



ICEDA

Increasing Civic Engagement
in the Digital Agenda

REPUBLIC OF SERBIA DIGITAL AGENDA OBSERVATORY

Country Report and Roadmap for
Digital Agenda advancement
in the Republic of Serbia

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability - CRTA and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.



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Center for research, transparency and accountability – CRTA



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Preface

Only with a clear and understandable approach to all citizens, without exception, can there be a sustainable digitalization in all spheres as an effective mechanism for significantly improving the lifestyle of the population. When we talk about digitalization in all spheres, we refer to the advancement and bigger efficiency of the institutions, organisations and other entities. Being witnesses of the pandemic crisis, we can note that this is a more than needed step for a better functioning of the society, and we can see how this unfortunate circumstance has accelerated the spread of knowledge about benefits from the digitalization. However, we must be aware that the swift digitalization has also brought up a lot of issues, where we gave devices to citizens are not taught how to use them properly, which is why we are faced with hate speech, fake news and misinformation, cyber bullying, cyber crime, etc.

As we have not come across any comprehensive research of this kind, in this report we have tried to provide a baseline for the state of e-Governance development and digital literacy in North Macedonia in order to provide a starting point for further measuring of the advancement in these areas in correlation to the Digital Agenda and to provide further recommendations for improvement.

The Digital Agenda is an initiative developed by the European Union, which has also been extended and adopted for 6 countries in the Western Balkan. It aims to ensure that citizens of the region can fully reap the benefits of the digital transformation. The commitment to the Digital Agenda will ensure that citizens have the skills to match the demands of the new economy and will help modernize public administrations, strengthen cyber security, increase connectivity, and improve the business climate.

This research is part of the Digital Agenda Observatory and is implemented in 5 Western Balkan countries as part of the project Increasing Civic Engagement in the Digital Agenda – ICEDA co-funded by the European Union and implemented by Metamorphosis Foundation (North Macedonia) as the leading partner, e-Governance Academy (Estonia), CRTA – Center for Research, Transparency, and Accountability (Serbia), NGO 35mm (Montenegro), Open Data Kosovo (Kosovo) and Lëvizja Mjaft (Albania). The issues addressed by the reports are specifically related to the chapters relevant to the Digital Agenda in particular Chapter 10 – Information Society and Media from the EU's acquis, with a goal to reinvigorate the issues of the Western Balkans Digital Agenda on the EU agenda..

Research methodology

The quantitative data extracted and analysed derives from the desktop study and information requests to the relevant information holders, including the collection of the secondary data by reviewing the strategy and policy documents, concept papers and international project reports. Descriptive data analysis method was used to answer the research questions i.e. the indicators of the current efforts of the Digital Agenda implementation by the government, civil society and media, and it is summarised in Chapter 1.

To understand the attitude, motivation and experience of stakeholders related to the Digital Agenda issues, qualitative research methods by collecting the primary data using interviews, online survey and semi-structured focus group discussion with different stakeholders (institutionalized and non-institutionalized civil society representatives (CSOs and civic activists), representatives of state authorities, journalists and representatives of media) were conducted about their views of the state of DA and needs for improvement. The results of these research projects are presented in all the chapters of the report.

In North Macedonia, through our activities we received 52 responses on our online survey (10 from representatives of state authorities, 4 from the media and 38 from the civil society representatives), we conducted 9 interviews with 3 media representatives of state authorities, 3 media representatives and 3 civil society representatives, and organised a focus group with 1 state authority representative and 4 civil society representative out of which one was an association of all the municipalities in the country.

The research methodology was designed by the e-Governance Academy (eGA). eGA is a non-profit think tank and consultancy organisation from Estonia that creates and transfers knowledge and best practices and empowers central and local government decision in the area of digital transformation: e-governance, e-democracy and national cyber security.

The research was done in the period between April – June, 2020.



1



Digital Agenda implementation in the Republic of Serbia

Summary

The Digital Agenda is a highly unfamiliar term in Serbia today. Although accessed in June 2018 and beneficial for the country's development, it seems that it has been treated by the stakeholders and the public as an exclusive topic that only experts can understand. State administration adopted a top down approach in treating this subject. There aren't many civil society actors involved in this process, nor have the media reported about it. Even though a large portion of the Digital Agenda that refers to the e-government, directly influences the quality of citizens' lives, they are unaware of its potential. The majority of generations are digitally illiterate and don't understand the process. That can also be the case with the media ignoring this topic. Having lost their educational role, just seeking for sensations, this topic is on their agenda only when large scandals occur. Additionally, the inception process of building infrastructure for the development of e-services, that citizens will eventually get in direct contact with, is in attractive enough. However, that doesn't explain the low interest of the civil society organizations in the process. Involving more actors necessarily slows down the process, however, thus potentially valuable inputs can be lost.

What is even more important, the Digital Agenda rests on the existing capacities of state administration, therefore it consequently suffers from the same problems. Many of the efforts to digitalize the state administration rest on unfinished processes. There are a couple of steps that could improve the process, some are even available right now, without large investments. Opening of data in the possession of institutions that are already in electronic form is practically effortless, and the economic benefits from it are huge, and let alone democratic potential, efficiency etc. However, not only that the citizens are unaware of the possibilities and their right to request the changes in this area, the state administration servants share the same mindset. Fear of changes, routine, atrophied procedures that public servants strongly hold on to, disable proper public administration reform which is now costing the Republic of Serbia its status in the European integrations and millions of dinars.

Digitalization is inevitably coming, if citizens continue to ignore this process, they might get enforced solutions that are not tailored by their needs. Additionally, it should be accompanied by in-depth public administration reform, otherwise the Republic of Serbia is in risk of reducing it to e-mail communication and building of expensive infrastructure that no one will use.

Internet penetration

In the Republic of Serbia, 80.1% of households have an internet connection, which is an increase of 7.2% compared to 2018 and 12.1% compared to 2017. When looking at the structure of households according to the amount of monthly income, households with a monthly income over 600 euros 97.3% have the Internet connection, while the share of households with income up to 300 euros is only 64.2%. When asked why households did not have an internet connection at home, 76.2% said they did not need the internet, 20.6% of households said that equipment was too expensive, while 12.5% of households cited a lack of skills. Based on the results obtained, out of the total number of households with internet connection, DSL (ADSL) has 44.9%, cable internet 46.8%, mobile phone via 3G network 71.1% of households. Survey results show that only 0.7% of households have a dial-up connection. This is primarily due to the growth in the use of broadband connectivity. In Serbia, 79.6% of households have broadband internet connectivity, an increase of 7.1% over 2018 and 17.7% over 2017¹

The number of subscribers to fixed broadband Internet in the fourth quarter of 2019 has increased slightly compared to the previous quarter, to about 1.64 million. In Q4 2019, most subscribers use access speeds greater than 30Mbit / s (about 51%) and speeds of 10Mbit / s to less than 30Mbit / s (about 44%).² In the area of Internet access, Serbia has not yet clearly defined the obligation to provide universal service to socially deprived persons and to the population in hard-to-reach rural areas of the country with access to internet and fixed telephony services at reduced prices and through alternative technologies. Adoption of a new Law on Electronic Communications and further engagement of the Regulatory Agency for Electronic Communications and Postal Services is expected in this area.³

Operators of public electronic communications networks have the right to require the sharing of electronic communications infrastructure of another operator or third party when necessary for the competitive, economical and efficient performance of electronic communications activities. The Electronic Communications and Postal Services Regulatory Agency has prepared a database of capacities that may be shared and accessed on the basis of data provided by operators of public electronic communications networks, in compliance with the Law on Electronic Communications ("RS Official Gazette", no. 44/10, 60/13 – CC and 62/14) and the Rulebook on the method of collecting and publishing data on the type, availability and geographical location of electronic communications network capacity ("RS Official Gazette", no. 66 / 15). Pursuant to Article 52 of the Law, it is foreseen that the Agency maintains an up-to-date database on the type, availability and geographical location of capacities that may be shared.⁴

¹ Use of information and communication technologies in the Republic of Serbia, 2019, Statistical Office of the RS, pg 12-14 <https://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G2019/Pdf/G201916014.pdf> Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

² Electronic communications market overview in the Republic of Serbia – fourth quarter 2019, Republic Agency for Electronic Communications and Postal Services, pg 10 https://www.ratel.rs/uploads/documents/empire_plugin/Kvartalni%20pregled%20podatka%20o%20stanju%20trzista%20elektronskih%20komunikacija%20Q4%202019_lat.pdf Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

³ Digital inclusion report in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2014-2018, Government of Serbia, pg 7 http://socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Izvestaj_o_digitalnoj_ukljucenosti_RS_2014-2018_lat.pdf Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

⁴ Republic Agency for Electronic Communications and Postal Services web page <https://www.ratel.rs/sr/page/infrastruktura-za-zajednicko-koriscenje> Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

According to records annually collected for the period from 2006 – 2019 from the Statistical Office of the RS updated on 20. September 2019, there were 52,3 % of internet users with no education or with lower education, 86,5% among the population with mid-level education and 94,6% of highly educated. More of male population uses the internet (81,2%), compared to female (73,7%).⁵ When it comes to the age of internet users, usage decreases with the age, thereby population in between 16–24 (97.4%), 25–34 (96.3%), 35–44 (95.2%), 45–54 (83.2%), 55–64 (63.9%) and 65 – 74 (30.1%).⁶

The report Monitoring of Digital Rights and Freedoms in Serbia⁷ stated that in recent years there is the so-called digital divide, a socio-economic risk that threatens free and balanced access to digital technologies. Within society, these differences are most pronounced in relation to persons with disabilities, the Roma population and the population of rural areas. Thus, data from the Digital Inclusion Report show that 90.2% of the total number of people with disabilities do not use computers and the Internet. Differences can also be noticed when comparing the representation of computers in urban and rural parts of the Republic of Serbia: 73.3% vs. 54%.⁸

To accommodate broadband internet to all the citizens of Serbia, the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications is in the process of preparing for the project of construction of broadband communication infrastructure in rural areas of the Republic of Serbia.⁹ It will be presented through interactive map on already existing portal of the Ministry called „Smart and Safe”¹⁰, that is dedicated to promoting digital literacy and internet safety. This map will serve as a basis for strategic investing into infrastructure for high-speed internet. State Secretary at the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, Tatjana Matić stated: "It was also established that for slightly more than half a million households in rural areas, there is no economic interest of operators for the development of new generation networks, ie high-speed Internet access, as stated in the Decision of the State Aid Control Commission. We determined according to the analysis that five percent of households, i.e. about 125 thousand households do not have fixed internet access".¹¹ In the first phase of the project, in the spring of 2021, the construction of infrastructure will begin that will enable high-speed internet access (100 Mbps) for 90,000 households in rural settlements.

⁵ Statistical Office of the RS <https://data.stat.gov.rs/Home/Result/270202?languageCode=sr-Latn> Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

⁶ Statistical Office of the RS <https://data.stat.gov.rs/Home/Result/270205?languageCode=sr-Latn> Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

⁷ The report Monitoring of Digital Rights and Freedoms in Serbia, SHARE Foundation, May 2017 https://labs.rs/Documents/Monitoring_digitalnih_prava_i_sloboda_izvestajza_2016_srb.pdf Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

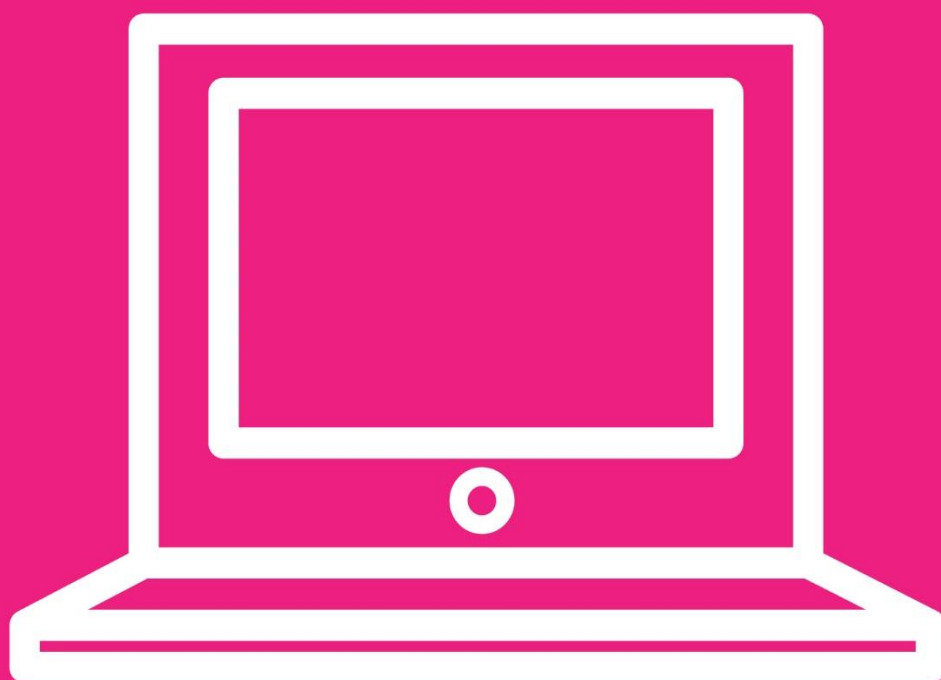
⁸ The report Monitoring of Digital Rights and Freedoms in Serbia, SHARE Foundation, May 2017

https://labs.rs/Documents/Monitoring_digitalnih_prava_i_sloboda_izvestajza_2016_srb.pdf Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

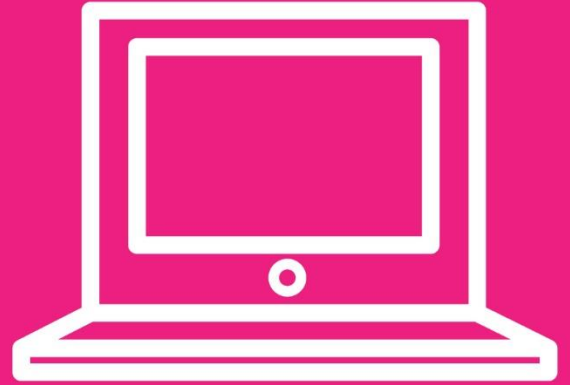
⁹ Public Procurement „Rural Broadband Rollout”, for Preparation of detailed mapping and feasibility study was announced on June 11 2020. It is financed by the EBRD project https://mtt.gov.rs/saopstenja-najave/obavestjenje-o-javnoj-nabavci/?fbclid=IwAR27J7GgY7KVjUb2VKq7lOrbJYBXqSQkKtpnaJLllovnfNDDHCxmF3b6_Oxg

¹⁰ <https://pametnoibezbedno.gov.rs/#> Accessed 26. 6. 2020.

¹¹ https://mtt.gov.rs/slider/pocinjje-projekat-izgradnje-sirokopojasne-infrastrukture-u-ruralnim-podrucijima/?fbclid=IwAR2WbS4h3f-Fnhe-QyN_V4PsdVcl7ZH8YdA9M0loBQK4T37qLl42WqM4q Accessed 26. 6. 2020.



2



Strategic, legal and administrative
developments regarding e-
Government

Strategic, legal and administrative developments regarding e-Government

Strategic and legal development

Government has adopted many strategic documents related to the development of information society in the Republic of Serbia. Following Strategies are in the effect:

- Strategy for the development of electronic communications in the Republic of Serbia from 2010 to 2020¹²
- Strategy for the development of the information society by 2020¹³

These two strategies that represent the Digital Agenda for the Republic of Serbia are being replaced by newly adopted Strategy of the development of digital skills 2020 – 2024¹⁴.

- Strategy for the development of next generation networks by 2023¹⁵
- The information security development strategy in the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2017 to 2020¹⁶
- Strategy for the development of the information technology industry for the period from 2017 to 2020¹⁷
- Strategy for the development of artificial intelligence¹⁸

These strategies are followed by a legal framework that is according to the Annual Progress report of the EU for 2019: "Moderately prepared in the field of information society and media. There has been some progress in the last year, especially in the Digital Single Market and in the Information Society and e-Government. However, the recommendations of the previous report were not met. In the coming year, Serbia should in particular: align its legislative framework in the field of electronic communications with the EU regulatory framework of 2009; ensure the financial and operational independence of the regulatory bodies for electronic communications and postal

¹²

https://www.ratel.rs/uploads/documents/pdf_documents/documents/Regulativa/Strategije/Strategija_razvoja_elektronskih_komunikacija_2010-2020.pdf Accessed 26. 6. 2020.

¹³

https://www.ratel.rs/uploads/documents/pdf_documents/documents/razno/Strategija%20razvoja%20informacionog%20društva.pdf Accessed 26. 6. 2020.

¹⁴ Adopted on 27. February 2020. <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/extfile/sr/448245/strategija-razvoja-digitalnih-vestina-RS-2020-24-0215-cyr.zip> Accessed 26. 6. 2020.

¹⁵ <http://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/vlada/strategija/2018/33/1> Accessed 26. 6. 2020.

¹⁶ https://www.ratel.rs/uploads/documents/empire_plugin/strategija-razvoja-informacione-bezbednosti055_lat%20-%20Copy.pdf Accessed 26. 6. 2020.

¹⁷ <http://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/vlada/strategija/2016/95/1/reg> Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

¹⁸ Adopted in December 2019. <http://www.mpn.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/1-Nacrt-strategije-razvoja-ve%C5%Alt%C4%8Dke-inteligencije-u-Republici-Srbiji-za-period-2020.-2025-godine.pdf> Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

Government just recently, in June 2020, adopted an Action Plan for the development of artificial intelligence 2020 – 2022. One of the measures is the improvement of teaching contents in primary and secondary schools. The goal is to introduce one subject in primary school in which artificial intelligence is included in the curriculum, by 2021. According to the action plan, there were two such subjects in high schools in 2019, so it was planned to have four in 2021 and seven in 2022. Establishing the Institute for Artificial Intelligence is planned for 2021. When it comes to the development of public services based on AI, it is planned to create regulatory conditions for the introduction of the restricted market exception "regulatory sandbox" in order to test solutions based on artificial intelligence in 4 areas of public importance (health and medicine, agriculture and forestry, transport, smart cities).

services (RATEL) and for electronic media (REM); take measures to ensure the enforcement of competition measures and to facilitate the access of operators to telecommunications infrastructure (channels, antennas, optical and fixed telephony infrastructure)."

In the field of electronic communications and information technologies, the new Law on Electronic Communications has yet to be adopted to align Serbian legislation with the EU regulatory framework.¹⁹ Current Law on Electronic Communications originates from 2010²⁰, although it underwent changes in 2013, 2014, 2018, they were of no significant scope. Even though a new draft of the Law on Electronic Communications was prepared in 2018, it was withdrawn from the parliamentary procedure by the Government. The new draft Law is currently in the process of drafting and is expected to be completely aligned with the European Electronic Communications Code that was last updated on 11 September 2019²¹.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted, on 4 June 2020, the e-Government Development Program 2020-2022 and the Action Plan for its implementation, which paves the way for further development of e-Government in Serbia. The program envisages as many as 300 new electronic services for citizens and the economy, which will be developed in the next two years. The e-Government Development Program 2020-2022 was prepared by the Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government, the Office for Information Technologies and Electronic Government and other state bodies, and the development was supported by the European Union within the project "Support to Public Administration Reforms public administration", the UK Government Good Governance Fund, UNDP and NALED.²² The e-Government development program has four goals, and the most important for citizens are the improvement of the e-Government Portal, the increase in the number of electronic services and a new approach to the digitalization of procedures with a focus on life events. In case of relocation, payment of taxes, car registration and other similar opportunities, citizens will be able to immediately perform all procedures electronically, instead of solving them one by one. All services will be available via mobile phone, and citizens and the economy will have the opportunity to monitor the stage of resolution of their request and finally assess the quality of service. The basis for the development of eGovernment will be digital infrastructure: the completion of the State Data Center in Kragujevac, connecting local governments to a single information and communication network of the e-Government and the establishment of an e-Office and e-Archive. Thus, the work of public administration would be fully digitalized and it would be possible to receive, create and store electronic documents. Of strategic importance, as stated, are the completion of the Central Population Register and the development of the Metaregister, strengthening information security and training officers to work in a new way, in a digital environment. One of the key goals of the Program is the security of e-Government. Citizens will be able to check what personal data the authorities store, to submit a request for change or to find out who uses that data and how. Electronic documents will be recognized and accepted by courts, notaries and executors, while institutions will confirm their authenticity with their e-seal, instead of the e-signature of individual officials. The program will also resolve the issue of submitting documents. Instead of waiting for the

¹⁹ Republic of Serbia Progress Report for 2019

https://www.mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/eu_dokumenta/godisnji_izvestaji_ek_o_napretku/20190529-serbia-report_SR_-_REVIDIRANO.pdf Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

²⁰ Law on Electronic Communications https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon_o_elektronskim_komunikacijama.html Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

²¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/european-electronic-communications-code-updating-eu-telecom-rules> Accessed 26. 6. 2020.

²² <http://mduls.gov.rs/saopstenja/usvojen-program-razvoje-e-uprave-2020-2022-300-novih-elektronskih-usluga-i-servisa-za-gradjane-i-privredu/?script=lat> Accessed 26. 6. 2020.

postman, citizens and businesses receive an electronic solution from the local tax administration for property tax in the Single Electronic Inbox on the eGovernment Portal. It will be similar with the delivery of a court decision, cadaster or some other body, which will solve the decades-old problem of obsolescence of procedures due to poor delivery, and it is expected that by 2022, the electronic mailbox will have at least 640,000 citizens and 150,000 companies. The special goal of the Program is dedicated to opening the data that are in the possession of state bodies so that all citizens, especially the economy, can use them to create new services and products and encourage economic development. It will also be the basis for creating a platform for the exchange of data important for local development so that local governments can start applying the concept of smart cities in the development of services.²³

Not many analyses that identify existing gaps in the legal framework in the field of DA/e-governance are available on-line. Both government conducted analyses are supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. First one is Digital inclusion report in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2014-2018, whose objective is to map existing initiatives that contribute to the advancement of this area and include: a review of the legal, strategic and institutional framework in the field of digital inclusion, analysis of the current situation and review measures and programs implemented. Taking into account good practices from the world and the region, as well as the constant development of the ICT field, the Report proposes recommendations for improvement in the field of digital inclusion for the coming period.²⁴ Other report, with the same partner – Assessment of the state of e-government in 60 local self-government units in the Republic of Serbia, is a comprehensive survey on the current state of eGovernance and eServices provided by LGs to citizens and the economy, on a representative sample of 60 LSGs in Serbia. Three sets of indicators related to the provision of electronic services, capacity and willingness of LSGs to implement eServices, IT literacy, perception and satisfaction of e-Government services were observed.²⁵

²³ <http://rs.n1info.com/SciTech/a606927/NALED-Jedinstveno-elektronsko-sanduce-eUprave-zamenice-postara.html> Accessed 26. 6. 2020.

²⁴ Pg 6 http://socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Izvestaj_o_digitalnoj_ukljucenosti_RS_2014-2018_lat.pdf Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

²⁵ <http://socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/sr/swiss-pro-%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%98%D0%B0%D0%B2%D1%99%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%BE%D1%86%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%9A%D0%B0-%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BA%D1%82%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA/> Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

Administrative capacities

Digital Agenda is being tackled by three public institutions/sectors simultaneously. Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, Digital Agenda Department²⁶, who prepares the legal framework for the process. Government Office for Information Technologies and e-government, that is directly under the authority of the government, manages the process, e-government and implements the projects²⁷. Within the cabinet of the Prime-minister is the "Delivery unit" that is composed of advisors for various topics related to the Digital Agenda. The Ministry of state administration and local self-government, is in charge of the domain of public administration reform and the e-government. This Ministry coordinates e-government development at the regional/local level.²⁸

Additionally, duty of the independent agency - The Regulatory Agency for Electronic Communications and Postal Services (RATEL), is to effectively implement established electronic communications policy, promote competition in the area of electronic communications networks and services, enhance their capacity and/or quality, contribute to the development of electronic communications market and protect the interests of users of electronic communications and postal services. In addition, RATEL is responsible for the operation of the National Centre for the Prevention of Security Risks in Information and Communication Systems (SRB CERT), conducting coordination, prevention and protection from security risks in ICT systems.²⁹ Also, in the field of business, Serbian Chamber of Commerce established Center for Digital Transformation coordination and implementation of digital transformation in all private sector industries, with a particular focus on SMEs.³⁰

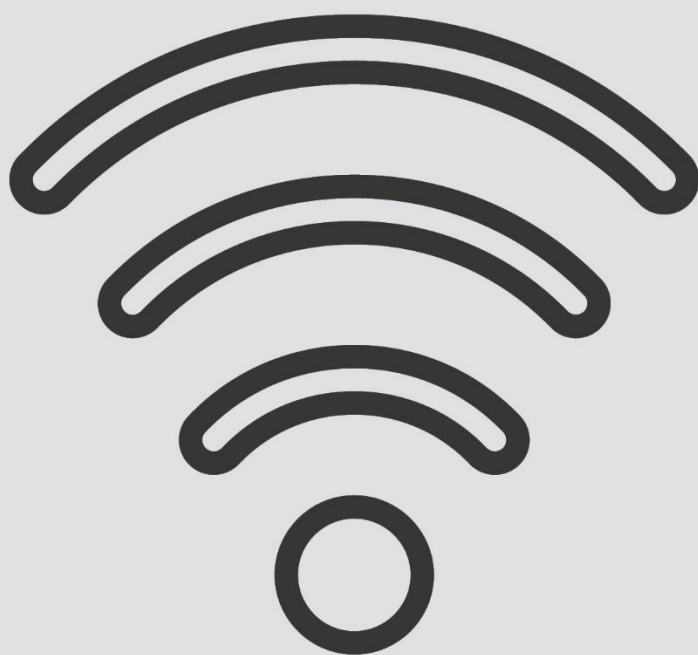
²⁶ Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, web-site, <https://mtt.gov.rs/sektori/uprava-za-digitalnu-agendu/sektor-za-digitalnu-agendu/> Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

²⁷ Office for information technologies and e-government, web-site, <https://www.ite.gov.rs/tekst/149/kancelarija-za-it-i-eupravu.php> Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

²⁸ Minister recalled in his statement that 188 local administrative procedures were signed in order to harmonize the practice in order to avoid differences in management practices in cities and municipalities in Serbia. Minister pointed out that the Local Government Fund financed the introduction of e-Government and information technologies into the work of 18 municipalities in Serbia last year, adding that this year the Fund has been increased by 50 percent and that various projects with which local self-governments will be supported with close to half a billion dinars can compete until April 1st. <https://www.blic.rs/biznis/vesti/ruzic-vise-od-1400000-puta-razmenjeni-podaci-preko-ezup-a/vxvsvby> Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

²⁹ The Regulatory Agency for Electronic Communications and Postal Services, web-site, <https://www.ratel.rs/cyr/page/cyr-ratel> Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

³⁰ Center for Digital Transformation, web-site, <https://cdt.org.rs/index.php/o-projektu/> Accessed 2. 5. 2020.



3



e-Services and key enablers
to deliver them

e-Services and key enablers to deliver them

Delivery of e-services

Government has established web portal e-Government³¹ that represents a unique place where public administration electronic services are presented. Following services from the table below, according to recent data from that portal are the most used ones, it has to do a lot with the period of the year and recent state of emergency³². Other than that, remaining services are the ones that were by their nature obligatory for all the citizens of Serbia, like requests for issuing new health cards or scheduling appointments for reissuing passports. Each web-page of the service provides detailed instruction on how to acquire it. However, the portal itself has no quality mechanisms of user support. The only interactive option it offers, is contact form³³. There is no possibility of providing feedback or filing of complaints. The portal has 1.008.490 registered users, and 76.028 services provided in the month of April 2020.³⁴ Besides the portal itself, the survey shows that 7.5% of the internet population uses internet services instead of making personal contacts or visiting public institutions or administration bodies. Over 1.550.000 persons use electronic public administration services. The survey also found that 34.2% of the internet population used the internet for obtaining information from the public institutions websites and 21.1% for downloading official forms.³⁵

There were several campaigns of the government to promote the e-government concept. Most recent and with the largest reach, since it is all media commercial, financed by the EU, refers to public administration tailored by the citizens' needs. Commercials were broadcasted through various TV stations, on billboards, public transportation etc.³⁶ In July 2019, the service e-inspector won third place as the most innovative initiative of the year on the international competition "Europe in the making".³⁷ This fortunate event was advertised through the media, to increase public awareness on the e-government potential. The latest attempt to involve wider audience into promoting of e-government concept, was the conference "Information and eGovernment: A spark for the future", that was organized by government Office for Information Technology and Electronic Governance and the United Nations Development Program, supported by the United Kingdom Good Governance Fund.³⁸

³¹ <https://euprava.gov.rs/> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

³² The Republic of Serbia underwent State of Emergency due to COVID virus pandemic from 15 March 2020 by 6 May 2020

³³ <https://euprava.gov.rs/kontakt> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

³⁴ <https://euprava.gov.rs/> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

³⁵ Use of information and communication technologies in the Republic of Serbia, 2019. pg 24

<https://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G2019/Pdf/G201916014.pdf> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

³⁶ <http://mduls.gov.rs/uprava-po-meri-svih-nas/?script=lat> Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

³⁷ <https://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/125/drustvo/3577487/e-inspektor-medju-tri-najbolje-inovativne-inicijative.html> Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

³⁸ <https://www.ite.gov.rs/vest/4740/podaci-i-euprava-iskra-za-buducnost.php> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

Table 2 – Most used services

Name of e-service	Service provider	URL	Short description
Motion for movement of physical persons during a restraining order	Municipalities	https://cutt.ly/7f13cOL	The application is submitted by citizens who need a permit to move because they take care of the users of services (home help – social care service, social care service personal assistant or other). Afterwards the permit is sent to their home address.
e-Kindergarden	Kindergardens	https://cutt.ly/6f13leg	Applying for the kindergarten. When using this electronic service, the necessary birth records, the Central Register of Compulsory Social Security and residence records are automatically obtained so that parents do not have to submit any documents at the time of their child's registration, nor go to any counter.
Expressing interest in primary school enrollment	Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development	https://cutt.ly/lf13Fzy	Instead of enrolling, parents and other legal representatives can contact the school where they want to enroll their child through the new online service "Expressing Interest in Elementary School Enrollment" on the eGovernment Portal, or by telephone at the school itself. In this way, schools will record the parents' interest in enrolling their child in a particular school so that they know roughly what number of students they can expect.
Renewal of vehicle registration at authorized technical inspections (service for natural persons)	Ministry of Interior	https://cutt.ly/lf13BZ8	The electronic service "Extension of Vehicle Registration with Authorized Legal Person for Performing Vehicle Technical Inspection" is provided to natural persons – owners of vehicles. The aim of this service is to extend the registration of vehicles (proof that the registration has been extended is a registration sticker) for vehicles entered in the unique vehicle register without going to the competent police station according to the place of residence.
Requesting issuing of a Health Card and Replacing a Health Booklet with a Health Card	Republic Fund for Health Insurance	https://cutt.ly/Sf1341b	Deadline for replacement of health booklets with health cards was 31.12.2016. Insured persons who have not applied at that time for a replacement could do so after expiration of the deadline.

There is a discussion within the public and the authorities on whether the citizens themselves should advocate for digitalization of services according to their needs or there is a responsibility of the Government to initiate and to offer the citizens what should meet their needs. One of the most successful e-government services is providing 100 euros to each adult citizen of the Republic of Serbia as an impetus to the consumption in the post Corona crisis period. The Public Treasury Administration had a very short period of time (around three weeks) to create the program for on-line applications for this service and afterwards for payments to around 6.200.000 of citizens. Around 4.325.500 of citizens managed to electronically apply through the special web-page of the

Public Treasury Administration³⁹ which is a good indicator that 60% of the population managed to use e-service, when they clearly identified their benefit from it. This example can be used in discussing further potential of the e-government development and potential methods for its implementation.

Digital identity and signature

Although there are efforts to digitalize more services of public administration, still the process is underdeveloped. The most used digital identification methods are username and password, unlike in the banking sector where codes and tokens are the most used means of verification. However, in this very moment, digital signature is experiencing a rise of popularity. It is the business sector that mainly embraces the advantages of such tools, followed by an increase in physical persons applying for the same.⁴⁰ It is regulated with the Law on Electronic Document, Electronic Identification and Security Services in Electronic Commerce⁴¹ adopted in October 2017. Following certification institutions are providing electronic certificates ie digital signatures:

- Privredna komora Srbije⁴²/Serbian Chamber of Commerce
- Pošta Srbije⁴³/Post of Serbia
- Halcom⁴⁴ / HALCOM BG CA is certification body intended for issuing digital certificates for individuals and legal entities and for providing technological services related to electronic signatures.
- MUP⁴⁵/Ministry of Interior
- Certification body eSmart Systems⁴⁶/ E-Smart Systems d.o.o. is a domestic company engaged in the development, design, consulting, education, production, installation and implementation of IT solutions.

The Ministry of Interior issues a digital signature free of charge directly to the ID card (embedded in the chip), however it works exclusively on computers with Windows operating systems. So this does not apply to Apple users. Simple middleware and architecture is such that these electronic signatures (certificates) can be used solely and exclusively on Microsoft Windows computers. Apple users must go to the Post Office and pay for their digital signature. Therefore, the Post Office is the only certification body that issues digital signatures for individuals that can be used on almost all platforms (Windows, OS X, Linux).⁴⁷ Unique Citizens Identification Number (JMBG) is an integral part of the name of the certificate user and may be visible to the recipient of the signed document.⁴⁸

³⁹ <https://idp.trezor.gov.rs/> Accessed 26. 6. 2020.

⁴⁰ 5% of the citizens is using the digital signature, European Commission Progress Report for Serbia 2019 https://www.mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/eu_dokumenta/godisnji_izvestaji_ek_o_napretku/20190529-serbia-report_SR_-_REVIDIRANO.pdf Accessed 14. 9. 2020.

⁴¹ <http://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/skupstina/zakon/2017/94/4/reg> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

⁴² <http://www.pks.rs/Usluge.aspx?tipUslugaID=2> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

⁴³ <http://www.ca.posta.rs/> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

⁴⁴ <http://www.halcom.rs/index.php?section=80> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

⁴⁵ http://www.mup.gov.rs/cms_cir/dokumenta.nsf/e-Usluge Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

⁴⁶ <http://www.e-smartsys.com/sr/uslugemain/Pages/ESS-QCA-kvalifikovani-sertifikati-za-elektronski-potpis.aspx> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

⁴⁷ <https://www.vesti.rs/Drustvo/Apsolutno-sve-o-sertifikatima-Zverko.html> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

⁴⁸ Ministry of Interior <http://ca.mup.gov.rs/informacije-lat.html> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

The Office for IT and e-Government became the first institution registered in the Register of Providers of Electronic Identification Services and Electronic Identification Schemes in the Republic of Serbia, in compliance with the Law on Electronic Document, Electronic Signature and Trust Services in Electronic Business. With this act, the Office has become the only institution that guarantees the reliability of electronic identities of citizens, as well as the safe use of e-government services. This means that citizens of the Republic of Serbia and foreign citizens who have been granted permanent residence in the Republic of Serbia will not have to remember numerous passwords for using e-government services on various state portals, nor will they have to login and register for each of the individual portals and web presentations. It is enough to identify themselves electronically on the e-Government Portal. Electronic identification on the e-Government Portal is possible with different levels of security: basic level of reliability using a user account and password, medium level of reliability using two-factor authentication using an application on a mobile phone or tablet, or high level of reliability using a qualified electronic certificate.⁴⁹

Privacy and data protection

Protection of personal data is regulated with the Law on the Protection of Personal Data (Official Gazette no. 87/2018)⁵⁰, whose implementation began in August 2019. Law itself is in great deal in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (EU GDPR). For the most part, the text is an adapted translation of the GDPR as well as of the so-called Police directives, governing the processing of personal data by the competent authorities in relation to criminal proceedings and threats to national security. It can therefore be considered that the principles of GDPR (and the Police Directive) have been introduced in the domestic system.⁵¹ Overseeing of the privacy protection was attributed to already existing institution of Commissioner for Information of Public Importance, which becomes Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Protection of Personal Data⁵². According to the Law, article 21, para 1: "The operator is obliged to take appropriate measures to provide the data subject with all the information referred to in art. 23 and 24 of this Law, that is, information regarding the exercise of the rights referred to in article 26, article 29 to 31, article 33, art. 36 to 38 and article 53 of this Law, in a concise, transparent, understandable and easily accessible manner, using clear and simple words, especially in the case of information intended for a minor. This information shall be provided in writing or other form, including electronic form, as appropriate. If requested by the data subject, the information may be provided orally, provided that the identity of the person is undoubtedly established". And related to informing of citizens of who can access their data, article 24 of the Law states: "If the personal data is not collected from the data subject, the operator is obliged to provide the data subject with the following information..., point 5) about the recipient, or group of recipients of the personal data, if any. The provisions of these Articles shall not apply to the processing of data carried out by competent authorities for specific purposes". The citizens are guaranteed with this Law their right to be informed at any time about who is using their personal data and for what purposes.

⁴⁹ Accessed on 26. 6. 2020.

https://www.ite.gov.rs/vest/5056?fbclid=IwAR2qwtEHguWrkTPSrO8TSyvX_TSDv95hVotHgCTnV0y7t48u70S370QlF6E

⁵⁰ Law on the Protection of Personal Data <https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon-o-zastiti-podataka-o-licnosti.html>

⁵¹ Guide through the Law on the protection of personal data and GDPR, Share Foundation, pg. 13

https://www.sharefoundation.info/Documents/Vodic_ZZPL.pdf Accessed 26. 6. 2020.

⁵² Information Booklet of the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Protection of Personal Data

<https://www.poverenik.rs/images/stories/informator-o-radu/2020/mart/INFORMATOR-MART-latinica.docx> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

Furthermore, the recently adopted, e-Government Development Program 2020-2022 and the Action Plan for its implementation will enable the citizens to check what personal data the authorities store, to submit a request for change or to find out who uses that data and how.

4



Digital literacy of citizens

Digital literacy of citizens

Data on digital literacy in the Republic of Serbia, which is regularly published by the Republic Office of Statistics in statistical yearbooks, show that 34.2% of persons aged 15 and over are computer literate, while 14.8% of persons are partially computer literate. Observed by gender, the share of men and women is almost equal among computer literates (50.4% of men and 49.6% of women are computer literate), while the share of women (54%) than men is illiterate among computer illiterates (46%).⁵³ Computer literate people are people who can perform four basic activities on a computer, namely: word processing, making spreadsheets, sending and receiving e-mail and using the Internet. Persons who are partially familiar with computer work are persons who can perform one, two or three activities on a computer, but not all four listed, while computer illiterate persons are persons who are not able to perform any activity on a computer. These data indicate the number of persons who need to be provided with digital literacy at least at the basic level, given that computer illiterate persons in the Republic of Serbia are 51%.⁵⁴

	Women	Men	Total
Computer literate	49,6%	50,4%	34,2%
Partially computer literate	49,1%	50,9%	14,8%
Computer illiterate	54,0%	46,0%	51,0%

It is the estimation of the Marko Mudrinić, Editor in Chief of the web-portal Netokracija⁵⁵, who is a programmer himself, that the digital literacy of the citizens is poor and that the solutions Government offers are of poor quality. He says that the state is limited with the budget and cannot afford to pay for the experts in this area. On-line services are overly complicated due to poor procedures. State administration servants do not grasp the process of digitalization and are therefore inefficient. It is his opinion that the process of digitalization should be initiated by the citizens and not the EU, however, it is easier to implement this in developed countries where digital literacy is on a high level.⁵⁶

Government of Serbia adopted The Strategy of the Development of Digital Skills in the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2020 to 2024⁵⁷, on 27 February 2020, assessing that this initiated the process of inclusion of the entire population and economy into a digital society. The overall objective of the Strategy of the Development of Digital Skills 2020 – 2024 is to improve the digital knowledge and skills of all citizens, including members of vulnerable social groups, to enable the monitoring of the development of information and communication technologies in all fields and to meet the needs of the economy and the labor market. Accordingly, the specific objectives are to enhance digital competences in the education system, to improve basic and advanced digital skills for all citizens, to develop digital skills in relation to the needs of the labor market, and to provide

⁵³ Statistical Yearbook of the Republic Office of Statistics for 2018, Belgrade 2018 <http://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G2018/Pdf/G20182051.pdf> Accessed 26. 6. 2020.

⁵⁴ Strategy of development of digital skills 2020 – 2024 <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/extfile/sr/448245/strategija-razvoja-digitalnih-vestina-RS-2020-24-0215-cyr.zip> Accessed 26. 6. 2020.

⁵⁵ <https://www.netokracija.rs/> Accessed 26. 6. 2020.

⁵⁶ Interview with Marko Mudrinić, Editor in Chief of the web-portal Netokracija, Belgrade 28 May 2020

⁵⁷ Strategy of development of digital skills 2020 – 2024 <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/extfile/sr/448245/strategija-razvoja-digitalnih-vestina-RS-2020-24-0215-cyr.zip> Accessed 26. 6. 2020.

lifelong learning for ICT professionals.⁵⁸ The main goal of the Strategy, as stated is: „The Strategy of the Development of Digital Skills in the Republic of Serbia for the Period from 2020 to 2024 determines in a unique and comprehensive way the directions of action in the field of improving digital skills in the Republic of Serbia, having in mind the results achieved so far. directions of development of the capacity of the entire society for the use of modern information and communication technologies, development of the information society and digital economy in the Republic of Serbia.”⁵⁹ The main challenges of the perceived lack of digital skills in the Strategy are identified challenges in the field of education and training, development of digital skills for all citizens, development of digital skills in relation to the needs of the labor market, as well as monitoring further development of this area by ICT experts. And the indicator based on which the success of the general goal will be measured is increasing the computer literacy of the citizens from 34,2% of digitally literate citizens in 2018 to 46,2% in 2024, alongside with 26,8% of partially literate. The strategy itself does not elaborate financial sources for its implementation, it merely mentioned in one sentence that assets will be provided from the budget based on the availability and additionally from donations.

One of the measures for increasing the digital literacy of the citizens from an early age is newly announced measure of introducing in September in the first grade of elementary school, obligatory subject: “Digital world”⁶⁰. Newly adopted Strategy for development of digital skills 2020 – 2024 tackles Promoting of digital competences in the educational system, this goal refers to training of the lecturers and establishing of necessary infrastructure in schools for practicing information technologies.

⁵⁸ <https://pcpress.rs/usvojena-strategija-razvoja-digitalnih-vestina/> Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

⁵⁹ Pg 29, Strategy of development of digital skills 2020 – 2024 <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/extfile/sr/448245/strategija-razvoja-digitalnih-vestina-RS-2020-24-0215-cyr.zip> Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

⁶⁰ <http://www.mpn.gov.rs/digitalni-svet-za-buduce-prvake/> Accessed 26. 6. 2020.

5



Cyber security

Cyber security

Cyber security is entrusted to the Department for curbing high-tech crime of the Ministry of Interior and the Special Prosecution for Hi-Tech Criminal⁶¹. Police has recently established a Department for curbing harmful content on the internet in August 2019.⁶² However, these institutions do not have corresponding roles in the process of regulation drafting. It is mainly in the hands of the Government, with consulting the relevant actors. State Secretary at the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, Tatjana Matić, stated in November 2016, that the strategic documents for the IT industry development and improvement have been adopted. She noted that the adoption of four decrees of the Law on Information Security, is of great importance for the development of the information society. The following regulations were adopted: Regulation on closer content of the Act on Security of Information and Communication Systems of Special Importance, method of verification and content of reports on security audits of ICT systems of special importance, Regulation on closer regulation of ICT security measures of particular importance, Regulation on the establishment of a list of jobs in areas where activities of general interest are performed and where ICT systems of particular importance are used, as well as the Decree on the procedure for submission of data, lists, types and significance of incidents and the procedure for notification of incidents in ICT systems of particular importance.⁶³ Additionally, the first City Data Center was put into operation in the city of Kragujevac, that will, with the most up-to-date system of protection, store the data of the city administrations, public companies and institutions, as well as provide connection to the republic databases. The project is a donation from China in equipment and system software worth about \$ 2 million.⁶⁴

According to the National Cyber Security Index of the E-government Academy, Serbia is ranked as 15. in the list of 160 countries, with the score of 77,92.⁶⁵ Having the maximum score in following areas: cyber security policy development, protection of digital services, protection of essential services, e-identification and trust services, protection of personal data, cyber incident response, fight against cybercrime. The lowest score came in cyber threat analysis and information and contribution to global cyber security.

The research of the Startit, from June 2020⁶⁶ showed that majority of state institutions' web-sites are unsafe. Based on the verification of 113 web-sites of the various state authorities 70% is marked as unsafe. Privacy of data exchange and authenticity is not guaranteed by 78 out of 113 sites of republic bodies. They are marked as insecure because they do not have an SSL/TLS certificate. Ministries unlike the administrations and independent bodies had the best results of the clusters of public organs. What is shocking is that web-sites of the Tax Administration, National Assembly, Constitutional Court and Republic Public Prosecutor did not dispose of this certificate.⁶⁷

⁶¹ Special Prosecution for Hi-Tech Criminal, web-site, <http://www.begrad.vtk.jt.rs/> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

⁶² <http://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/435429/Policija-formirala-odsek-za-suzbijanje-stetnih-sadrzaja-na-internetu> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

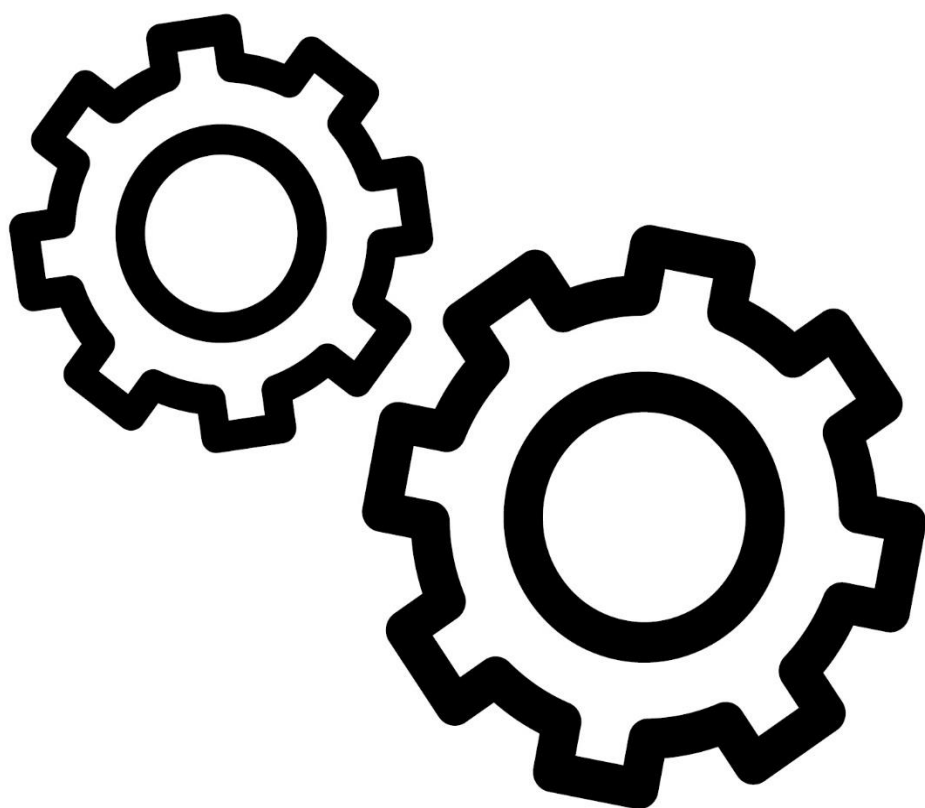
⁶³ <https://www.pametnoibezbedno.gov.rs/vest/1173> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

⁶⁴ <http://rs.n1info.com/Biznis/a576272/Gradski-data-centar-u-Kragujevcu-pusten-u-rad.html> Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

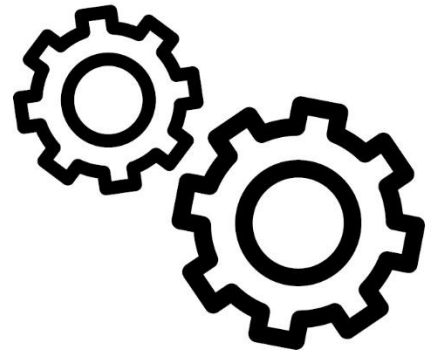
⁶⁵ <https://ncsi.ega.ee/ncsi-index/> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

⁶⁶ Startit https://startit.rs/posetili-smo-vise-od-100-sajtova-drzavnih-institucija-70-nebezbedno/?fbclid=IwAR0d6C7mxETOJLOE5eqp40Q-SIWlss9BI8B2ISTC_6w8ydkOyehaZbNF1hl Accessed 26. 6. 2020.

⁶⁷ Startit https://startit.rs/posetili-smo-vise-od-100-sajtova-drzavnih-institucija-70-nebezbedno/?fbclid=IwAR0d6C7mxETOJLOE5eqp40Q-SIWlss9BI8B2ISTC_6w8ydkOyehaZbNF1hl Accessed 26. 6. 2020.



6



Citizen participation in
policy making

Citizen participation in policy making

Serbia has effective one of the best Laws on Free Access to Information of Public Importance⁶⁸ in the world, according to Access Info Global Right to Information rating.⁶⁹ The public has a legitimate interest to know, always when it comes to information at the disposal of the authority related to endangering, ie protection of health of the population and the environment, and if it is other information at the disposal of the authority, it is considered that the justified interest of the public to know under this law exists unless the authority proves otherwise. Furthermore, the Government established Open Data Portal⁷⁰. Opening of the data in the possession of public institutions for their reuse is a strategic commitment of the Government of Serbia, as stated in the e-Government Development Strategy in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2015 to 2018, as well as action plans for the implementation of the Open Government Partnership initiative in the Republic Serbia for 2016–2017 and 2018–2020. Following datasets are presented on the portal: public security, education, energy, administration, health, environment. Data are published by 57 organizations, foundations, municipalities, agencies, independent bodies, ministries, and in total there are 270 datasets⁷¹. Citizens are provided with the possibility to request for opening of data from an institution, by the Law on Electronic Administration⁷² which introduced the obligation to provide machine-readable data upon request, in a similar manner that functions the request for information of public importance. Access to public sector information is overseen by the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Protection of Personal Data and development of open data is in the hands of the Government and its Office for Information Technologies and e-Government.

Citizens participation in the policy making process is regulated by the Rules of Procedure of the Government⁷³. Namely, this act regulates obligatory organizing of public debates for the draft laws that regulate certain areas for the first time and for those of the utmost importance, like the budget law etc. However, improvement was accomplished through the Law on Planning System⁷⁴, that envisaged obligation of consulting all stakeholders even in the stage of drafting of all planning documents, before the draft is presented to public debate. Strategies and action plans in the area of civic participation are National Strategy for Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2015–2019 years⁷⁵, that expired in the previous year. To the proposal of the Office for Cooperation with the Civil Society, the Government of the Republic of Serbia, at its session held on 30 January 2020, adopted Guidelines for the inclusion of civil society organizations in working groups for drafting public policy documents and drafts⁷⁶, that is, the draft regulation [Official Gazette of the RS, No. 8/20]⁷⁷. Calls for participation in public debates are

⁶⁸ Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance

https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon_o_slobodnom_pristupu_informacijama_od_javnog_znacaja.html Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

⁶⁹ <https://www.rti-rating.org/country-data/> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

⁷⁰ Open Data Portal <https://data.gov.rs/sr/> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

⁷¹ Data from 3. 5. 2020. <https://data.gov.rs/sr/datasets/>

⁷² Law on Electronic Administration <https://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/skupstina/zakon/2018/27/4/reg> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

⁷³ Rules of Procedure of the Government <http://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/ministarstva%20poslovnika/2006/61/1/reg> Accessed 26. 6. 2020.

⁷⁴ Law on Planning System <https://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/skupstina/zakon/2018/30/1/reg> Accessed 26. 6. 2020.

⁷⁵ <http://civilnodrustvo.gov.rs/podsticajno-okruzenje/pravni-okvir/nacionalna-strategija.371.html?categoryId=2> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

⁷⁶ Conclusion 05 No. 011-722 / 2020

⁷⁷ <http://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/vlada/zakljucak/2014/90/1/reg> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

published on the portal „Public Debates“⁷⁸, that is related to the e-government portal. There is also an obligation of institutions to publish it simultaneously on their web-pages.

On-line survey about recognizing the goals of the Digital Agenda and participation in the process by media, CSOs and institutions was answered by merely 8% of the examinees. This is a good indicator of the lack of awareness about the importance of this topic. None of the state institutions answered, and only two media did. Media and CSOs estimated that there is lack of knowledge of the public about this topic, 80% of respondents answered of not knowing about the existence of the Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans and same percentage was not included into the process of development of e-government and that additional education is the method to be used to overcome this obstacle. 90% of CSOs haven't used any of the on-line platforms to provide input to the government and 80% of them are interested in engaging themselves into the process of the developing the Digital Agenda. All of these numbers clearly show that this topic remained unnoticed since its initiation, however there is a spark of interest and the will to join the process. Worrying trend is that the institutions for the most part remained silent. Having in mind that one part of the incentive towards this subject should come from them, especially in the field of e-governance. General conclusion is that although being on the state agenda for already two years now, the Digital Agenda, and its benefits, remains an unfamiliar term to majority of stakeholders.

Initiatives, petitions and proposals

The right of citizens to submit initiatives, petitions and proposals is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia. Pursuant to the Law on the National Assembly, the National Assembly and/or MPs consider initiatives, petitions and proposals. Namely, as the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly further stipulate the committees of the National Assembly, as its working bodies, within their scope, consider initiatives, petitions and proposals. After considering the submitted initiatives, petitions and proposals, the committee informs the petitioner of the initiative in writing. In the case that the committee forwards an initiative, the petition and the proposal to another competent body, it will inform its applicant. Citizens can submit initiatives, petitions and proposals as follows:

- In writing or electronically, in which case they may use the form available to citizens on the website of the National Assembly. Anonymous submissions and submissions that are unclear, illegible, incomprehensible, or offensive content are not considered
- Citizens can contact National Assembly by telephone
- Citizens may also contact the National Assembly or its working body directly, in which case representatives will welcome them at the premises of the National Assembly.⁷⁹

Besides the National Assembly, there is the on-line portal “Petitions on-line”⁸⁰, established by a private sector, that provides citizens with the on-line tool to collect signatures of others for their cause. Portal presents petitions per years, starting from 2011 and is still active. Most popular petition since the beginning of its operation had 94.052 signatories.

⁷⁸ <http://javnerasprave.euprava.gov.rs/> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

⁷⁹ National Assembly, web-page, <http://www.parlament.gov.rs/gradjani/pitajte/inicijative-peticije-predstavke-i-predlozi.1098.html> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

⁸⁰ <https://www.peticije.online/> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.



7



Open Government
Partnership [OGP]

Open Government Partnership [OGP]

The Republic of Serbia is the member of the Open Government Partnership⁸¹, since its first year of operation, 2012.⁸² The last Action plan was adopted on 29. December 2018 for the period 2018–2020⁸³. Obligations that refer to Digital Agenda related issues are following:

- Obligation 2: Creating of e-calender of public calls for financing of projects and programmes of CSOs from the budget of public administration of the RS
- Obligation 9: Simplification of administrative procedures and regulations – e–Paper
- Obligation 10: Establishing of electronic bulletin board for all state administration organs and municipality organs
- Obligation 11: Improving of proactive transparency – Information Booklets
- Obligation 13: Support to promotion of cooperation of public administration organs and civil society organizations in the process of preparation, adoption and monitoring of implementation of regulations
- Obligation 14: Introducing of legal basis and establishing of electronic system for e–citizens' participation

The process of partnership through this initiative is developing over the years. The working group for drafting the first action plan did not include representatives of CSOs, and already in the second cycle of drafting the AP the working group consisted of representatives of independent bodies, the Chamber of Commerce, 6 CSOs selected on the basis of a public call. The special inter-ministerial working group for the development of the Third Action Plan for the period from 2018 to 2020 and the implementation of the participation of the Republic of Serbia in the Open Government Partnership initiative (Working Group), in addition to state administration representatives, had 6 CSO representatives re-elected, as well as representatives of 5 local self-government units (LGUs) and the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia. The drafting of the fourth Action Plan for the implementation of the Open Government Partnership initiative in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2020–2022 has begun, at the first meeting of the Special Inter-Ministerial Working Group, which was held on May 19, 2020. online, and the plan is expected to be adopted by the end of the year. It was assessed at the meeting that the quality of communication and the openness of the administration towards the proposals of the civil society organizations have significantly increased.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Open Government Partnership Serbia <https://ogp.rs/pou-srbija/> Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

⁸² Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-government, web page, <http://mduls.gov.rs/reforma-javne-uprave/unapredjenje-transparentnosti-uprave/partnerstvo-za-otvorenu-upravu/?script=lat> Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

⁸³ Action plan for implementation of the initiative Open Government Partnership in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2018–2020. <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/AP-OGP-2018%E2%80%932020.pdf?script=lat> Accessed 2. 5. 2020.

⁸⁴ <http://mduls.gov.rs/saopstenja/pocela-izrada-akcionog-plana-za-sprovodjenje-inicijative-partnerstvo-za-otvorenu-upravu-u-republici-srbiji-za-period-2020-2022/?script=lat> Accessed 3. 5. 2020.

Roadmap for Digital Agenda advancement in the Republic of Serbia

Roadmap for Digital Agenda advancement in the Republic of Serbia

Strategic, legal and administrative developments

- Implementation of existing strategies and adoption of viable Action plans. Both strategies and accompanying action plans should be drafted after the careful consideration of the status and the needs corroborated with appropriate researches. Deadlines and activities from the Action plans should be in compliance with the sources of financing, to enable their proper implementation.
- Involving citizens into strategic planning. Citizens should be consulted through their representatives – CSOs, during the whole process of strategic planning, from the initial idea to the discussion about the draft. The process of strategic planning should include citizens' needs into consideration of provisions of the strategic documents.
- Evaluation of implementation of strategic documents. Evaluation of implementation of strategic documents should be done periodically by the authorities that implement them. These reports should serve as a basis for drafting subsequent strategies and for adjusting the planning accordingly.
- Using the Open Government Partnership mechanism. This existing mechanism should be used to strengthen the cooperation between the state administration and civil society actors. Digital agenda related topics should be introduced on a larger scale to the OGP Action plan.
- Open key institutions for communicating with citizens. Key institutions that tackle the Digital agenda issues, especially the Government Office for Information Technologies and e-Government, should have a functioning channel that would be at all times available to the interested citizens for their inputs in electronic form, and to be responsive to citizens' requests.
- Adoption of the new Law on Electronic Communication. New Law on Electronic Communication that is in compliance with all international recommendations, should be adopted as soon as possible. Given the nature of information technologies and the importance of fast reacting to changes, its further amending should be done without delay after identification of market changes.
- E-zup – interoperability of the administration systems. Improve the exchange of information and documents between state institutions, linking more databases and introducing new e-services that will enable the citizens with automatic collection of data from databases that are managed by various state institutions.

Digital literacy

- Strategic approach to educating citizens about the potential of e-government. Relevant stakeholders should organize continuous and strategic education of the citizens about the benefits of introducing e-government. This approach should include citizens of all age and social status, with sensitivity to disabled persons and minorities. The goal is to empower citizens to request for changes, based on their needs.
- Educating citizens on how to use e-government services. Organizing sustainable solutions to provide citizens with assistance in using e-government services, with special emphasis on their availability to all.
- More user-friendly e-government services. The quality of e-government services should be improved into the direction of user friendly applications.
- Completing the e-government services cycle. All e-government services should be electronic from their initiation to the final product. On-line ordering of paper documents should be replaced with initiating an electronic request for state administration service that will then be processed through the information system until the client is delivered an electronic service without its interference.
- Educating journalists and CSOs on how to tackle this topic. More stakeholders, that could disseminate the knowledge about the importance of digitalization and provide relevant inputs to the process, should be included into the education process.
- Capacity building of the public officials for the anonymization of personal data when disclosing the data, but also for improvement of their digital skills.

Cyber security

- Improving the system of web-site security of public institutions. Privacy of data exchange and authenticity should be guaranteed by obtaining an SSL/TLS certificate for all the web-sites of public institutions.
- Promoting of digital signature use among citizens as a supplement to the business sector. Citizens should be encouraged to use the digital signature tool for their private purposes. Procedure of using and obtaining the digital signature should be facilitated.
- Improving protection of personal data. Public institutions that handle databases with personal data should increase their capacities in the area of the protection of personal data, primarily through education of public servants who process the data and by upgrading the systems for the protection of personal data.
- Capacity building of the Special prosecutor for high-tech crime. Special prosecutor's office should be equipped with the latest information technology and reinforced with trained and competent staff.

We are **CRTA (Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability)**, an independent, non-partisan civil society organization committed to developing democratic culture and civic activism.

By creating public policy proposals, advocating for the principles of responsible behavior by the government and state institutions, and educating citizens on their political rights, we are dedicated to establishing the rule of law and developing democratic dialogue.

Since 2016, we have been observing elections, both nationally and locally. We are coordinating the work of the Citizens on Watch network, which has thousands of citizens trained to observe the regularity of voting. The ongoing struggle to improve the conditions for fair and free elections is the backbone of all our activities.

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Project partners:

- e-Governance Academy (Estonia) – www.ega.ee
- Metamorphosis Foundation for Internet and Society (North Macedonia) – www.metamorphosis.org.mk
- NGO 35mm (Montenegro) – www.nvo35mm.org
- Open Data Kosovo (ODK) (Kosovo) – www.opendatakosovo.org
- Lëvizja Mjaft! (Albania) – www.mjaft.org

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