



Fair-play Alliance

EUROPEAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS COMBATING CORRUPTION

Best Practices Study

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This publication has been created as a part of the European Union Program IPA 2008 project entitled "CAT against Corruption - Cooperation, Accountability and Transparency against Corruption" (Grant Contract number: 2008-0101-040103).

Project implementation period: 05.05.2011 – 04.05.2013

Total project funds: 213,597.70 EUR, out of which 196,616.68 EU funds

Project partners:



Project co-financed by:



EU



Government of Croatia
Office for NGOs



National Foundation for Civil
Society Development

Views and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author(s) and do not represent the views and opinions of the European Union, Croatian Government Office for Cooperation with NGO's or the National Foundation for Civil Society Development.

Fair-play Alliance

A Slovak watchdog organization based in Bratislava. The Fair-play Alliance uses investigative journalism to highlight uneconomical, non-transparent and unethical activities in the management public funds. It aims to contribute to a more professional, responsible and open administration of the state. The Alliance keeps developing modern technological instruments that help to increase transparency in public funds management and civic control. Further information available at www.fair-play.sk.

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1. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The objective of this study is to document European civil society organizations' (CSOs) best practices in combating corruption. The presented strategies and tactics could serve as an inspiration for similar anti-corruption efforts.

The study is structured in two parts. Part one contains a map of European civil society organizations combating corruption listed in chapter 2. Mapping has been conducted through advanced internet research, searching the specialized database www.againstcorruption.eu, reading related reports and communication with experts active in the anti-corruption field. As a result, 127 CSOs from more than 30 European countries were found to perform various types of activities with anti-corruption impact. For the purposes of this study an extended definition of 'anticorruption impact' is taken as the basis. It includes all activities aimed at increasing transparency of public bodies, engaging the public in the decision-making process, enhancing scrutiny initiatives and implementation of effective repressive anti-corruption measures. According to this definition, the following types of activities have been identified:

Types of anti-corruption activities:

- **IT applications for more effective public scrutiny**
- **E-democracy tools**
- **Monitoring**
- **Research**
- **Analysis**
- **Disclosure**
- **Legislative changes**
- **Highlighting positive examples**
- **Advocacy campaigns**
- **Capacity building**
- **Networking**

Part two provides a collection of CSOs' best practices in combating corruption covering each activity type. In order to choose the most effective and successful anti-corruption stories among 127 CSOs and their strategies, the following selection criteria have been applied:

- a) The project must have a measurable anticorruption impact
- b) The project must draw international attention of the CSO community or European media

Consequently four anti-corruption activities have been selected and are presented in chapters 3-6. Each chapter has a case study format, describes the chosen activity in detail and identifies factors that played an important role and contributed to the positive output. The analysis is based on online search, going through relevant academic journals and contacting the CSOs. Finally, activities similar to the best practice are listed at the end of each chapter.

2. EUROPEAN CSOs COMBATING CORRUPTION: AN OVERVIEW

The following tables contain a map of European civil society organisations combating corruption including selected activities with anti-corruption impact.

CSO	Country	Example of activity
Fair-play Alliance	Slovakia	www.datanest.sk www.znasichdani.sk (From Our Taxes) www.otvorenezmluvy.sk (Open Contracts) judiciary monitoring investigative journalism legislative activities White Crow Award
Transparency International SK	Slovakia	www.otvorenezmluvy.sk (Open Contracts) www.tender.sme.sk (Open Public Procurement) Evaluation of corporate transparency open local government Monitoring transparency in healthcare Public procurement systems transparency e-learning Integrity Award legislative activities www.odkazprestarostu.sk (Message To Mayor)
Good Governance Institute	Slovakia	Public sector reforms
Oziveni	Czech Republic	Public procurement systems www.vsechnyzakazky.cz (All Tenders) legal advisement anti-corruption map Monitoring conflicts of interest open local government evaluation Don't tolerate corruption campaign
Ruzovy panter	Czech Republic	Infobank Political party funding lobbying
Transparency International CZ	Czech Republic	legal advisement watchdog reports (Progress reports, Corruption Indexes...) seminars, courses

CSO	Country	Example of activity
Kohovolit.eu (whotovote.eu)	Czech Republic	www.napistejim.cz (Write To Them) www.kohovolit.eu (Who To Vote)
Otevřená společnost (Open Society)	Czech Republic	www.otevrete.cz (Open It)
Verejnost proti korupci (Public against Corruption)	Czech Republic	statements
Rozpočet veřejné o.s. (Public Budget)	Czech Republic	www.rozpocetobce.cz (Municipal Budget)
Naši politici (OurPoliticians)	Czech Republic	www.nasipolitici.cz (Our Politicians)
Prague Watch	Czech Republic	www.praguewatch.cz
The Hungarian Civil Liberties Union	Hungary	legal regulation of public interest www.whistleblowing-cee.org (Disclosures in Post-Soviet Democracies) watchdog
Eötvös Károly Public Policy Institute	Hungary	Political party funding electronic freedom of information transparency in government
K-Monitor – Watch dog for Public Funds	Hungary	Corruption cases database Corruption alphabet Your Story (reporting corruption) legal regulation of public interest www.whistleblowing-cee.org (Disclosures in Post-Soviet Democracies)
Transparency International HU	Hungary	Monitoring legislation Local governments Freedom of information Party and campaign financing Public procurement legal aid service
Normálne Państwo (Healty State)	Poland	I don't give, I don't take bribes! Clear and open recruitment system in state administration
Stephan Bathory Foundation	Poland	Monitoring legislation Transparency of legislative procedures Protection for whistleblowers Preventing corruption in praxis anti-corruption strategy blueprint
ePF	Poland	www.mampytanie.net (I Have a Question) Och Parliament www.sejmometr.pl ePF_API Center for analysis

CSO	Country	Example of activity
Centrum Cyfrowe (Digital Centre)	Poland	www.otwartybudzet.pl (OpenBudget.pl) Hackathon "Open public data"
Stowarzyszenie 61	Poland	www.mamprawowiedziec.pl (I have a Right To Know)
Whistleblowing Austria	Austria	Advocacy and consulting for whistleblowers
APA-OTS Original text-Service GmbH	Austria	www.meinparlament.at (My Parliament)
Respekt.net	Austria	www.meineabgeordneten.at (My Representatives)
Transparency International AT	Austria	Parliament monitoring Political party funding Integrity Pact Working groups (Compliance; Whistleblowing; Banking sector; Health care) reports (Bribe Payers Survey; Corruption Perception Index...) Public sector reforms
Mehr Demokratie	Germany	Transparenz schafft Vertrauen (Transparency Act)
Parlamentwatch	Germany	www.abgeordnetenwatch.de
Transparency International DE	Germany	Corruption reports, publications www.hochschulwatch.de Transparenz schafft Vertrauen (Transparency Act) conferences; expert circles Integrity Award
Whistleblower Netzwerk e. V.	Germany	Advocacy and consulting for whistleblowers seminars
Digitale Gesellschaft	Germany	campaign (Whistleblowing; Open data, Transparent lobbying) www.opendata-kommunen.de
The Open Knowledge Foundation Germany .	Germany	www.bund.offenerhaushalt.de www.fragDenStaat.de (Ask The State) www.offenesparlament.de (Open Parliament)
Lobby Control e.V.	Germany	www.lobbypedia.de Loby Planet Berlin
mySociety	United Kingdom	www.TheyWorkForYou.com www.WhatDoTheyKnow.com www.WriteToThem.com
Mark Houldey/ Jonathan Hartley	United Kingdom	www.whistleblower.co.uk
Bairwell Ltd.	United Kingdom	www.publicwhip.org.uk
Moving Flow	United Kingdom	www.whoslobbying.com www.blog.whoslobbying.com

CSO	Country	Example of activity
The Open Knowledge Foundation	United Kingdom	Open Knowledge Festival Open Data Commons www.openspending.org www.wheredoesmymoneygo.org www.opencorporates.org
UK Anticorruption Forum	United Kingdom	legislative activities publications conferences; workshops; expert circles
Transparency International UK	United Kingdom	Bribery Act corruption in the UK reports; publications
Article 19	United Kingdom	Freedom of expression
The Campaign for Freedom of Information	United Kingdom	Freedom of information
Publish What You Pay	United Kingdom	Contract transparency in the extractive industry
Involve	United Kingdom	www.participationcompass.org Review of research councils UK dialogues
The Center for Public Integrity	United Kingdom	investigative journalism
Open Rights Group	United Kingdom	open data; open standards
John Handelaar / Gavin Sheridan	Ireland	www.kildarestreet.com
Dail Watch	Ireland	www.dailwatch.ie
Transparency International IE	Ireland	National Integrity Systems Barriers to prosecuting corruption Prevention of corruption (Amendment Bill) whistleblowing helpline
Ashoka Ireland / Parliamentwatch e.V.	Ireland / Germany	www.candidatewatch.ie
Sanoma Media Group	Netherlands	www.nupubliek.nl
ProDemos - House for Democracy and the Rule of Law	Netherlands	www.nationalebegrotingswijzer.nl (National Budget Guide) Dutch Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) Civic engagement
De stichting Petities.nl	Netherlands	www.petities.nl
Stichting Het Nieuwe Stemmen (New Voting Foundation)	Netherlands	www.maildepolitiek.nl www.wiekiesjij.nl

CSO	Country	Example of activity
Transparency International NL	Netherlands	National Integrity Study
Politikercheck A.s.b.l.	Luxembourg	www.politikercheck.lu
Transparency International LU	Luxembourg	reports; publications
Transparency International BE	Belgium	TI-B Corporate Package reports (Bribe Payers Survey; Corruption Perception Index...) ethics in banking sector
Access Info	Spain	Advancing the right to know www.tuderechoasaber.es (Your Right To Know) www.asktheeu.org Access Info Toolkits
CiVio	Spain	www.tuderechoasaber.es (Your Right To Know) www.dondevanmisimpuestos.es (Where Does My Money Go) Training programs
Coalición Pro Acceso	Spain	Promoting access to information
Transparency International ES	Spain	Transparency indexes Public Transparency Portal Law of Transparency Principles for business
Oscar Ribas / Jose Costa	Spain	www.discursia.com
Transparência Hackday Portugal	Portugal	www.demo.cratica.org www.nunomoniz.com www.despesapublica.com (Public Contracts)
Transparency International PT	Portugal	National Integrity Systems Good governance /anti-corruption tools
Access Info	Cyprus	www.accesinfocypus.eu
Transparency International Cyprus	Cyprus	reports (Progress reports; Corruption Indexes...)
Regards Citoyens	France	www.nosdeputes.fr www.nossenateurs.fr open data Parliament monitoring lobbying
La Quadrature du Net	France	www.memopol.lqdn.fr
Acrimed	France	Media watch dog
Transparency International FR	France	transparency in the financial sector Corporate transparency reports (Bribe Payers Survey; Corruption Perception Index...) Whistleblowing protection lobbying

CSO	Country	Example of activity
Open Polis	Italy	www.politici.openpolis.it (OpenPoliticians.it) www.parlamento.openpolis.it (Open Parliament) Camere Aperte (open the houses of the parliament) www.indice.openpolis.it (Parliamentary Productivity Index) www.openmunicipio.it (Open Municipality)
Transparency International IT	Italy	Political parties
Investigative Reporting Project	Italy	Investigative journalism
Baltijos pažangių technologijų institutas / Baltic Institute of Advanced Technology	Lithuania	www.atviras-seimas.info (Open-Seimas.info)
Ernest / Aurimas	Lithuania	www.seime.lt
Transparency International LT	Lithuania	www.manoseimas.lt www.parasykjiems.lt Whistleblowing protection Lobbying Political advertising Corruption map Construction Sector Transparency Study
Viešai	Latvia	www.viesai.lt
Providius	Latvia	www.gudrasgalvas.lv www.politika.lv www.korupcijas-c.wikidot.com
ManaBalss.lv	Latvia	www.manabalss.lv
Transparency International LV	Latvia	National Integrity Systems Whistleblower www.deputatiuzdelnas.lv
re:Baltica	Latvia	Investigative journalism
Transparency International EE	Estonia	Curbing Corruption in Media Courts of Justice in Estonia
Transparency International SL - Društvo Integriteta	Slovenia	National Integrity Systems Whistleblowing Protection
Michael Friis	Denmark	www.folketsting.dk
Buhl & Rasmussen	Denmark	www.hvemstemmerhvad.dk (Who Votes What) www.itsyourparliament.eu
Transparency International DK	Denmark	Publicity Act Whistleblowing protection Reports (Bribe Payers Survey; Corruption Perception Index...)

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CSO	Country	Example of activity
Gustaf Josefsson/ Joakim Green / Johan Sandén	Sweden	www.riksdagsrosten.se
Transparency International SE	Sweden	Corruption risks in public procurement transparency in political party financing Corruption risks in local government Corruption risks in the municipality sector
Kansan Muisti Ry	Finland	www.kansanmuisti.fi
Mikko Heikkinen	Finland	Parliament votings API
Transparency International FI	Finland	reports (Bribe Payers Survey; Corruption Perception Index...) National Integrity Systems
Chr. Michelsen Institute	Norway	U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre
Transparency International NO	Norway	corruption in the judiciary anti-corruption measures for municipalities
Zašto Ne	Bosnia and H.	www.istinomjer.ba www.razglasaj.ba www.pravodaznam.ba open politicians
The Association Alumni of the Center for Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Studies (ACIPS)	Bosnia and H.	Evaluation of Public Administration reform Election monitoring
Oštra Nula	Bosnia and H.	Parliament monitoring
Vanjsko politička inicijativa BiH (The Foreign Policy Initiative)	Bosnia and H.	Monitoring of the BiH European Integration Process
Centar za politike i upravljanje (Centre for Policy and Governance)	Bosnia and H.	Analysis of Governance and Transparency in the Development of Banks
Centri Civilnih Inicijativa	Bosnia and H.	Parliamentary monitoring
Kyodo (Center for Civil Society)	Bosnia and H.	corruption in education legal anti-corruption network
The Center for Investigative Reporting	Bosnia and H.	investigative journalism
Transparency International B&H	Bosnia and H.	Cartoons against corruption Monitoring and advocacy for good governance in municipalities Prevention of corruption in higher education
CRTA (Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability)	Serbia	www.pratipare.rs (Map The Money) www.otvoreniparlament.rs (Open Parliament) Public service delivery monitoring www.istinomer.rs (truth-o-meter)
Pro Aktiv	Serbia	Proactive citizens

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CSO	Country	Example of activity
Center for Development of Serbia	Serbia	Monitoring of the municipality performance
Transparency International RS	Serbia	Monitoring of implementation of national anti-corruption strategy Monitoring of local election campaign
The Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP)	Europe	investigative journalism Investigative Dashboard
MANS	Montenegro	OCCRP Parliament monitoring Conflict of interest Privatization monitoring Public procurement
Pod Lupom	Montenegro	investigative journalism
Centar za demokratsku tranziciju	Montenegro	Elections monitoring Political parties financing www.istinomer.me
Initiative for Progress	Kosovo	Good Local Governance Program Local Governance Index
Kosova Democratic Institute / Transparency International Kosovo	Kosovo	Parliamentary monitoring
Balkan Investigative Reporting Network	Kosovo	investigative journalism and reporting
Metamorphosis	Macedonia	www.vistinomer.mk e-law www.pisiim.mk (Write To Them)
Open Society Foundation Macedonia	Macedonia	www.spininfo.org.mk
MOST	Macedonia	www.pravo.org.mk (Right to Know) Monitoring of local elections
Transparency International MK	Macedonia	CRINIS Western Balkans - Shining a light on money in politics www.transparency-watch.org
Rise Project	Romania	investigative journalism
Institute for Public Policy	Romania	administrative transparency and rule of law local public administration reform parliamentary monitoring
Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism	Romania	investigative journalism
European Institute for Participative Democracy - Qvorum	Romania	www.parlamentultau.ro

CSO	Country	Example of activity
Asociația pentru Implementarea Democrației	Romania	public administration
Transparency International RO	Romania	Romanian judges - skills for EU competition law evidence-based action against Corruption
Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center	Bulgaria	investigative journalism
Transparency International BG	Bulgaria	National Integrity System
Transparency International HR	Croatia	Legal Leaks Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre
Vjetrenjača	Croatia	FOIA http://nabava.vjetrenjaca.org
Udruga za nezavisnu medijsku kulturu (UNMK)	Croatia	Investigative Journalism http://www.h-alter.org/
Partnerstvo za društveni razvoj (Partnership for Social Development)	Croatia	Active Policy Advocacy Project Civil Initiative Monitoring Anti-Corruption Response to Implementation of the Procurement Policies http://www.psd.hr/hr/
GONG	Croatia	Election and Campaign Finance Monitoring Good Governance / FOIA http://www.gong.hr/
Green Action	Croatia	Corruption in Spatial Policy and Investment Projects http://zelena-akcija.hr/
Green Istria	Croatia	Corruption in Local Spatial Policy FOIA / Aarhus convention http://www.zelena-istra.hr/

3. CASE STUDY: TRANSPARENCY LAW IN HAMBURG

ACTIVITY TYPE: LEGISLATIVE CHANGES / ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

Since October 2012 Hamburg's unique Transparency Act is in effect. It forces city-state public authorities and private legal entities falling under the control of Hamburg to publish large amounts of information proactively in a special register accessible to everyone. Hamburg State Parliament representatives adopted the law after citizen initiative *Transparenz schafft Vertrauen* (Transparency creates Trust) had threatened to trigger a referendum on this issue.

What is the purpose of the act?

Hamburg Transparency Act is a new regulation replacing the previous Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Hamburg FOIA enabled requesting public information for payment of a fee. This way of making information available was thus connected with significant administrative burdens. Requested information was only made available to the applicant. In case anyone else interested in the same information wanted to get it, the public body was obligated to repeat the same administrative procedure. Furthermore, the FOIA didn't guarantee the best possible transparency of public authorities. Citizens could only request information if they knew that the particular piece of information indeed exists. A big part of data produced by public bodies was therefore hidden from the public.

Hamburg Transparency Act is an attempt to fill this transparency gap. It binds public authorities to create a so called *information register* in which a big set of information will be published proactively. According to the Act, the information register should include, among others:

- **communication between the Senate and the Hamburg State Parliament**
- **decisions made in public sessions**
- **protocols and annexes related to decisions made in public sessions**
- **contracts pertaining to services to the public of higher value than 100,000 Euros**
- **various types of plans (household, agency, management, organization, business distribution and filing plans)**
- **global directives, technical instructions and regulations**
- **local development plans and landscape plans**
- **provisions of granted building permits¹**

Subjects of this law are not only the usual public authorities. It also addresses private legal entities in which Hamburg holds a majority of the capital, controls a majority of voting rights or can appoint a majority of administration, management or supervisory body members.²

¹ Transparency Act of Hamburg from 6th July 2012 (TI English translation): http://www.transparenzgesetz.de/fileadmin/user_upload/materialien/Transparency_Act_of_the_Free_and_Hanseatic_City_of_Hamburg.pdf [Last accessed 28.2.2013]

² Transparency Act of Hamburg from 6th July 2012 (TI English translation): http://www.transparenzgesetz.de/fileadmin/user_upload/materialien/Transparency_Act_of_the_Free_and_Hanseatic_City_of_Hamburg.pdf

Who is behind the law?

The idea and the first draft of the act come from a citizens initiative *Transparenz schafft Vertrauen* (Transparency creates Trust). The initiative is a coalition of three civil society organizations that came together in June 2011 in order to establish modern and citizen-friendly transparency law in Hamburg. The core initiative members are organizations [Transparency International Germany](#); [Mehr Demokratie](#) (More Democracy – a German NGO specialized in direct civic participation) and [Chaos Computer Club](#) (hackers association).³ During the campaign the group received support from dozens of activists, other relevant civil society organizations and experts.

How-to

The original strategy of the initiative was to pass the *Transparency Act* outside the usual legislative process through a referendum. According to the Hamburg law two main conditions must be met to trigger a referendum.⁴

- 1) A people's initiative (Volksinitiative) must be formed and supported by at least 10,000 signatories
- 2) At least 62,000 people must request the referendum (Volksbegehren)

In the first phase the initiative collected more than 15,000 signatures within 6 weeks and started to prepare the campaign for the people's request for the referendum. In the meantime Hamburg's politicians decided to invite the group to the parliamentary hearing and let its representatives present their request. As a result of the parliamentary session, the draft law prepared by the citizen's initiative needed to be reworked. Comments of the German commissioner for data protection were taken into special consideration. Finally, Hamburg's politicians decided to avoid people's request for referendum and the upcoming referendum and passed the Hamburg Transparency Act on June 13th 2012 in unison.⁵ It came into force in October 2012.

Factors that made the success possible

There is a huge variety of factors that might have contributed to the positive outcome of the initiative.

First, Hamburg's citizens have experience with a strong negative example that serves as a symbol of less-than-transparent and ineffective policy making – the construction of the Hamburg's Elbe Philharmonic Hall⁶. After construction had started in 2007, the hall was

[pdf](#) [28.2.2013]

³ <http://www.transparenzgesetz.de/ueberuns/> (German version) [28.2.2013]

⁴ Hamburg Referendum Act from 20th June 1996 (German version): <http://rechtsprechung.hamburg.de/jportal/portal/page/bshaprod.psml?nid=c&showdoccase=1&doc.id=jlr-VoBegGHApG3&st=lr> [28.2.2013]

⁵ http://de.hamburgertransparenzgesetz.wikia.com/wiki/Transparenzgesetz_selber_machen (German version) [28.2.2013]

⁶ http://de.hamburgertransparenzgesetz.wikia.com/wiki/Transparenzgesetz_selber_machen (German version) [28.2.2013]

supposed to be finished in 2010. But Hamburg's signature project is still not completed and the new deadline for finishing is scheduled for 2017 – at the earliest⁷. Construction costs have risen enormously.⁸ Thus the citizens of Hamburg have several good reasons to demand more transparency in public policymaking.

A framework condition for the whole initiative was the possibility to pass the law through a referendum regardless of the opinion of Hamburg's politicians.⁹

An important role was played by the fact that there had been one successful referendum in Hamburg in the recent past.¹⁰ Hamburg's politicians knew they were facing an active civil society interested in public issues.

The well managed campaign was a big contribution to the overall success of the initiative. Through collecting 15,000 signatures the group got strong public support for legislative change. By symbolically submitting the signatures to the Hamburg parliament on the Global Anti-corruption Day (December 9th) necessary media attention was ensured.¹²

During the work on the draft law the cooperation with the former constitutional judge Jürgen Kühling was helpful. Kühling provided the initiative with free legal advice and helped to consider various juristic aspects of the plan. Thanks to his expertise the initiative had good arguments on hand when negotiating the final version of the act.¹³

Finally, the timing was essential. The initiative was successful in opening a window of opportunity. The original plan counted on a referendum at the next German federal election which must be held in September 2013. One of political parties running for this election will be Pirate Party promoting total transparency and openness in public policy. Hamburg's government didn't want to come off second best and risk losing votes so they increased cooperation with the initiative and adopted the law.¹⁴

Hamburg an example worth sharing

"Hamburg's new export hit"¹⁵ – this is how the initiative itself describes the situation after adopting the Transparency Act. Several German but also European civil society

7 SPIEGEL ONLINE, 14.2.2013 (German version): <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/hamburg-ex-buergermeister-beust-verteidigt-elbphilharmonie-a-883508.html> [28.2.2013]

8 SPIEGEL ONLINE, 14.12.2012 (German version): <http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/musik/elbphilharmonie-in-hamburg-nochmal-200-millionen-euro-teurer-a-873013.html> [28.2.2013]

9 Email communication with Daniel Lentfer, Executive Director of Mehr Demokratie, February 2013.

10 <http://blog.transparency.org/2012/06/25/hamburgs-transparency-law-to-open-government-more-than-ever/> (German version) [28.2.2013]

11 Email communication with Daniel Lentfer, Executive Director of Mehr Demokratie, February 2013.

12 http://de.hamburgertransparenzgesetz.wikia.com/wiki/Transparenzgesetz_selber_machen (German version) [28.2.2013]

13 http://de.hamburgertransparenzgesetz.wikia.com/wiki/Transparenzgesetz_selber_machen (German version) [28.2.2013]

14 Email communication with Daniel Lentfer, Executive Director of Mehr Demokratie, February 2013.

15 http://www.transparenzgesetz.de/41/?tx_ttnews%5Bttnews%5D=253&cHash=636c89048eac58459b4fc43ec34ea109 [28.2.2013]

organizations announced they would like to take inspiration from Hamburg and pass similar laws. Meanwhile Berlin is the next state negotiating what a *Transparency act* should look like.

The cities thus copy open data trends in opening data set by Anglo-Saxon countries. They actively publish everything that is available to the state and hasn't been classified as secret.

4. CASE STUDY: THEYWORKFORYOU

ACTIVITY TYPE: MONITORING / IT APPLICATION / E-DEMOCRACY TOOLS

TheyWorkForYou.com¹⁶ is a monitoring website provided by MySociety offering comprehensive and detailed information about activities of members of the British Parliament, Scottish Parliament and the North Ireland Assembly. On average, the website attracts the attention of about 250,000 visitors monthly.¹⁷ In 2005 it was honored with the New Statesman Media Award for 'Contribution to the Civil Society' and since then it has inspired and helped tens of CSOs to build similar services.

What does the website offer?

Compared to [official](#) governmental websites, [TheyWorkForYou](#) offers its users aggregated and analyzed information in a very simple and organized form in one place. Thanks to this, information otherwise dispersed throughout various media is compact and enables users to form a more complex view on his/her representatives. In a user survey 2009/2010 89% of users claimed the website had improved their knowledge about representatives.¹⁸ Beside that the data on the website are restructured into a more logical order and linked to representatives. As a result, all representatives have a short profile on the website including

- **Voting records**
- **Topics of interest**
- **Public Bill Committees**
- **Written answers**
- **Oral answers to questions**
- **Statistics on the parliamentary activities**
- **Information about overseas visits, benefits and gifts**
- **Expenses¹⁹**

TheyWorkForYou complements the static overview on information with interactive tools in order to encourage the people to react to what they have read. Customizing tools integrated in the website enable to comment written statements of politicians responding to questions of their colleagues and evaluate whether the requested answer is sufficient or not. When facing a surprising fact, users can easily switch to another website [WriteToThem](#) and ask politicians directly what they want to know - about 60% of messages have been replied to in the past²⁰. Another useful tool for increasing

¹⁶ <http://guides.mysociety.org/images/archive/9/95/20111128222828!Twfybook.pdf> [Last accessed 28.2.2013]

¹⁷ Escher, Tobias: TheyWorkForYou.com. Analysis of users and usage of for UK Citizens Online Democracy; 2011, p.

^{13.} Available at: http://www.mysociety.org/files/2011/06/TheyWorkForYou_research_report-2011-Tobias-Escher1.pdf [28.2.2013]

¹⁸ Escher, Tobias: TheyWorkForYou.com. Analysis of users and usage of for UK Citizens Online Democracy; 2011, p.

^{30.} Available at: http://www.mysociety.org/files/2011/06/TheyWorkForYou_research_report-2011-Tobias-Escher1.pdf [28.2.2013]

¹⁹ <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/mps/> [28.2.2013]

²⁰ Escher, Tobias: WriteToThem.com: Analysis of users and usage of for UK Citizens Online Democracy; 2011, p.

the effectiveness of public scrutiny are email alerts monitoring keywords users are interested in. In this way, citizens willing to pay attention only to a specific policy area are comfortably kept informed without the need to monitor each parliamentary session.

Who is behind the website?

The website is run by [MySociety](#), an e-democracy project of UK Charity Citizens Online Democracy. Its main aim is developing simple and effective online tools to entice people's participation in public issues.²¹ Among these tools are websites like www.WriteToThem.com; www.WhatDoTheyKnow.com; www.FixMyStreet.com and www.ePetitions.com.

MySociety also makes its own data, in a 'raw' format enabling processing, conditionally available to other civil society organizations in order to facilitate their further use. This is possible thanks to an API – a programming interface that enables third parties, such as coders or analysts to draw good-quality original data from the system. To a certain volume the usage of MySociety API for non-commercial purposes is free.²²

Anti-corruption impact

Although mySociety websites only exist online their usage has tangible and measurable anti-corruption impact. In 2009 they helped to create civic pressure and prevent keeping representatives' expense details secret from the public. At that time, UK Ministers announced that MPs' expenses should be excluded from the Freedom of Information Act.²³ Thus, MySociety started an online campaign and recommended that people write to their politicians and express their dissatisfaction, thus seriously threatening enactment of this regulation.

"...tell them that TheyWorkForYou will be permanently and prominently noting those MPs who took the opportunity to fight against this regressive move."²⁴

The threat worked and the campaign was a success. Thousands of people complained to their representatives via WriteToThem, TheyWorkForYou served as an information platform where many of them came across the governmental plans for the first time.²⁵ Finally, the government gave its plan up²⁶ and MP's expenses remained public.

Beside significant campaigning potential, mySociety websites also succeed in attracting civic target groups which weren't interested in activities of their representatives before. 60% of TheyWorkForYou users claim the website motivated them to look up information about their representatives' activity

^{5.} Available at: http://www.mysociety.org/files/2011/06/TheyWorkForYou_research_report-2011-Tobias-Escher1.pdf [28.2.2013]

²¹ <http://www.mysociety.org/about/> [28.2.2013]

²² <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/api/> [28.2.2013]

²³ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/jan/16/mps-expenses-exemption> [28.2.2013]

²⁴ <http://www.mysociety.org/2009/01/17/6-days-to-stop-mps-concealing-their-expenses/> [28.2.2013]

²⁵ <http://www.mysociety.org/2009/01/21/blimey-it-looks-like-the-internets-won/> [28.2.2013]

²⁶ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/7842402.stm [28.2.2013]

for the first time ever.²⁷ So, the website extends the number of people checking actively what politicians do and helps reduce the gap between civil society, citizens and politicians.

What made the success possible?

Various factors with different importance might have contributed to the success of mySociety websites.

First, the organization puts great importance on simplicity, tangibility and attractive design of its online services. User opinions confirm these efforts. More than 71% of them consider TheyWorkForYou pretty and almost everyone is of the opinion that the website is well structured.²⁸ Among other factors is the user-friendly approach which makes the website so popular. Even some governmental civil servants appreciate the existence of the website and use it. According to mySociety, 2% of TheyWorkForYou visits come from the UK parliament.²⁹

An important part of mySociety organizational integrity is also highlighting its neutrality. This enables the group to be a relevant and respected partner for all public bodies. MySociety cooperates with several public authority types at local and national level and offers them its online services made to measure. For example, the e-Petitions website was developed especially for the UK Prime Minister's office 2006.³⁰ While user satisfaction is crucial to create civic pressure and enhance public scrutiny, cooperative attitude towards public authorities within certain limits gives the organization a chance to push for changes inside the system.

A fundamental precondition for effectiveness of the website is a political environment responsive to public pressure. In this sense, the UK might serve as an example for high sensitivity of politicians to the public. In 2006 *The Times* even assumed that aggregated statistics about MPs' activity published on TheyWorkForYou might motivate politicians to participate in debates just because it brings them benefits in the public eye.³¹ Finally, due to the limited resources, the role of volunteers needs to be pointed out. As mySociety declares, although annual maintenance costs for running TheyWorkForYou are about £ 20,000³² a lot of work is being done voluntarily.

²⁷ Escher, Tobias: TheyWorkForYou.com. Analysis of users and usage of for UK Citizens Online Democracy; 2011, p. 5. Available at: http://www.mysociety.org/files/2011/06/TheyWorkForYou_research_report-2011-Tobias-Escher1.pdf [28.2.2013]

²⁸ Escher, Tobias: TheyWorkForYou.com. Analysis of users and usage of for UK Citizens Online Democracy; 2011, p. 30. Available at: http://www.mysociety.org/files/2011/06/TheyWorkForYou_research_report-2011-Tobias-Escher1.pdf [28.2.2013]

²⁹ Escher, Tobias: TheyWorkForYou.com. Analysis of users and usage of for UK Citizens Online Democracy; 2011, p. 20. Available at: http://www.mysociety.org/files/2011/06/TheyWorkForYou_research_report-2011-Tobias-Escher1.pdf [28.2.2013]

³⁰ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/6147842.stm [28.2.2013]

³¹ Escher, Tobias: TheyWorkForYou.com. Analysis of users and usage of for UK Citizens Online Democracy; 2011, p. 44. Available at: http://www.mysociety.org/files/2011/06/TheyWorkForYou_research_report-2011-Tobias-Escher1.pdf [28.2.2013]

³² Escher, Tobias: TheyWorkForYou.com. Analysis of users and usage of for UK Citizens Online Democracy; 2011, p. 4. Available at: http://www.mysociety.org/files/2011/06/TheyWorkForYou_research_report-2011-Tobias-Escher1.pdf [28.2.2013]

MySociety websites – an example worth sharing

As a leader in developing useful online websites encouraging people to engage, mySociety is the most visible CSO in this area. But it is just the tip of the iceberg. Meanwhile dozens of websites similar to TheyWorkForYou and WriteToThem have been built and are also listed in chapter 2. To these belong, among others: www.abgeordnetenwatch.de, www.politikercheck.lu or www.nosdeputes.fr.

5. CASE STUDY: OPEN MUNICIPALITIES

ACTIVITY TYPE: RESEARCH / ANALYSIS / HIGHLIGHTING POSITIVE EXAMPLES / CAPACITY BUILDING

Do you wish for more transparent and citizen-friendly municipalities? Let them compete, highlight positive examples and work systematically with local activists. This is the strategy the Slovak non-governmental organization [Transparency International Slovakia](#) decided for. And the results show that it might work.

Why care about municipalities?

In 2002 – 2004 fiscal decentralization quickly proceeded in Slovakia. Competence and financial resources of the state administration were transferred to municipalities and higher territorial units in order to enhance their autonomy and bring the government closer to the people. What was missing for a long time was a serious analysis on whether Slovak municipalities developed systemic mechanisms helping them handle public funds effectively. Various findings of local experts and activists indicated the opposite. And furthermore, many of them complained about the impossibility to get relevant information requested through the Freedom of Information Act. Summarized, transferring of public money hasn't been accompanied by equal transparency and public control.

How to measure their transparency?

In order to assess the weak points and offer a comprehensive overview of the current status, Transparency International Slovakia developed a methodology how to measure the openness of municipalities. It is based on transparency monitoring in the following policy areas:

- **Access to Information Policy**
- **Public Participation Policy**
- **Public Procurement Policy**
- **Public Property Sales and Lease Policy**
- **Budgeting**
- **Grants Policy**
- **Housing and Social Services**
- **Human Resources**
- **Professional Ethics and Conflict of Interest**
- **Land Use Planning and Construction Policy**
- **Municipal Business and Investments**³³

The openness of each municipality will be measured through numerical evaluation of

³³ <http://mesta2012.transparency.sk/en/sets/mesta-2012/category-rank> [Last Accessed: 28.2.2013]

111 indicators falling under monitored policy areas. Information necessary for in-depth evaluation comes from local websites, FOIA requests and the Public Procurement Office website.³⁴ Dependent on how many points municipalities receive a ranking will be created that motivates them to compete in the best approach to public issues.³⁵ Transparency International Slovakia highlights the winning municipalities which usually earn wide media attention.

In 2012 Slovakia's most transparent city Šaľa obtained 83 points out of 100. On average the 100 monitored towns reached 49 points. Two years ago the average value of municipal transparency in Slovakia was 43 points.³⁶

What contributes to increasing municipal transparency?

In Slovakia a combination of multiple factors has played an important role in leading municipalities to higher openness.

To a certain degree municipalities are forced to be transparent by law. Especially a section in the Slovak *Civil Code* should be pointed out according to which all contracts related to public funds enter into force only on the day following their publication (mainly in the Central register of contracts³⁷). The law applies to municipalities as well and a contract which is not published shall not enter into force.

Second, Slovak municipalities have a strong positive example among them to get inspiration from. The northern town of Martin in cooperation with Transparency International Slovakia implemented a comprehensive anti-corruption program and won UN Public Service Award³⁸ in category "Preventing and Combating Corruption in Public Service" in 2011. In 2008 TI Slovakia audited potential corruption risks and helped to develop made-to-measure anti-corruption tools. The mayor of the town Martin Hrnčiar claims that thanks to this anti-corruption program 28% of anticipated costs could be saved.³⁹ Several other towns took Martin as an example and implemented similar anti-corruption packages.

Martin also serves as a good example for politicians discovering the value of proclaimed transparency in election campaigns. Its mayor Martin Hrnčiar was re-elected 2010 after he had been running mainly under the header of "transparency". Its example shows that politicians pushing for transparency and providing concrete tangible anti-corruption measures can count on public support.

Finally, essential for transparent municipalities are engaged citizens. Transparency International Slovakia regularly organizes anti-corruption networking seminars to which

³⁴ <http://mesta2012.transparency.sk/en/sets/mesta-2012/analyses/p:885/najtransparentnejsim-slovenskym-mestom-je-opat-sala> [28.2.2013]

³⁵ <http://mesta2012.transparency.sk/en/sets/mesta-2012/rank> [28.2.2013]

³⁶ <http://mesta2012.transparency.sk/en/sets/mesta-2012/analyses/p:885/najtransparentnejsim-slovenskym-mestom-je-opat-sala> [28.2.2013]

³⁷ <http://crz.gov.sk/index.php?ID=114372> [28.2.2013]

³⁸ <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un-dpadm/unpan048624.pdf> [28.2.2013]

³⁹ http://www.transparenttown.eu/?s=key_benefits [28.2.2013]

the best local activists combating corruption in municipalities are invited.⁴⁰ Trainings targeted at using legal mechanisms for monitoring and preventing corruption help to increase local capacities and strengthen public control at the lowest level. As a result of these seminars a unique information platform “Antikor” has been formed where activists share their experiences, get legal help and organize campaigns. These activities significantly contributed to the development of dozens of local watchdog websites and initiatives controlling how municipalities handle public funds.

6. CASE STUDY: ORGANIZED CRIME AND CORRUPTION REPORTING PROJECT

ACTIVITY TYPE: DISCLOSURE / NETWORKING

[Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project](#) is a cross-border platform for investigative journalists and CSOs revealing serious cases of organized crime and corruption in Eastern Europe and Balkan region. In 2011 it was awarded the prestigious Daniel Pearl Award⁴¹ for its investigating offshore companies⁴².

What do OCCRP investigations look like?

Between March 20 and June 11, 2012 OCCRP published 10 investigative stories about the First Bank – a Montenegrin bank controlled by the family of the former Prime Minister⁴³. Over the years OCCRP reporters have tracked suspicious financial transactions, checked hundreds of conflicts of interest and monitored the providing of privileges to questionable clients. In their stories they comprehensively described how some Montenegrin politicians and First Bank representatives ignored recommendations of the Central Bank and made decisions that may not have been in the public’ interests⁴⁴. They also shed light onto involvement of the bank in financing illegal⁴⁵ or dubious projects⁴⁷.

One of them was the construction of the Astra-Montenegro resort. As Montenegrin anti-corruption NGO and OCCRP research partner MANS discovered, the luxurious complex, financed partially by the First Bank providing a loan, was constructed without obtaining any permits.⁴⁸

In order to achieve the highest possible level of transparency and public control OCCRP attached complete documentation to the published stories and made it available to everyone.⁴⁹ Thanks to the cooperation with BBC Newsnight findings about the First Bank have drawn international attention and helped to put bigger pressure on Montenegrin politicians.

41 <http://www.publicintegrity.org/2011/10/17/7133/daniel-pearl-awards-winners-announced> [Last Accessed: 28.2.2012]

42 <https://reportingproject.net/offshore/> [28.2.2012]

43 http://www.reportingproject.net/first_bank/en/first-bank-first-family [28.2.2012]

44 http://www.reportingproject.net/first_bank/en/saving-the-bank-at-any-cost [28.2.2012]

45 http://www.reportingproject.net/first_bank/en/zavala-cape-corruption [28.2.2012]

46 Email communication with Dejan Milovac, Deputy Executive Director of MANS, February 2013

47 http://www.reportingproject.net/first_bank/en/paying-for-madonna-cheating-montenegrins [28.2.2012]

48 Email communication with Dejan Milovac, Deputy Executive Director of MANS, February 2013

49 http://www.reportingproject.net/first_bank/en/about [28.2.2012]

40 <http://www.transparency.sk/en/bojovnici-proti-krize---v-samosprave-2/> [28.2.2013]

Since its founding in 2007 OCCRP has run several projects similar to the First Bank investigation and its reporters have been monitoring various social environments where organized crime and corruption occur, such as offshore companies or the tobacco industry.

Who is behind OCCRP?

Several European and Asian civil society organisations, investigative journalism centres and media are OCCRP members, among them:

- **The Center for Investigative Reporting (Bosnia and Herzegovina)**
- **Rise Project (Romania)**
- **The Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center (Bulgaria)**
- **The Center for Investigative Reporting (Serbia)**
- **Novaya Gazeta (Russia)**
- **The Kyiv Post (Ukraine)**
- **Armenian Investigative Journalists (Armenia)**
- **re:Baltica (Latvia)**
- **Atlatszo.hu (Hungary)**
- **SCOOP (Macedonia)**
- **MANS (Montenegro)**
- **Center for Investigative Reporting (Montenegro)**
- **Liberali and Studio Monitor (Georgia)**
- **Individual journalists⁵⁰**

Anticorruption Impact

The First Bank example proves that the anti-corruption impact of investigative journalism can be enormous. Well researched OCCRP stories helped to start an open discussion on a topic in Montenegro that due to lack of documentation and hard facts couldn't be discussed in that form and intensity before⁵¹. Disclosure made in public interests made responsible persons visible and forced them to face public pressure and criminal charges⁵².

In the case of the Astra-Montenegro resort, the MANS investigation led to strong public pressure. As a result the project was stopped and the Montenegrin government was forced to rework the Law on Spatial Planning. This negative example also helped to achieve including illegal construction under criminal acts.⁵³

OCCRP in-depth analysis also set high standards for Montenegrin journalists and helped to

⁵⁰ <https://reportingproject.net/occrp/index.php/en/about-us/about-us> [28.2.2012]

⁵¹ Email communication with Dejan Milovac, Deputy Executive Director of MANS, February 2013

⁵² <https://reportingproject.net/occrp/index.php/en/ccwatch/cc-watch-briefs/1580-montenegro-corruption-charges-against-top-politicians-first-bank-and-central-bank-officials> [28.2.2012]

⁵³ Email communication with Dejan Milovac, Deputy Executive Director of MANS, February 2013

increase the capacities and knowledge of CSOs involved in the project.⁵⁴

What made the success possible?

OCCRP shows that valuable international investigation is possible with enough time and capacities, a wide network of partners and local experts knowing the environment in very details.

An important role is also played by the knowledge about how to access information. OCCRP in cooperation with the Forum for African Investigative Reporters and the International Center for Journalists developed a unique database called [Investigative Dashboard](#). It provides access to business registers worldwide and helps with transaction costs when information will be only available for a fee.

Databases for journalists

Another type of database helping journalists to create a good story is the database developed by the Hungarian NGO [K-Monitor](#) which contains the majority of articles published by national online media in the last 5 years. A unique tagging methodology enables users to filter information according to a person he or she is interested in. The database serves as a library and important information source for journalists investigating hidden connections. In the past it helped create series of stories on questionable state advertisements in the media.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Email communication with Dejan Milovac, Deputy Executive Director of MANS, February 2013

⁵⁵ Email communication with Sándor Léderer, K-Monitor, February 2013