

Open Government Analysis of the
Office of the Prime Minister in Kosovo (2023)

Proposals for improvements to the current situation

OPEN GOVERNMENT ANALYSIS OF THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER IN KOSOVO (2023)

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INTRODUCTION

The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), as the main executive institution in Kosovo, plays a key role in the development and implementation of state policies, inter-institutional coordination and oversight of key reforms. Since 2022, the OPM has been taking further steps to increase institutional transparency, strengthening the connection between government and citizens. As the center of government decision-making, transparency and accountability remain fundamental pillars for building effective and credible governance.

In an effort to increase transparency and access to information, the OPM has undertaken several concrete measures, such as publishing government decisions, work reports and data on public expenditures on official platforms. In addition, the digitalization of public services and the use of online platforms have facilitated communication with citizens and civil society organizations, making information more open and accessible. However, despite these efforts, the OPM still faces major challenges in this regard. Although a legal framework for transparency and accountability is in place, its implementation in practice remains partial. Improving access to information requires not only political will, but also a more advanced use of technology to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of institutions.

In the context of development and European integration, the OPM is taking continuous steps to increase transparency and accountability, making governance more open and credible. Through the digitalization of services, regular publication of government decisions and the creation of platforms for public consultation, citizens and civil society organizations have more opportunities to participate in decision-making processes. Additionally, new regulations and improved oversight mechanisms strengthen institutional accountability, ensuring a more efficient administration committed to democratic and European standards.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The 2024 analysis is based on four core principles that determine the institutional openness of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) according to the Regional Openness Index. This index measures the level of transparency and accountability of government institutions in the Western Balkans, focusing on citizens' and civil society's access to public information.

The assessment of the OPM is based on four main pillars: transparency, accessibility, integrity and institutional awareness. Transparency is related to the publication of information on the organizational structure, budget management and public procurement processes, ensuring that citizens have clear and easy access to this data. Access includes the level of public information and citizen participation through public consultations, as well as mechanisms that promote their involvement in decision-making processes. Integrity focuses on respecting institutional ethical standards, transparency in lobbying, the implementation of codes of ethics and anti-corruption measures, ensuring a credible and resilient administration. Institutional awareness is related to the monitoring and evaluation of policies to ensure their effectiveness and compliance with the principles of good governance.

The data for this analysis were collected through the review of official documents published on the OPM website, the assessment of the legal framework for transparency and the responses provided by the institutions through structured questionnaires. To ensure accuracy of the assessment, the data were validated with an error margin of +/- 3%. The monitoring process was conducted over an extended period of time and relied on a detailed approach to provide a clear picture of the current situation.

A very important aspect of this analysis is the comparison of the results of 2024 with those of previous years, in order to identify the progress made, remaining challenges and areas that require further improvement. This comparison helps to assess the institutional commitment to a more open, accountable and transparent governance, by providing recommendations for further strengthening these standards.

Openness of the Office of the Prime Minister 2022

During 2022, the Office of the Prime Minister of Kosovo made significant progress in terms of transparency and accountability, achieving a score of 73% according to the institutional performance indicator measurements. This result represents a significant improvement compared to previous years and reflects the OPM's efforts to increase public access to information and enhance open governance.

This year, there was an increase in the publication of official notices and updates in the organization of content on the official website, making it easier for citizens to access information. Inter-institutional cooperation on data sharing was also strengthened, which helped create a clearer picture of government activity.

However, despite this progress, there is still room for further improvements, particularly in strengthening transparency mechanisms and citizen involvement in decision-making processes, as well as in consolidating regular channels for public consultations and effective inter-institutional communication.

Openness of the Office of the Prime Minister 2023

During 2023, the Office of the Prime Minister of Kosovo marked an improvement in the level of transparency compared to the previous year. This achievement was a result of several concrete steps taken by the OPM to strengthen open governance and more actively involve citizens in decision-making processes.

One of the most important initiatives was the launch of the public consultation platform konsultimit.rks-gov.net, which allows citizens and civil society organizations to provide comments on draft laws and strategic documents. The platform represents an important step towards more transparent and inclusive governance, contributing to increased civic engagement.

During this year, the OPM also started publishing all official communications in the country's two official languages, Albanian and Serbian. This measure was intended to ensure equal access to information for all citizens, as well as to minimize the possibilities for misunderstandings or the spread of misinformation.

In line with efforts for greater transparency, the OPM has ensured that competitions for public positions are open and easily accessible to all, aiming to strengthen fairness and integrity in the selection process of public officials.

Another important development occurred in July 2023, when the OPM dedicated a significant fund to improving public communication services. This initiative aimed to better inform citizens about government policies and activities.

The European Parliament's latest report has praised the progress made by the OPM, particularly in improving governance and the fight against corruption. However, the report highlights that there is still room for further improvement, particularly in further strengthening transparency and accountability.

TRANSPARENCA

The Prime Minister's Office has intensified its efforts for transparency and accountability, with a score of 61%. The publication of official documents, the development of digital platforms, and the strengthening of mechanisms for public consultations has ensured easier and more comprehensive access to government information, aiming for more open governance and greater citizen involvement.

An important step towards transparency has been the publication of official materials on the website of the Office of the Prime Minister, including government decisions, regulations, administrative instructions and documents from Government meetings. Among the most important documents of 2024 is Regulation (QRK) No. 17/2024, which reorganizes the responsibilities of the Office of the Prime Minister. This regulation aims to strengthen open governance and increase transparency in decision-making processes.

In addition, strategic documents such as the Transitional Justice Strategy 2024–2034, the Employment Strategy 2024–2028, and the Employment Action Plan 2024–2025 have been published, ensuring that citizens have equal access to information. In addition, annual reports of ministries and government agencies and plans for project implementation have also been published.

In the area of financial transparency and public procurement, steps have been taken to increase accountability. Contracts have been made public on the Public Procurement Commission platform, and the Contract Management Module has been functionalized. E-procurement has also been integrated with the public finance information system, making the process more transparent.

Another step is to build a database on the financing of civil society organizations, which aims to increase transparency in the distribution of public funds and ensure fair support for the non-governmental sector.

In terms of digital governance, platforms for the provision of public services have been strengthened, through the "e-Municipality" project and the digitalization of judicial processes, making the system more efficient and open.

Despite progress, some challenges remain. Financial reports, including the six-monthly state budget, are not always published regularly, making public monitoring difficult. The lack of an integrated system for measuring the performance of institutions also limits objective analysis of their work.

However, the commitment to more open and transparent governance is clear. The Office of the Prime Minister continues to consolidate transparency platforms and strengthen accountability mechanisms to ensure efficient and accountable governance.

ACCESSIBILITY

The principled approach measures the degree of citizen involvement, civil society organizations (CSOs), and stakeholders in government activities. In the current year of assessment, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) achieved a score of 72% on this principle, reflecting its commitment to transparency and active public participation.

An important aspect of the approach is the participation of the OPM in social media through various posts, with attention focused on the official Facebook and Twitter platforms. These channels serve as the main sources of information for the public, sharing news, decisions and government initiatives. In addition, the Prime Minister's personal accounts on Twitter and Instagram are regularly updated with information and policies on his activities. Activities on these platforms create an important space for communication with citizens, enabling direct interaction with the public and stakeholders. This approach not only improves transparency, but also increases awareness and civic engagement.

To ensure an open and inclusive approach, the OPM has undertaken a series of concrete measures during 2024. In accordance with Regulation (GRK) No. 05/2016 on Public Consultations, mechanisms have been established to ensure the effective participation of citizens and stakeholders in the decision-making process. The government agenda is published on the official website of the OPM, ensuring full transparency on the government's plans and actions. At the same time, the e-governance platform e-Kosova has been used to improve citizens' access to public services and simplify administrative procedures.

In the context of improving access to information and transparency, public procurement contracts and relevant procedures have been published on official procurement platforms, thus strengthening institutional accountability. Furthermore, trainings have been organized for civil servants on the rights of access to public documents and the effective use of social media for better communication with citizens. To measure the effectiveness of government policies, performance indicators have been developed, while annual work reports have served as important tools for assessing the progress of state institutions.

AWERNESS

In terms of the assessment of the Office of the Prime Minister of Kosovo in terms of awareness, a result of 91%, reflecting the institution's commitment to increasing transparency and civic engagement. The awareness component focuses on the internal mechanisms used to oversee and evaluate policies implemented by the Office of the Prime Minister.

According to Regulation (GRK) No. 17/2024 on Rules of Procedure of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo, there are clear mechanisms for monitoring, reporting and evaluating the implementation of strategic documents. The relevant ministries are responsible for the continuous monitoring of these policies, by drafting annual reports on the progress achieved. There is also an inter-ministerial structure that ensures regular oversight and evaluation of the impact of policies at the central level.

In the framework of transparency and accountability, the Office of the Prime Minister has adopted specific documents such as the Regulation on Minimum Standards for the Public Consultation Process and the Regulation on Criteria, Standards and Procedures for Public Funding of NGOs. These instruments regulate the process of involving the public and interested parties in the drafting and implementation of government policies. In an effort to raise awareness and improve oversight mechanisms, the Office of the Prime Minister has participated in and organized trainings for civil servants on access to public documents and open data during 2022-2023. Furthermore, a direct communication channel for citizens has been functionalized to address concerns and complaints.

Based on these measures, the Office of the Prime Minister demonstrates commitment to accountable and open governance, ensuring that its policies are effectively monitored and evaluated.

INTEGRITY

During 2024, the Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo (OPM) has undertaken several concrete measures to strengthen institutional integrity and transparency in public administration. These efforts have been materialized through the adoption of various regulations aimed at improving the structure and functioning of state institutions.

One of these is Regulation No. 04/2024, adopted on 15 February 2024, which defines the internal organization and systematization of jobs in the Institute for War Crimes in Kosovo. This regulation aims to ensure more efficient functioning and increase accountability within the institute.

In addition, other regulations related to the internal organization and systematization of jobs in various institutions, such as the Free Legal Aid Agency, the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, and the Cybersecurity Agency, have been adopted. These regulations aim to strengthen the organizational structure and increase efficiency in the provision of public services.

In terms of promoting information integrity, in December 2024, civil society organizations, media, and major political parties in Kosovo signed a Code of Conduct for Social and Online Media, with the support of USAID. This code aims to create a fair and transparent environment during election campaigns, addressing challenges such as misinformation and hate speech.

All these measures clearly reflect the commitment of the Office of the Prime Minister to building a stable, transparent and accountable administration towards citizens.

Citizen engagement in the activities of the Prime Minister's Office

ODK, in collaboration with UBO Consulting, has conducted a survey to understand how citizens perceive and experience the work of the Office of the Prime Minister. This research included 1,310 citizens of all ages, genders, ethnicities and places of residence in Kosovo.

One of the key questions was whether citizens believe they can have an influence in the work of the Assembly. Only 60.3% of respondents answered negatively, indicating that the majority of them do not feel empowered to contribute.

Meanwhile, when asked how much they follow the work of the Prime Minister's Office, only 5.6% said they follow it regularly.

These results show that many citizens feel excluded from decision-making processes and that there is a need for more spaces for participation and active involvement. The more citizens are heard, the stronger and more democratic the governance process becomes.

Recommendations

ACTION STEPS

Despite the significant progress that the OPM has made in terms of openness and access to information, there are still several areas where further improvements are needed to ensure deeper and more comprehensive transparency. First, it is necessary to create an integrated system for measuring and reporting institutional performance. Such a system would enable more regular and objective assessments of government performance.

Second, regular and timely publication of financial reports, including semi-annual and annual budget reports, should become standard practice. This would help increase accountability to citizens.

Further, building a simplified mechanism for submitting and following up on requests for access to public documents. An easier and more efficient process would ensure more transparency and make this right more accessible to all.

The Office of the Prime Minister should also be more engaged in promoting civic education, especially regarding the right to information and the use of digital platforms. This would empower citizens to participate more actively in the policy-making process.

Finally, to ensure that public policies reflect the needs of citizens, it is essential that public consultations be conducted with full transparency, including clear agendas, reporting of results, and the widest possible participation of civil society, especially in the early stages of policy development.

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