



Press release

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TOP of the most TRANSPARENT rayons in Moldova: Straseni and Falesti, on the top in the ranking

The Straseni, Falesti and Soroca rayon councils are the most transparent local public authorities of the second level in the Republic of Moldova. This is the conclusion of experts from the Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDIS) "Viitorul". The ranking of the most open regions was presented today, October 19, at a public conference.

“The more transparency there is within local authorities, the shorter is the road between the citizen and the decision-making mechanism, the more confidence and social capital becomes important for the country and the society. Therefore, local authorities need to invest in people and standards of good governance and transparency”, stated IDIS Director, Igor Munteanu.

In turn, Peter Tomášek, Development Cooperation Diplomat at Embassy of the Slovakia in Chisinau mentioned: *“The project supported by SlovakAid has succeeded in sharing the Slovak experience in developing the capacities of self-government unites in better serve the public interest. Therefore, in 2017 and 2018 we will focus on the transparency of state-owned enterprises and the evaluation of their economic performance”*.

„More transparency means a higher standard of living. Transparency protects the general public against the abuse of power of the narrow ruling elite. We came to Moldova to increase transparency and the fight against corruption at the local level”, underlined the INEKO director, Peter Golias.

Rayon Councils 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 and **the most transparent rayons in this respect are Straseni (59 points), Falesti (49.5 points) and Soroca (48.5 points)**.

“Implementation of the transparency actions within the Straseni Rayon Council started in 2009. All this time, we managed to designate a person in charge of the decision-making process, to create and modernize an official web page and to publish the announcements of the council meetings in press. Last year, we developed the Strategy for the development of the Straseni district for the years 2016 - 2020, which also has a chapter dedicated to the improvement of the transparency”, says the Straseni rayon president, Mihail Popa.

According to the ranking, more than half of the rayon councils (19) have on their page headings dedicated to decisional transparency. However, four out of 19 authorities did not fill in these headings and did not include all the information required by law. The administration is not always open to the citizens: **only nine rayon administrations announce the citizens about the public sessions**. Also, in 2016, 10 rayon public authorities did not make the draft decisions known to the public. **The best examples of access to information are the public**

authorities in Straseni, Stefan Vodă and Singerei, who have accumulated 15 points out of the 16 maximum possible.

In terms of participation in the decision-making process, things are the same. The analysis shows that out of 32 rayons, only the Straseni Rayon Council held public consultations on all draft decisions, announcing this on the web page. Unfortunately, however, **most regional public authorities (28) did not elaborate and publish internal rules for information**, consultation and participation in the decision-making process. In the same context, **only eight rayon councils placed on the web the Transparency Report for 2016: Cahul, Cimislia, Edinet, Falesti, Rascani, Stefan Voda, Straseni and Telenesti.**

"For us, transparency means making professional work more efficient and increasing public confidence in the administrative act, and this is only possible by strengthening the social partnership. The accessibility of the decision-making process is ensured by the participation of civil society in the adoption of normative acts of common interest", says Falesti president, Iraida Binzari.

With regard to public procurement, **most authorities publish public procurement announcements, but not the procurement plans.** Public procurement plans are only available on the web pages of Falesti Rayon council, the Ungheni Rayon council and the Orhei Rayon council. At the same time, although it is important for authorities to publish public procurement contracts on their websites and civil society to monitor them, this is not done. **Only on the web pages of the districts of Orhei and Rezina we find monitoring reports on public procurement.**

In terms of budgetary transparency, on the one hand, **23 local authorities have published the budget for 2017** on the web and 20 district councils have placed the budget execution reports for the year 2016 on the web. On the other hand, only the councils from Straseni rayons, Stefan Voda and Causeni used the web page to submit to public consultations and to inform citizens about the draft budget for the current year.

"Decisions prepared and adopted in a transparent and participatory manner enjoy the support of society and have a stronger chance of serving the public interest. Only by increasing transparency will the public money be used efficiently and the level of corruption will be diminished", believes the lawyer from IDIS "Viitorul" Viorel Pirvan.

The study also highlights the fact that although 17 local authorities have made public on the website of the rayon president's CV, **the declarations of assets and personal interests of the president, vice-presidents and public officials have not been published on a web page of the rayon councils.**

The ranking of the most transparent districts also shows that **14 rayon public authorities did not make public the public job vacancies** on the web page in 2016, and only one local public authority, namely the one in Singerei publicly communicated the number and names of all the candidates for the civil service.

Other chapters analyzed are "public services" and "investments". Thus, the rayon councils in Ungheni, Edinet and Causeni represent the best examples of accessibility for the population to information on social services. Also, **only 11 rayon public authorities publish on the web the data, largely incomplete, on the programs and projects** whose beneficiaries or executors are. Unfortunately, no list of municipal enterprises is also published on one of the rayon council webpages.

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Top of the most transparent local public authorities in Moldova can be found on the open data portal www.localtransparency.viitorul.org.

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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