

REFORMATOR

07

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM

Ministry for Human and Minority Rights,
Public Administration and Local Self-Government

JUNE 2012

TOPIC OF THE ISSUE

Dear Readers,

Before you is the seventh edition of the electronic newsletter *The Reformat*, publication of which has been launched in the scope of the Municipal Support Programme IPA 2007 – Good Local Governance, Planning and Service Delivery project. The project is funded by the EU and its objective is to contribute to improving governance and economic development in the Republic of Serbia through providing further support in the decentralization process.

The newsletter was conceived as one of the instruments for improving communication and exchange of information about up-to-date initiatives of major relevance for local self-government units in the Republic of Serbia. The *Reformat* primarily aims at informing local administration employees and other stakeholders about issues relevant for towns and municipalities in the Republic of Serbia.

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SINGLE ELECTORAL REGISTER FIRST TIME IN SERBIA SINCE THE INTRODUCTION OF THE MULTI-PARTY SYSTEM

Single electoral register as an electronic database was used for the first time in recent elections. The introduction of the single electoral register has brought about many benefits for citizens.

Inter alia, it enabled the citizens to choose where to vote in parliamentary elections to avoid traveling to their place of residence, by submitting a request thereabout within the statutory deadline to the city/municipal administration in the territory where they desired to vote.

The citizens were also able to check and verify their polling station via the Internet portal of the Ministry or SMS message.

Protection of personal information because of the changed nature of viewing the electoral register was also ensured.

The electoral register will be updated automatically in conjunction with electronic registers the Ministry has been developing since 2009. The procedure will be specified and more efficient exchange of information (by modern technology) enabled between the authorities maintaining official citizens' records required for the electoral register update. ■



Single electoral register will bring benefits to the voters



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THREE QUESTIONS – THREE ANSWERS

Our interlocutor – Zoran Petrović, director – chief administrative inspector at the Administrative Inspectorate at the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self-Government

1. What has been done in so far to institute the single electoral register?

Single electoral register was instituted by the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self-Government for the first time after 20 years following the introduction of the multi-party system in the Republic of Serbia.

The onset of implementation of the Law on the Single Electoral Register (24 December 2010) laid down conditions for the single voters' database formation by data take-over from the electoral registers independently maintained by local self-government units.

Following the voters' information take-over from the local self-government units (in May and November 2010), the Ministry examined electoral registers in accordance with its statutory competences and authorities and undertook necessary measures to ensure their mutual compatibility, accuracy and strict adherence to all set standards for personal data protection. Based on information submitted by the Ministry and that obtained through the regular procedure of information updating, during this period local self-government units (until 10 May 2012) passed over 420,000 decisions on amending the single electoral register, such as: registering voters not previously registered (in most cases based on attaining the age of maturity and registration of residence), deleting voters (usually based on death and loss of eligibility), plus a significant number of amendments, modifications or corrections of the existing information (inserting date and place of birth, name of one parent, deleting double registrations, inserting missing or correcting incorrect personal identification numbers, etc.).

2. What was the cooperation with city and municipal administrations like?

Owing to the involvement of municipal and city administrations and exceptional cooperation between the Ministry and the aforementioned bodies, significant amount of informa-

tion was updated in a relatively short period of time compared to the workload.

As of March 2012, citizens were given the opportunity to verify their respective information by sending a free SMS messages or visiting the public portal of the Ministry and entering their personal identification number and in that way check whether they were entered in the electoral register and what their polling station was. Around 500,000 citizens exercised this right conclusive with May 2012 which largely contributed to the updating of data.

When the elections at all levels were announced in the Republic of Serbia mid-March 2012, the single electoral register system was ready to be used after barely a three-month implementation of the Law on the Single Electoral Register, and was used in the electoral process for electing the President of the Republic, MPs of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, members of the AP Vojvodina Assembly, and assembly members in towns, municipalities and city municipalities applying the proportional and majority electoral system, as well as in the referenda in a number of municipalities.

The assessment undertaken after the elections demonstrated that the electoral register was successfully tested in practice and served its purpose in the electoral process implementation.

3. What is still left to be done?

Regardless of the fact that Serbia previously did not have such a precise and accurate electoral register protected from any kind of abuse as it does today, this system will still have to be further improved and developed.

Administrative Inspectorate will continue to play an important role in this process, through administrative inspectors who will, same as during its introduction, closely cooperate with municipal and city administrations and undertake necessary measures and activities to further update all the data required for an accurate and precise register of voters. ■



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PROPOSED LAW ON EMPLOYEES IN LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT UNITS SET

The Government of the Republic of Serbia, at its session held on 29 March of this year, determined the [Proposed Law on Employees in Local Self Government Units](#).

The Proposed Law was forwarded to the National Assembly for adoption. By the adoption of the Law on Employees in Local Self Government Units, this area will be for the first time regulated by means of a special law. ■

PROPOSED LAW ON GENERAL ADMINIS- TRATIVE PROCEDURE SET

At its session held on 23 February 2012, the Government of the Republic of Serbia determined the [Proposed Law on General Administrative Procedure](#).

The aim of this Law is to ensure proportionality in meeting and protecting private and public interests in administrative matters, increasing transparency and improving efficiency and cost-effectiveness of administrative procedures and harmonizing actions and work of the Administration of the Republic of Serbia with the European standards of administrative practice. ■

EU SUPPORT FOR 26 TOWNS AND MUNICIPALITIES

Technical support in the area of finance and administrative efficiency out of the budget worth EUR 7.6 million shall be provided to additional 26 towns and municipalities in Serbia under the EU funded project lasting until 2013. On 25 April of this year Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the representatives of the selected local self-government units and the [Municipal Support Programme IPA 2007 Project](#).

More than a hundred of towns, municipalities and city municipalities submitted their applications for participation, and 26 of them met the criteria to join the project set by the European Union in cooperation with the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self Government and the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities. Since 2010, a total of 70 towns and municipalities with 117 of their projects have in so far been included in the project.

Depending on their needs stated their in project applications, some of the listed towns and municipalities will receive expert assistance in devising their local budgets and mid-term development plans, preparing and planning the so-called capital expenditures, training for accelerating the procedure of issuing construction permits, introducing new model of organizational structure in municipal and city administrations, improving human resource management, improving the quality of services provided by towns and municipalities to their

Technical support within the project shall be provided to the City of Belgrade, Belgrade municipalities Lazarevac, Zemun and Zvezdara, as well as Sokobanja, Senta, Vranje, Kula, Arandjelovac, Malo Crniće, Golubac, Bojnik, Kanjiža, Ruma, Valjevo, Požarevac, Pirot, Bečej, Zrenjanin, Bela Palanka, Paraćin, Gornji Milanovac, Inđija, Loznica, Sombor and Kraljevo.

citizens, and developing and upgrading Citizen Service Centers.

On the occasion of the Memorandum signing, State Secretary for Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self Government, Mr. Duško Radaković, assessed that Serbia needs an administration that meets the standards of both the state and the economy. He said that the Local Self-Government Units Employees Training Strategy, prepared by the Ministry with support from the Project, will greatly contribute thereto.

The EU Delegation to Serbia Head of Operations III, Mr. Andrew Headey, stressed that the support was harmonised with the needs of Serbian towns and municipalities and EU standards, aiming at their capacity building in the areas of finance, programme budgeting and the use of municipal bonds. ■



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RESEARCH ON AWARENESS OF EMPLOYEES IN LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT UNITS ON COMPETENCES OF THE MINISTRY – SECOND ROUND

The research was conducted from 8 to 29 March 2012 using an online method and a sample of 495 respondents consisting of managers and employees in city and municipal administrations throughout Serbia.

The second out of three rounds, conducted under the “Municipal Support Programme IPA 2007 – Good Local Governance, Planning and Service Delivery” project was aimed at determining the changes in terms of awareness of employees in city and municipal administrations about the role, current and planned initiatives of the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self-Government in comparison with the results of the first round of research conducted a year ago.

Results showed that the role and competences of the Ministry are generally recognized given that 96% of employees and managers in city and municipal administration are familiar with the public administration tasks the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self-Government is responsible for, which is not a significant change compared to the previous round of research.

The research findings also showed that employees and managers in city and municipal administrations are well aware about the current initiatives of the Ministry, such as the in-

roduction of the Single Electoral Register (84%), institution of the central system for processing and keeping a second copy of the registers (61%) and communal police (58%). As it was expected, the focus has shifted from initiatives that were related to the communal police, inclusion of Roma, minority rights and the like that were central in the previous round of research to initiatives related to electoral registers, public administration reform, and so on.

The efforts of the Ministry in so far in terms of informing employees in city and municipal administrations about the activities and initiatives thereof were generally recognized and positively evaluated. 59% of employees and managers in city and municipal administrations considered to be better informed about the activities and initiatives of the Ministry because of the efforts of the Ministry regarding this issue. Those that were generally better informed about the activities and initiatives of the Ministry, as well as those who read the “Reformator” were significantly more likely than others to positively assess the efforts put forth by the Ministry in terms of raising the awareness of employees in city and municipal administrations.

More information may be found at the [internet presentation of the Ministry](#). ■

E-GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT TO MODERNIZE LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENTS’ DEVELOPMENT

At the E-Government Conference held on 29 February 2012, Minister for Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self Government, Mr. Milan Marković, said that the equipment worth EUR 2.5 million was procured under the “Support to E-Government Development in Serbia” project. The equipment, already installed and tested, will serve for the introduction of electronic government (e-government) and will be made available for use to local self-governments once the procedure for its use had been put in place.

At the gathering held at the “Continental” Hotel, attended by the representatives of public administration, universities and NGOs, and organised for the purpose of presenting the results achieved under the “Support to the E-Government Development in Serbia” project, minister Milan Marković stressed that a series of measures for introduction of e-government have been undertaken, which, as he noted, will lead to increased efficiency of work in public administration and improved communication with citizens and businesses. He stressed that the system for processing and keeping the second copy of civil re-



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Presentation of the "Support to E-Government Development" project

gistries and developing the Single Electoral Register has already been introduced.

EU Delegation to Serbia First Secretary and Head of Operations, Mr. Martin Kern, said that this is a very important project for both the citizens and the state, since, among other things, it reduces the costs same as opportunities for corruption and documents issuing waiting time.

"Support to E-Government Development in Serbia" is an EU funded project worth EUR 1.3 million aimed at establishing specific e-government infrastructure elements in accordance with the method of data protection in the EU countries. Project activities were initiated in February last year and will last for 18 months. ■

THE ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT SIGNED TO HELP THE ROMA REGISTER IN BIRTH REGISTRIES

On 9 April 2012 Minister for Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self Government, Mr. Milan Marković, Deputy Ombudsman, Mr. Goran Bašić, and Chief Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to Serbia, Mr. Eduardo Arboleda, signed the Memorandum of Understanding envisaging establishment of closer cooperation in the implementation of activities aimed at assisting members of the Roma national minority in the procedure of their subsequent registration in the Birth Registries.

Signing of this Agreement forms the basis for the establishment of the Steering Committee, which will, together with the technical group, be tasked to propose and carry out activities related to exercising the right to subsequent registration of birth-related data.

This also includes field work – interviews with people in Roma settlements and inviting them to come to the Social Work Center and register their place of residence, so that they can subsequently, with a temporary ID card, register a birth of a child with the registrar.

For additional information, please visit [the web site of the Ministry](#). ■



Signing of the Assistance Agreement to help the Roma register in birth registries



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MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING SIGNED WITH THE LINE MINISTRY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA

On 14 March 2012 Minister for Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self Government in the Government of the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Milan Marković, and Minister for Administration and Local Self Government in the Government of the Republic of Srpska, Ms. Lejla Rešić, signed the Memorandum of Understanding between the two ministries in Banja Luka.

The Agreement, among other things, provides for cooperation in public administration reform, local self-government and civil registries, especially in the area relating to electronic linking of registries in a central database.

Minister Marković said that this type of partnership is just the beginning of cooperation between the two ministries and announced the formation of working groups and regular biannual meetings of the ministers. For additional information, please visit [the web site of the Ministry](#). ■



Minister M. Marković and minister L. Rešić signing the Memorandum of Understanding

MINISTER MILAN MARKOVIĆ DISCUSSED THE DEVELOPMENT OF E-GOVERNMENT WITH THE MUNICIPALITY MANAGEMENT IN STARA PAZOVA

On 14 April of the current year, Minister for Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self Government, Mr. Milan Marković, visited the

municipality of Stara Pazova and thereby discussed the functioning of the e-government in that local self-government with the municipal management.

The Minister complimented the municipal government for their work on electronic registries and updating a Single Electoral Register, adding that e-government significantly contributed to improved communication with citizens and business people thus enabling savings both in time and money.

Mayor of the municipality, Mr. Goran Jović, reminded that in the past four years large progress was achieved through establishment of the municipal website, Call Center, business portals and e-counters.

More information may be found at the [internet presentation of the Ministry](#). ■



One stop shop in Stara Pazova municipality

EDUCATION AS A PREREQUISITE FOR THE ROMA COMMUNITY SOCIALIZATION

On 18 April 2012, Minister for Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self Government, Mr. Milan Marković, attended the promotion of the “Successful Integration Models in Local Communities” project in the municipality of Prokuplje. On that occasion the awards were presented to the best students, members of the Roma national minority, as well as to the best school principals and pedagogical assistants.

“Education is a prerequisite for socialization of the Roma community and therefore it is very important for as many

Roma children as possible to complete their schooling. About 200 students and 400 high school students were enrolled under the affirmative action for enrollment”, said Minister Marković.

Talking about the situation of the Roma national minority in Serbia, Mr. Marković said that the intensive efforts are being invested in ensuring conditions for all Roma community members to receive personal documents that they currently lack in a year or two at the latest.

[For additional information, please visit the web site of the Ministry.](#) ■

VISIT TO THE NEW SCHOOL IN DESPOTOVAC

On 19 April of the current year, Minister for Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self Government, Mr. Milan Marković, visited the primary school “Stefan Nemanja” in the village of Lipovica near Despotovac, the construction of which was funded by the Ministry in the amount of RSD 7 million.

Minister Marković said that construction of the new school in Lipovica resolved some of the major problems of residents living in this village. “The children in that school did not have good conditions as they were in a building banned for use by the inspection for safety reasons”, said Mr. Marković and added that the new school was constructed in accordance with the highest of standards.

The construction of the new school began on 1 April last year at the site of the old school. The new school opened its doors on 1 September 2011, and 23 preschool and first to fourth grade pupils now attend the school.

Mayor of the Despotovac municipality, Mr. Mališa Alimpijević, said that the cost of construction of the new school was about RSD 12 million, and that the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self Government allocated seven million, and the municipality itself contributed with five million from its own budget. During his visit, Minister Marković visited the reconstruction site of the Cultural Center in the village of Grabovica,

jointly funded by the Ministry and municipality of Despotovac.

For additional information, please visit [the web site of the ministry.](#) ■



Minister Markovic visited elementary school in Despotovac



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