



**JOINT INITIATIVE FOR
TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Minutes from the Second Meeting of the Thematic Working Group - Proactive
Transparency for the Joint Transparency and Accountability Initiative (JI)**

The meeting was organized on April 5th, 2022 on the Zoom platform. The following topics were considered at the meeting:

- a) Reviewing the status of initially identified measures;
- b) Discussing the following newly-proposed measures:
 - (i) Standardization of website content of Government institutions, posting relevant documents in a machine-readable format, and making them publicly available, and
 - (ii) Preparing and regular publishing of the documents such as analyses of the government's plans, and other similar documents of public concern;
- c) Discussing potential suggestions to the next Serbian government.

The meeting was moderated by Mr Srđan Majstorović, representative of the JI's Secretariat. Participants of the meeting included representatives of the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, Public Policy Secretariat, General Secretariat of the Government, Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection, Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue, Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM), Transparency Serbia, and Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia, as well as representative of the Embassy of Germany in the capacity of observer. **(The list of participants is Annex 1 of the Minutes).**

1. Opening and Introductory Remarks

On behalf of the World Bank Office in Serbia, Mr Srdjan Svircev welcomed all participants. He highlighted the preparation of a Policy Note that will include the views and recommendations of this thematic working group (TWG) for the next Government, with a focus on achievable actions that will contribute improving proactive transparency. He stressed that the JI represents an opportunity for the agreement of public, civil and business sectors representatives how to achieve progress.

Mr Majstorovic outlined the agenda for the meeting. As an area of progress, he acknowledged the effort of the Public Policy Secretariat (PPS) to make the last Action Plan for implementation of the Government Program (APIGP) publicly available and implement the main action to improve the transparency of this document envisaged by the JI.¹

2. Discussion on newly proposed measures, previously defined topics and potential suggestions for the next Serbian government

Participants repeated their commitment to work alongside other partners on strengthening proactive transparency. They briefly presented the ongoing activities of their institutions and organizations

¹ The document is available at <https://rsjp.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/Action-Plan-for-the-Implementation-of-the-Governments-Program.pdf>

related to the defined topics of TWG. Also, they shared their views on two newly proposed measures (standardization of website content of Government institutions and posting relevant documents in a machine-readable format; and regular publishing of the documents such as analyses of the Government plans).

During the discussion, the participants stated that the normative framework for the standardization of website content of Government institutions and posting relevant documents in a machine-readable format already exists.² However, according to the CSOs, the lack of regular posting of relevant documents by public institutions in a machine-readable format represents a persistent problem.

Representatives of public institutions pointed out that for adequate implementation, i.e. establishing the practice of regular posting of relevant documents in a machine-readable format by relevant public authorities, it will be important to secure appropriate support. Furthermore, this also applies to the fulfilment of envisaged measures and activities in the proactive transparency field at the strategic level.

The representative of Transparency Serbia suggested one potential proposal to the next Government - the establishment of an effective oversight mechanism for the implementation of public institutions' obligation to publish documents regularly in a machine-readable format. Another proposal for the next government would be to complete measure previously identified by the TWG and establish a practice of publishing agendas and decisions-conclusions and unzipping all documents on its website.

The representative of the Commissioner informed participants that in February 2022, the implementation of the amendments to the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance came into force. These amendments bring improvements to the proactive transparency of public institutions, especially regarding the Informational Booklets' content and publishing. Following these amendments, since November 2022, informational booklets (informatori o radu) with more detailed data on the work of public institutions will be published in a machine-readable format. These documents will be available on the unique portal hosted by the Commissioner.³

The representative of PPS said that it is currently preparing the Final Report on Implementation of the APIGP. This document will present the level of implementation of the APIGP in all four thematic areas covered by this plan. The PPS expects to publish this report on the website.

During the discussion, an additional measure was nominated for further consideration - establishing the practice of publishing annual reports on the implementation of the APIGP. The participants also suggested examining the comparative practice in publishing the Final Report on Implementation of the APIGP before the election process.

Results:

- The participants agreed that newly proposed topics and measures are important for improving the situation in the area of Proactive Transparency and that they should be the subject of work in the forthcoming period.
- The participants nominated an additional measure for further consideration.

² Regulation on Detailed Requirements for Development and Maintenance of Official Websites of Authorities prescribes that all authorities will post on their website content that is in a machine-readable format.

³ The amendments obliged an extensive range of public institutions to prepare Informational Booklets.



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3. Conclusion

In conclusion, the moderator informed the participants about activities following the second meeting of the TWG – Proactive Transparency:

1. The JI Secretariat invites all participants to submit **by May 12, 2022** proposals for actions of the next Government that will contribute to the further improvement of the proactive transparency.
2. The JI Secretariat will prepare the proposal of suggestions for the next Government with the selected topics for the further improvement of the proactive transparency following the analysis of submitted inputs by participants.
3. In the process of the preparation of the Policy Note, the JI Secretariat will take into consideration the document *Proposed Priorities for the New Government and the New Convocation of the National Assembly 2022-2026*, prepared by the CSOs coalition prEUgovor.⁴

⁴ The representative of Transparency Serbia shared with participants this document. He stressed that it contains proposals and recommendations for strengthening proactive transparency in the work of public institutions. The document is available at <https://preugovor.org/Policy-Papers/1730/Proposed-Priorities-for-the-New-Government-and.shtml>