



Local government transparency index LTI 2024¹ unchanged, Novi Pazar, Veliko Gradište and Kanjiža ranked best

The Local Self-Government Transparency Index (LTI) in 2024 remained unchanged compared to the previous year, at a relatively low level - 52 out of 100 possible points, according to the evaluation and ranking carried out by the Transparency Serbia organization since 2015. After four years of growth, this is the first time that the index has not increased.

At the top of the table, for the third time in a row, is Novi Pazar with as many as 97 out of 100 maximum points, followed by Veliko Gradište with 88 and Kanjiža with 87. Among the top ten are Leskovac, Sombor, Sokobanja, Vranje, Bor, Tutin and Zaječar.

At the bottom of the table are Svilajnac (31), Kovačica (30), Bujanovac (29), Gadžin Han (27) and Preševo (9).

Director of the Swiss Cooperation Office in Serbia **Richard Kohli**, pointed at the presentation of LTI 2024 that the principle of transparency is in the foundation of a democratic system of checks and balances, and is therefore a key element of all the projects that the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) implement, in particular those in partnership with local governments.

The LTI provides a precious and independent reality check of the situation on the ground. By measuring progress in transparency, we get a sense as to what extent local governments are accountable and capable of presenting results of their work as well as other key information for the benefit of the community and the citizens, Mr Kohli said.

LTI research coordinator at Transparency Serbia **Zlatko Minić** said that there is a greater number of cities and municipalities that have spoiled the rating than those that have improved it, but the balance has been preserved by the best ones - the number of municipalities and cities that record very good and excellent results is increasing: 36 out of 145 have an LTI greater than 60, 12 above 70, and six local self-government units above 80.

The worst-rated area is still "Assembly and Council", with below 38% of positive indicators on average, while the best category is "Information Booklets" with 73.6%.

There is a large number of local self-government units (LSGs) that do not publish the results of the competition for the allocation of funds to media projects and associations. The number of those who publish evaluations of projects they have financed, as well as those who publish data on leased

¹ Project Local Self-Government Transparency Index LTI 2024 TS conducted with the support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).



properties, is symbolic.

Almost 15% of local public companies from the sample still do not have their own websites, on which, by law, they would have had to publish certain documents and information since 2012.

On the other hand, the number of LSGs that have budget portals where comprehensive information is available is growing.

By cross-checking the data, TS determined that the level of transparency is positively influenced by the capacities (budget, number of employees) that the municipalities have, but the will is a much more important factor, which can be particularly well seen from the fact that two small municipalities were at the very top of this year's list.

Programme director of Transparency Serbia **Nemanja Nenadić** concluded that maintaining a good score, or improving it, is most often the result of the existence of political priorities or the individual efforts of one or several civil servants. Regulatory procedures and independent external monitoring could help to maintain good results and support the will and efforts of interested and engaged officials and decision-makers.

TS, based on research and previous practice, recommended the Government of Serbia and relevant ministries to promote good practices identified at the local level. They should do so when adopting strategies and changing laws governing the work of local governments. For example, right now the Government has the opportunity to foresee such measures in the action plan of the anti-corruption strategy and through the proposed amendment to the Law on Electronic Administration. On the other hand, ministries and the Government have a lot to learn from local self-governments, especially when it comes to budget transparency and public procurement, said Mr Nenadić.

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