

From transparency to openness: public consultations in local government in Croatia

Anamarija Musa

Information Commissioner of the Republic of Croatia

World Bank - Austria Urban Partnership Program

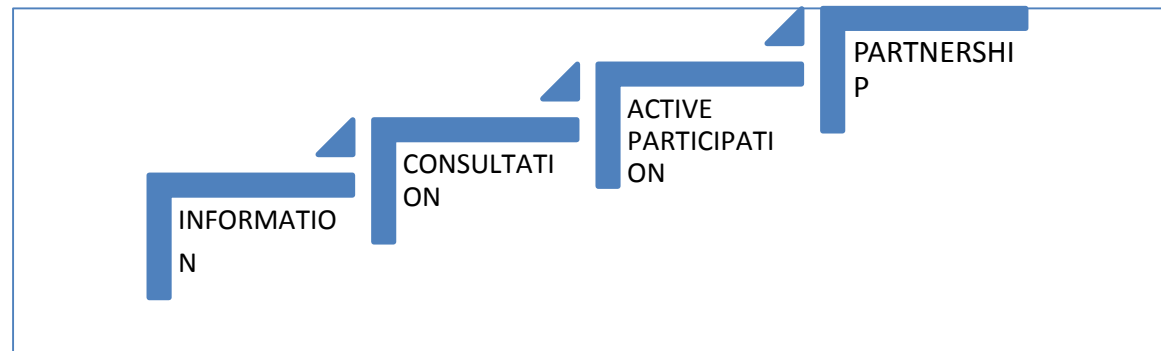
Regional Conference

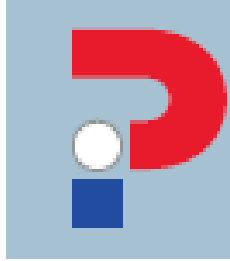
Zagreb, 27-28 March 2017

Transparency & Openness in Local Government



- New public governance: participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable, and inclusive and follows the rule of law, profits from dispersed knowledge and organised interests
- Transparency: **G2C** – INFORMATION - proactive disclosure of information, disclosure upon request - lowers corruption, strengthens accountability, enables development, efficiency in public spending
- Openness: **C2G** – FEEDBACK – consultation, participatory budgeting, other forms of participation – empowers citizens (voice), quality of decisions and services, strengthens legitimacy of regulation, enhances effectiveness of policies

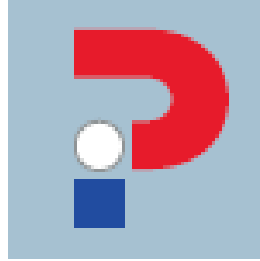




Public consultations in Croatia

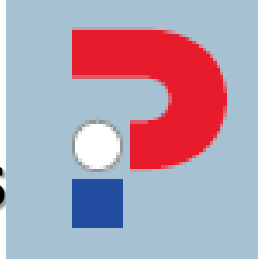
- Government Code of practice for public consultation 2009 / guidelines
- Rules of procedure - Government (2012) and Parliament (2013) – report on consultations
- Law on access to information – article 11 – public consultations
 - On draft laws, by laws, general acts and strategic documents
 - Annual public consultations plan
 - Online consultations + optional other means
 - Report on consultations (including status of proposals)
- Information Commissioner – monitors the applications
- From 2015 eConsultations portal – for central government
- 2011 Open government partnership
- Constitutional Court decisions and reports (2013)
- EU - Article 11 TEU: transparent, open, regular dialogue with citizens and organized interests
- Charter on Local Self-Government – Protocol 207 on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority – not signed by Croatia

Practice of public consultations



- Increase of public consultation at national level – 48 (2011), 144 (2012), 348 (2013), 544 (2014), 630 (2015), 655 (2016)
- Local governments (575 units) – improvements but still facing problems in implementation
- lack of awareness and low capacity
- 30% of local governments adopts annual public consultations plan
- Increase in total number of consultations – 1.198 in 2016, 604 in 2015.
- consultations in environmental matters, urban planning, sustainable waste management
- Participatory budgeting projects - Pazin, Mali Lošinj, Karlovac, Pula, Rijeka
- Guidelines and Handbook by Information Commissioner (2016)

How to improve practice of consultations

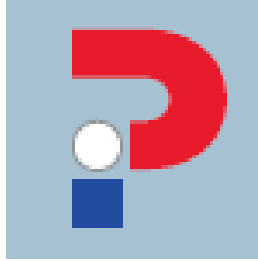


For local governments

- (obey the law)
- **Partnership projects** with civil society
- Introduce **participatory budgeting**

For civil society

- **Monitoring** by citizens and civil society – complaints to Information Commissioner, **before** the act is adopted
- **Request** draft acts by FOIA and create discussion (media, social media)
- **Propose projects** to introduce public consultations (local governments lack know-how)



Thank you for your attention

Dr Anamarija Musa

Information Commissioner

povjerenica@pristupinfo.hr

www.pristupinfo.hr