calendar is not respected. On the other hand, it is positive that budget documents are, to the greatest extent, available to citizens, that the budget contains more gender-responsive goals, expenses and expenditures are shown according to program classification, i.e. the budget is programmatic in nature. The deviation between the initially planned and realized budget revenues and expenses amounts to slightly over 15% and 16%, which can be considered an acceptable deviation. However, in the field of implementation of public procurement, the City Administration completely failed because it did not provide the researchers with the requested data, which is why it is not possible to create a more complete picture of the situation in this area.



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