THE FUTURE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN ETHNICALLY MIXED MUNICIPALITIES IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

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Abstract

Since the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA) and the beginning of the decentralization process, the preservation of stable inter-ethnic relations has been one of the biggest challenges in Macedonia. In the past ten years, the Macedonian society has been a good example of stable inter-ethnic relations at local level.

This paper provides a brief overview of the current situation in few ethnically mixed Macedonian municipalities: Gostivar, Tetovo, Debar, Struga, Butel, Gazi Baba etc. It focuses on the following issues:

- The level of cooperation among different ethnicities in the decision-making process, quantitatively measured thorough an analysis of the minutes of the meetings held by the municipal councils;

- The status and level of ethnic diversity of civil servants in the respective municipalities;

- Possible minorisation through mono-ethnic policies;

- The level of accountability, responsibility and transparency of the respective municipalities;

- Ideas concerning the enhancement of the quality of public services provided for the citizens and the business sector through rationalization of the administrative procedures, using modern IT solutions – sometimes small financial investments can bring great results;

- Proposals for capacity building of the human resources sectors within the respective municipalities;

- Overview of the public finance system and possible recommendations for the enhancement of the budgetary process through program-oriented budgeting and

- Raising the level of openness and transparency of the municipal administration through enhanced access to free public information for citizens, CSO's and companies.

1. Introduction

Each conflict has its story, written somewhere deeply in the archives of history, giving an answer to a very simple question: ''why?''. Ten years ago, nobody could even imagine or predict that one little incident in a small boarder village called Tanushevci could turn into a conflict, lasting few months, leaving many victims, as well as temporarily displaced persons, burned and damaged houses and political wounds that may never be completely healed. Many more years need to pass, and many reconstructions have to be done in order to determine the truth that lays hidden deeply in the woods of the North – West Mountains in Macedonia. Each party has its own truth, its own arguments and its own wounds that need to be healed. On August 13th (Ohrid Framework Agreement, 1), truce was signed and the peace was sealed. But that did not decrease the level of suspicion and the lack of trust among the Macedonian and the Albanian neighbors, colleagues, classmates and friends.

Nevertheless, Macedonia decided to go forward. Macedonia decided that further European and Atlantic integration is the path which must be closely followed. Instead of turning back toward the pain, it decided to look at the future.

One of the pillars of the OFA is the process of decentralization. As its Basic Principles clearly state: "the development of local self-government is essential for encouraging the participation of citizens in democratic life, and for promoting respect for the identity of community" (OFA, 1). Article 1.5 refers to the development of the multi-ethnic local self–government, respecting minorities and diversities in general. It should bring the government closer to the people by following international standards, without marginalizing a single entity living on the territory of the country. It must be noted that this principle is followed when Macedonian and Albanian communities are concerned, but it is not applied in the case of the other minorities mentioned in the Preamble of the Macedonian Constitution: Turks, Serbs, Bosnians, Roma and Vlachs. Furthermore, the OFA dedicates a whole paragraph to the Development of Decentralized Government:

> *3.1. A revised Law on Local Self – Government will be adopted that reinforces the powers of elected local officials and enlarges substantially their competences in conformity with the Constitution (as amended in accordance with Annex A) and the European Charter on Local Self – Government, and reflecting the principles of subsidiarity in effect in the European Union. Enhanced competencies will relate principally to the areas of public services, urban and rural planning, environmental protection, local economic development, culture, local finances, education, social welfare and health care. A law on financing of local self – government will be adopted to ensure an adequate system of financing to enable local governments to fulfill all of their responsibilities.*

> *3.2 Boundaries of municipalities will be revised within one year of the completion of a new census, which will be conducted under international supervision by the end of 2001.*

The revision of the municipal boundaries will be effectuated by the local and national authorities with international participation.

3.3. In order to ensure that police are aware of and responsive to the needs and interests of the local population, local heads of police will be elected by municipal councils from lists of candidates proposed by the Ministry of Interior, and will communicate regularly with the councils. The Ministry of Interior will retain the authority to remove local heads of police in accordance with the law. (OFA, 1-2)

These provisions provided the basis for the future development of the local self-government in Macedonia. The Macedonian Law on Local Self-Government was enacted in 2002, with a wide consensus from the most influential parties in Macedonian politics. This document incorporates more or less all of the principles enumerated in Article 3.1, OFA. The enhancement of the decentralization process continued with the promulgation of the controversial Law on Territorial Organization of the Local Self-Government in August 2004. According to the provisions of this Law, the municipal boarders were drawn in order to satisfy personal and party interests, following ethnic structure and gerrymandering. They are harmonized with the international standards prescribed firstly in the European Charter of Local Self – Government. A big turmoil was created when the Macedonian public realized that Struga and Kichevo (this provision was later amended and postponed until 2013) will get Albanian mayors following the next local elections in 2005. This was followed by a string of protests, one of which was particularly dangerous - in Struga, the Prime Minister Buchkovski was held hostage by the citizens in the local party headquarters. It is possible that a vital part of the process of decentralization, as well as a spiritus movens of the whole reform is the issue of financing the units of local self-government. This is regulated by the Law on Financing of the Local Self-Government, enacted in September 2004. It regulates the procedures for municipality financing, determining percentages of VAT and other taxes which are transferred to the local government. Also, it is one of the most amended laws in Macedonia.

This was a brief introduction concerning the normative development of the process of decentralization. On the following pages, we will try to give an overview of some segments of the process, proposing concrete recommendations which will help in the enhancement of the decentralization process and the future of good governance in ethnically mixed municipalities in Macedonia.

2. The Level of Cooperation among Different Ethnicities in the Decision – Making Process at Local Level

Since the signing of the OFA and the beginning of the decentralization process, the preservation of stable inter-ethnic relations has been one of the biggest challenges of Macedonia, especially at local level where everyday contact between different ethnic groups is established. Fortunately, in the past 10 years, the

Macedonian society has been a great example of good inter-ethnic relations in a post-conflict area, especially at local level. The future strive of Macedonia is to preserve and even enhance this level of cooperation between ethnicities within the ethnically mixed municipalities.

One of the most positive examples is the Municipality of Gostivar. Although the Albanian minority forms a vast majority in the Municipal Council (21 out of 31 councilors) (http://mojotsovetnik.org.mk/index.php/mk/2010-09-20-14-40-20), the decisions are brought in accordance with the political views and party programs and not according to the nationality of the councilors. This conclusion has been reached after a thorough analysis of two minutes from the meetings of the Municipal Council (Minute No. 17 from 10.03.2011 and Minute No. 18 from 09.05.2011). Another positive example is the introduction of the Turkish language as the third official language in this municipality, although the Turkish minority is represented only by 9,8 % out of the total inhabitants in the municipality (http://www.gostivari.gov.mk/index.php?option=com_content&task= view&id=44&Itemid=36). There is a good communication between the councilors, especially concerning questions like decreasing the communal taxes, urbanism, education etc.

Another good example is the Municipality of Butel. The ethnic structure of the councilors is also mixed, but the Council functions without any major problem. On the basis of an excerpt from the minutes (Minute No. 25 from 27.01.2011) we can conclude that consensus can be reached upon the crucial questions such as urbanism, primary and secondary education, infrastructure etc. We may add that, although the Mayor of Butel is very dominant, he plays a vital role in the work of the Council, actively suggesting and underlining problems which have to be solved.

One of the most outspoken municipalities is the Municipality of Kichevo. It was one of the most debated ones during the drafting of the Law on Territorial Organization of the Local Self-Government in August 2004. As several ethnic Albanian villages became a part of Kichevo, it was proposed that, following the local elections in 2009, it will have an Albanian mayor. But one of the amendments of the law prescribed that this territorial modification will be done in 2013. Until now, there were no great reactions like those in Struga, for example. However, if the general inter-ethnic relations issue does not move forward, possible tensions and reactions can be expected before the forthcoming local elections in 2013. Concerning the work of the Council (Minute from the ad hoc session on 05.01.2011, Minute No. 20 from 03.02.2011, Minute No. 21 from 25.03.2011, Minute No. 22 from 20.04.2011 and Minute No. 23 from 09.05.2011), it is evident that the councilors regularly reach consensus on the decisions concerning communal activities, local economic development and cultural activities. Also, it is evident that the Council takes in consideration the minority celebrations, as well as dates dedicated to people with handicap and other different vulnerable groups, without favoring a particular minority or group.

We have already mentioned the "Struga case", where in 2004 then Prime Minister Buchkovski was attacked at the SDSM headquarters. That was a result of the Law on Territorial Organization of the Local Self-Government when few dominantly Albanian villages became a part of the territory of the Municipality of Struga. The minutes from the Municipality Council sessions (Minute No. 23 from 28.01.2011, Minute No. 24 from 28.02.2011, Minute No. 25 from 18.03.2011 and Minute No. 26 from 21.04.2011) point to the conclusion that, despite of the history full of inter-ethnic conflicts, the municipality functions correctly. The councilors are able to reach a consensus concerning questions which are vital for the local development of the municipality, such as primary and secondary education, local economic development, gender equality, tourism, urbanism, anniversaries, inter-municipal cooperation etc. Although some political subjects attempt to flame the tempers by forcing the mayor to resign (they even announce plans to seek his resignation through a referendum on early local elections), the political situation is quite stable and there are no signs of potential political or inter-ethnic conflicts.

The Municipality of Brvenica is one of the small rural municipalities in the Tetovo region. Although it is one of the regions which suffered a heavy damage, both personal and material during the conflict in 2001, nowadays the inter-ethnic cooperation is on a high and satisfactory level. People perform their day-to-day activities, living peacefully side by side with their neighbors and friends. Sometimes, it even seems that everyone has forgotten what has happened ten years ago. This is one of the municipalities which should serve as an example to be followed. The municipal minutes (Minute No. 24 from 18.01.2011 and Minute No. 25 from 28.02.2011) show extremely good cooperation between the municipal councilors in the fields of education, sports and urbanism. This relatively small and poor municipality must be encouraged to continue its good work in future and to get the much needed financial help from the central Government, in order to implement many fruitful projects.

Another interesting small and rural municipality is worth mentioning in this analysis. That is the Municipality of Dolneni. All of the previously mentioned municipalities were mostly inhabited by Macedonian and Albanian entities. In this case, we have a municipality which is extremely mixed ethnically. Perhaps, we may even call it "small Macedonia". There, 36,57 % of the inhabitants are Macedonian, 26,37 % are Albanian, 18,94 % are Turkish and 17,36 % are Bosnian (http://www.opstinadolneni.gov.mk/mk/opshti-informacii-new/). This particular municipality was very problematic during the local elections in 2009. Three re-runs had to be conducted for a new mayor to be chosen. But one positive thing is that all of the election irregularities were party-influenced and they did not have an ethnic background. If we closely observe the four municipal minutes (Minute No. 23 from 20.01.2011, Minute No. 24 from 17.02.2011, Minute No. 25 from 14.03.2011 and Minute No. 26 from 07.04.2011) we can point to a close cooperation among the councilor in the fields of local economic development (more specifically growing, producing and selling of tobacco), urbanism and communal activities. This

municipality forms another great example where four entities can live and work together without any problem, trying to raise the quality of life for them and for their neighbors and friends. This is also another example of a municipality where the central Government should intervene financially and help the local economic development.

The Municipality of Tetovo is maybe the biggest urban municipality which faced severe damage during the conflict in 2001. The City of Tetovo was in the heart of the conflict and it was the only city where fights were held on the streets. Ten years later, the situation in Tetovo is peaceful and stable. Different ethnicities participate in the everyday activities and the third State University in Macedonia is situated in Tetovo. This is definitely a proof that inter-ethnic relations are taking a positive turn in this municipality. The councilors from different ethnic backgrounds easily reach consensus upon questions like finances, primary and secondary education, kindergartens, urbanism, but also with regard to the cultural activities, art etc. The analysis of the municipal minutes (Minute No. 22 from 27.01.2011, Minute No. 23 from 24.02.2011, Minute No. 24 from 03.03.2011 and Minute No. 25 from 30.03.2011) leads us to the conclusion that the functioning of the Municipal Council is more than satisfactory. In the future, Tetovo is expected to be a regional economic and financial center of the western part of Macedonia and the stable inter-ethnic relations are a vital precondition for its further development. Also, the local economic development, one of the main competences of the units of the local self-government should, and will be, one of the priorities of this municipality. Only continuous and sustainable development is a key towards a prosperous municipality.

In 2004, the City of Skopje as a separate unit of the local self-government, defined by law, was enlarged with few municipalities. The main idea was to increase the number of ethnic Albanians on the territory of the City, so that the percentage of Albanian speaking citizens could be above 20%. This threshold is needed in order to introduce the Albanian language as the second official language on the territory of Skopje. Many experts noticed that this was an artificial division of the municipalities, based only on the criteria of satisfying party and coalition interests. Today the City Council functions properly, especially concerning inter-ethnic questions. It is possible that tensions would have risen, if the City had competences concerning the project "Skopje 2014". However, this is a project of the Government and the Municipality of Centar. That is the reason why the discussions in the City Council did not take a negative turn. As a separate unit of the local self-government, the functioning of the City of Skopje, especially of its City Council is regulated by separate law, i.e. The Law on the City of Skopje. The work of the City Council was monitored through the analysis of few municipal minutes (Minute No. 5 from 07.02.2011 (ad hoc session), Minute No. 36 from 20.01.2011, Minute No. 37 from 31.01.2011 and 07.02.2011 and Minute No. 38 from 14.02.2011) which gave a clear picture about the operating of the City Council. There is a difference between the authority of the City of Skopje and the other municipalities on the territory of Macedonia. The City is responsible solely for the planning and urbanizing of the city space, the protection of environment and

nature, the local economic development, communal activities, culture, education, sports, social welfare and child protection, medical protection etc. For the time being, the City Council easily copes with the challenges, although much more finances, and a significantly bigger budget is needed for the functioning of a capital city. Concerning the inter-ethnic relations, the City Council works properly, but few minor incidents have been noted in the past few years. These incidents disrupt the generally good picture. Nevertheless, these incidents have not been major, and no greater damage has been done, for now. It is a responsibility of all concerned parties to do their utmost for the preservation of stable inter-ethnic relations in Skopje, because the capital city is an opinion-maker and an example for the smaller cities and municipalities to follow.

Although, generally, all of the mentioned ethnically mixed municipalities do a great job in the preservation and strengthening of the inter-ethnic relations, some recommendations should be given for further enhancement of democracy at local level:

- Municipalities should do their utmost to implement measures which will support inter-ethnic communication and cooperation, such as financial and logistic support of groups and organizations which would like to contribute in this sphere.

- They should stimulate ethnically mixed artistic and musical projects, as these are usually events which bring people together and enable them to know each other better. Through these events, people will learn much more about the culture and tradition of their neighbors with a different ethnic background.

- In the process of employing new people in the municipal administration, mayors must take into consideration the ethnic proportionality and attempt not to favor a certain ethnic group. This will represent a very good signal for the entire community.

- Also, improvement has to be made in the writing of the municipal minutes. Many of them are very unclear and confusing, and they do not contain all the needed information. Also, it is recommended that they should be translated into the languages of all ethnicities that live on the territory of the respective municipality.

3. Status and Level of Ethnic Diversity of Civil Servants in Some Ethnically Mixed Municipalities

One of the indicators of the ethnic balance within one municipality is also the status and the level of ethnic diversity of the civil servants. It is more than convenient that the mayor of the municipality (who is authorized by law to employ municipal civil servants) takes into consideration the ethnic structure of the inhabitants of the respective municipality. In this paper, we tried to analyze few municipalities from the administrative standpoint. We must note that out of several contacted municipalities, only the Municipality of Gostivar replied to the request concerning data about the percentages and the ethnic structure in the respective

municipalities. We will emphasize this question in the part on accountability and transparency.

The Municipality of Gostivar is one of the forerunners concerning the implementation of the ethnic balance, both on the territory of the municipality and within the municipal administration. Furthermore, the received official document from the Head of the Human Resources Department of the Municipality reveals that there are 74 employees in the Municipality of Gostivar - 68 of them are civil servants, and the other 6 are listed as administrative and technical support to the municipal administration. Concerning the ethnic structure of the employees, 56 people (75, 67 %) of the employees are Albanian, 13 people, (17, 56 %) are Macedonian, 3 employees, (4, 05 %) are Turks and 2 people, (2, 7 %) are Roma (Municipal Administration of the Municipality of Gostivar, 1). These numbers suggest that the municipal administration is complementary with the ethnic structure of the Municipality. There were suggestions that maybe a few more Turkish and Roma employees could be employed, especially in correlation to the Roma Decade which the Municipality duly respects. Nevertheless, the Municipality of Gostivar is one of the good examples concerning the standards of ethnic diversity of the civil servants.

From the web site of the Municipality of Tetovo, only partial information can be found concerning the municipal administration. Besides a scheme showing the horizontal and vertical hierarchy, a list of heads of units can also be found. If we go quickly through the names we will realize that all 6 heads of units have an Albanian ethnic background. (http://www.tetova.gov.mk/mk/k/24/) The website does not give any further information on employees. Nevertheless, on the basis of the presented information we may conclude that one ethnicity clearly dominates the municipal administration. It is a task for the Mayor of Tetovo to reconsider possible rotations within his administration and to try to overcome this lack of ethnic diversity.

Beside Tetovo, Struga is another municipality which failed to answer to our request to provide us with information on the ethnic structure of the municipal administration. The website of the municipality does not give any kind of information connected to the municipal administration. It only gives an overview of its sectors, and provides a brief description of each sector. (http://struga.gov.mk/index.php?option=com_content&view=section& layout=blog&id=8&Itemid=79&lang=mk). There are no listed contacts for any sector, neither names of heads of units. Also, unfortunately, the website is not completely translated in Macedonian. There are many parts which are provided only in Albanian, although both of the languages are official on the territory of the municipality. Here, we can see a major lack of transparency. It is highly recommended that the municipality firstly translates all the information on the website in Macedonian and English, and then, additionally, provide more information concerning the municipal administration. In that way, the level of cooperation between the municipality and its citizens will be established and the inhabitants

will have a much easier way to find desired information and solve some administrative procedures much easier.

The Municipality of Gazi Baba was also contacted in order to obtain information on the ethnic structure of the municipal administration. Equally as the municipalities of Tetovo and Struga, this municipality also did not share answers with the research team. The website of the municipality does not present any information concerning the municipal administration (http://www.gazibaba.gov.mk/). Although this website is very user friendly and nicely designed, providing very useful information for the citizens, it contains insufficient information on the ethnic structure and status of the municipal administration. In the future, the municipality should be encouraged to provide information concerning the administration. Such an improvement would facilitate solving the problems of the citizens and it would enhance the communication between the citizens and the municipal administration.

After the conducted research, we may draft few recommendations concerning the enhancement of the administrative structure of the municipalities and the construction of a better, two – ways channel for communication between the citizens and the municipal administration:

- The mayors which are authorized to regulate the employment of the municipal administration should take into consideration the ethnic structure of its citizens and try to reflect it in the ethnic structure of the municipal administration. Also, special focus should be put on protecting minorities and providing them with sufficient quantitative and qualitative share of administrative positions.

- Municipalities are encouraged to provide thorough and detailed information concerning the ethnic structure and the status of the municipal administration on their websites. In this way, a higher level of transparency and openness can be reached, and citizens will be better informed on who to contact in case of a specific administrative problem.

- Municipal websites should be translated in detail into all the official languages which are used in the municipality. It is highly recommended that they also translate them into English. In that way, information can be shared with many more people, including the potential investors which would not lose time on translations.

4. Possible Minorisation through Mono-Ethnic Policies

In a vulnerable society which has recently survived an inter ethnic conflict, it is very easy to flame tempers between different ethnicities. It does not matter if the topic is related to language, culture or sharing finances - if a group of people has an intention to disrupt the inter -ethnic relations, it can easily be weakened. In the recent past, there have been few examples of inter-ethnic tensions which threatened to create bigger incidents.

One of the outspoken cases of introducing mono-ethnic policies was the enacting of the monuments within the project

''Skopje 2014''. As the project was designed by the Government and implemented by the Municipality of Centar, fierce discussions about its mono-ethnic nature arose. The project consisted of enacting dozens of monuments which would present Macedonia's ancient history and its supposed antique origin. Also, monuments representing historic figures from the beginning of the 20th century and the period after World War Two were planned. The biggest debate was opened considering the statue of Alexander The Great located at the Makedonija square in the city center. This statue, enacted just few days ago, threatens the Euro -Atlantic perspectives of Macedonia which is a candidate member for accession to the European Union. A fierce reaction was issued by the Albanian minority, stating that their culture and heritage have not been respected. Things got even worse when the Municipality of Centar rejected the request concerning the building of the former Burmali mosque which used to be located at the right bank of the Vardar River. The Government was openly criticized by the international and local community. Even the procedure for conducting a referendum by a local NGO was jeopardized by the Municipality of Centar.

Another case which happened recently had both an ethnic and a religious background. An incident happened at the Kale Fortress when high party representatives from the DUI governing party attacked an object which was supposed to be a church museum. The clash started when the Head of the Bureau of Cultural Heritage denied giving an explanation on what was built inside the Kale Fortress. After bringing down a part of the church, a fierce reaction was delivered by the Macedonian side. A group of supporters which advocated for the building of the church gathered on a protest inside the fortress. On the same day, the group which advocated for dismantling of the object also organized a protest. After a sloppy reaction from the police forces, a mass fight started within the walls of the fortress. One of the main actors during the violence was the Vice Minister of Interior and the political advisor to the Dutch Ambassador in Macedonia. Even after the bloody incident, threatening from both sides through the social media started. Both groups called for "the last battle with the enemies" which threatened to jeopardize their national identity and religion.

If we analyze these and few other cases, we must get to a conclusion that municipal office holders should be very careful when dealing with this kind of ethnic conflicts. They should be very careful when implementing certain policies which might have ethic symbolism. To prevent these kinds of tensions in the future, municipal officials should:

- Conduct surveys and questionnaires in order to check the pulse of the citizenship and bring wise decision which will contribute toward a stable inter-ethnic constellation.

- They should refrain from mono-ethnic iconography in the pursuit for political reputation and daily political points;

- It is recommended that they develop a sense of inclusion and inclusive policies which will bring together the citizens from different ethnicities.

5. The Level of Accountability, Transparency and Responsiveness of the Respective Municipalities

One of the basic principles of good governance are the principles of accountability, transparency and responsiveness. The principle of accountability can be defined as ability to work and act in favor of the citizens, following their needs and respecting their will. On the other hand, the principle of transparency can be defined as open and clear work of the municipality administration and objective and timely informing of the public concerning the projects and activities of the respective municipalities. Lastly, the principle of responsiveness urges the municipality to act efficiently and effectively upon their citizens' requests. If one unit of the local self-government follows these basic principles, their work can be graded as more than satisfactory.

In a research conducted by Citizens' Association MOST, requests for municipality minutes were sent to all 85 units of local self-government in Macedonia. In the period of 3 months, the vast majority of the 85 units responded promptly and delivered the minutes to the assigned addresses. On the other hand, around 25 municipalities failed to send the minutes or even sent an explanation why the failed to send them or why they refuse to send them. Furthermore, 2 municipalities answered that they will not send the respective documents because they were not legally obliged to do that, thus breaking the Law on Free Access to Public Information.

The Municipality of Gostivar responded well to the request to submit the minutes. Also, it was the only municipality which provided data concerning the ethnic diversity of their municipal administration. We must also note that the website of the municipality provides a variety of information concerning the whole municipal administration. Gostivar must be singled out as a great example for a transparent, accountable and responsive unit of the local self – government.

The Municipality of Tetovo is also one of the municipalities which provided MOST with transcripts from their Municipal Council minutes. Unfortunately, they failed to answer the request concerning the ethnic diversity within their municipal administration. Equally, their website produces solid and relevant information concerning the heads of sectors within the municipal administration, with detailed CV's, photos and contacts. They show a good degree of transparency in sharing information, but still, improvements can be done.

The Municipality of Struga transparently provided the Municipal Council minutes, but it did not find it important to provide us with the information on their ethnic structure within the municipal administration. Also, their website should undertake massive redesigning in the process of providing sufficient and relevant information. Also, as we mentioned previously, a complete translation into Macedonian and English is required in order to provide information to a larger group of users.

In the end, the municipality of Gazi Baba provided the team of MOST with transcripts from Municipal Council minutes, failed to answer upon the request concerning the ethnic structure of its administration. Their website, although useful and user friendly, does not give relevant and sufficient data concerning the municipal administration. If this information is added to the website, it might become a complete product which will serve the citizens of the local community.

After this short analysis, some concrete recommendations can be provided in order to stimulate the municipalities to reach a higher level of accountability, transparency and responsiveness:

- Despite the newsletters which the municipalities are legally obliged to publish, it is more than recommended for them to use the internet as a tool for the informing of their citizens. Daily information can be published on the municipality website, and an electronic newsletter can be sent every week to the interested subscribers. This is an easy and cheap way for the municipality to stay in touch with its citizens;

- Also, the municipal administration must be more cooperative and open toward the civil sector. Recently the civil society has done a lot of work to raise the awareness of the local government in the process of strengthening the accountability, responsiveness and transparency at local level;

- Municipalities are advised to employ a person responsible for public relations which will coordinate the daily contact and activities with media and with interested citizens.

6. Ideas concerning Enhancement of Quality of Public Services for the Citizens and the Business Sector through Rationalization of Administrative Procedures Using Modern IT Solutions

By definition, the municipality is a level of government which is closest to the citizens. Through the process of decentralization, authorities are transferred from central to local level. One of the main authorities of the municipalities is delivering quality public services for their citizens. They can be provided either by the municipal administration or by public enterprises founded by the municipality. Also, the municipalities should help and enhance the local economic development through measures which would encourage the business sector to invest more in the local community. One of the easiest, cheapest and most pragmatic ways is the employment of the modern information technology.

Public services can be enhanced in many ways. One of them is constant and regular education of the municipal administration through seminars and workshops which would enhance the personal capacities of the employees. Another way is the frequent usage of modern IT solutions such as computers, printers and massive use of the internet. Also, provision of few internet services could rationalize some operations both for the municipal administrations and the citizens. For example, taxpaying through the internet or the providing

of documents which are regularly issued through long and exhausting administrative procedures. The implementation of these measures could enhance the efficiency and the effectiveness of the municipal administration.

The local business sector should be the main driver of the local economy within one municipality. There are several ways for a municipality to help local businesses. One of the most popular methods is the public-private partnership which permits that finances and resources from the municipality and private investors are joined in order to enhance municipal infrastructure and services. Also, some tax deductions are a very popular measure for attracting potential investors. Another tool which is frequently used is the cheap sell of municipal land, which can provoke investors to invest less money in land and more money in technology and employees.

The IT modernization of the municipalities is an ongoing process which should be enhanced in order to produce some concrete results. By providing the municipalities with a sufficient number of computers and other IT equipment, the municipalities will be able to satisfy citizens' needs much more efficiently. In order that the modernization produces an effect, sufficient training for the municipal administration should also be included.

7. Proposals for Capacity Building of Human Recourses Sectors within the Respective Municipalities

The employees are the heart of every municipal administration. For each municipality to develop constantly and follow the principle of good and objective work, a highly educated and efficient administration is needed. That can be done in several ways.

One of the ways is sporadic and non-planed capacity building, which suggests that employees find their own mechanisms for capacity building, such as looking for seminars, trainings and conferences, applying on their own, without any real support from the heads within the municipal administration.

The other way implicates a separate human resources sector within the municipality which will take care of the professional development of the whole administration. This sector should be highly involved in every segment of the work of the administration. For example, the involvement of this sector should start with the act of employing new staff in the municipal administration. Their role should be to draft the decision concerning which candidate should be employed and suggest it to the mayor who is the responsible authority deciding about the employment. Furthermore, this sector should take care about the complete professional development of the whole municipal administration. Its role should be designed to conduct regular testing of the employees and to suggest possible promotions and degradations within the administration. Also, a systematic capacity building through trainings, recommendable by outsourcing experts, should be delivered regularly.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

   It is sometimes hard to draw a line between the administration in the central Government and the municipal administration. But in the end, both groups are employees in the public sector, delivering services to the citizens. That is why, many principles which should be incorporated in the functioning of the central Government, should be also applied at local level, so that the future of good governance becomes a reality:

- Economy – decreasing costs, i.e. rational spending of the municipal budget and increasing productivity of public bodies; citizens should enjoy better services at a lower price;

- Efficiency – diligent spending and reaching a maximum level of producing goods and services;

- Effectiveness – guarantee that an organization reaches its goals, one of the most significant instruments for measuring effectiveness of individuals are the effectiveness agreements – the head which is responsible for the program will negotiate with his superiors concerning the agreement in which objective goals which should be achieved in a concrete period of time will be detailed. At the end of that period, the person gets evaluated for the finished work;

- Participative Government – internal concept: decreasing of strict hierarchy for employees in the municipal bodies and involving lower – positioned civil servants to participate in the creation of policies brought by the public body and fair representation of minority groups. External concept: citizens' participation in public bodies policy creation and public discussions and opinion polls, as well as an advisory role of the citizens toward the public bodies;

- E - Government – following the dynamic development of the IT solutions and its implementation in the internal communication between the civil servants – software for internal communication of the municipal servants, as well as within the communication with the citizens – creating a website for direct contact between the civil servants and the citizens;

- Transparency – citizens should know how the administration works, the limits of the actions of the civil servants and who is responsible in case of insufficient results;

- Availability – citizens should enjoy easy physical access to the municipal administration at a time which is convenient for them and the information should be offered in understandable language. The "Single Window System" where all public services are unified – is an example how to establish a more pleasant contact between citizens and public services in order that the citizens save time;

- Responsibility and Control – the head is responsible for the efficiency of the public body which is measured through economic and market principles;

- Treatment of citizens as clients – through taxes and other fiscal fees citizens have indirectly paid for the services delivered by the public

bodies. As Marshal Dimock says, "satisfaction of the consumers is a criteria which should be implemented in the work of the administration, as well as in the business sector";

- Representative public service – Donald Kingsley uses this term to define the public administration as a representative body through which the characteristics of the people it works for are determined (Davitkovska, Traditional vs. New Public Management, 9 – 10)

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