

The situation about CM in Serbia and project relevance in this respect

The new Law on Local Self-Government, adopted in 2002, stipulates as one of the novelties the introduction of Municipal Manager. As this institution is of optional character, most of the municipalities in Serbia have not introduced it. Furthermore, the Law does not regulate in detail the responsibilities and methods of work of this institution, and leaves it to the President of the Municipality to regulate it by a contract with the Municipal Manager that should stipulate the conditions and methods of work. The Law on Local Self-Government defines the Municipal Manager above all as a person whose primary responsibility is to pursue the economic development of the municipality. However, the experiences from other countries have shown that the role of the manager should be broader. In some countries, municipal or city managers even have the executive powers, while in Serbia the manager mostly functions as an advisor to the Mayor. In some countries, the managers perform also the functions that are the responsibilities of Heads of Municipal Administration in Serbia.

That is why, firstly, the need arose to improve and explain the functioning of the institution of Municipal Manager within the currently valid legal regulations, while in the long run the intention is to provide recommendations and contribute to the possible new legal solutions.

Moreover, it has also been noticed that in the majority of municipalities the economic capacities are not being utilised, while the municipalities, although having the relevant potentials, economically stagnate or even regress. Most often, the reasons for such a situation are poor organisation and lack of managerial capacities required for creation of strategies and plans for municipal development and attracting of investments. Poor management in municipalities often leads to the dispersion of capacities and resources, and furthermore, to the impoverishment of the municipality and its citizens. Therefore it is necessary, in as many municipalities as possible, to introduce the institution whose task will be to work continually on the overall economic development in the municipality, along with the simultaneous care for protection of the environment and good organisation of municipal affairs.

Municipalities in Serbia are often the environments closed for any changes, which often leads to the economic stagnation. Such a situation has created the need to introduce an institution with the task to initiate and create reforms plausible in each municipality.

The existing regulations often slow down or even prevent new business initiatives and capital investments. That is why there is a need for an institution that would have complete insight into the real obstacles in the field and provide feedback information to the local authorities in the sense on what regulations should be changed or newly adopted.

In many municipalities where the Municipal Manager already exists, there's a need for his/her improved functioning, which calls not only for education in management, but also for raising of manager's awareness of the need for transparency in his/her work and improved orientation towards citizens.

Project "Efficient Municipal Manager and Active and Informed Citizens – A Step Forward to More Developed Communities" has the aim to help capacity building within local self-government through the promotion of importance and explanation of the role of Municipal Manager, as well as through the efforts to establish this body in the municipalities where it has not been introduced so far. Raising the citizens' awareness of the need and ways for the more efficient management of local communities, as well as of the need for citizens' co-operation and partnerships with municipal institutions is one of the primary goals of this project. Target groups are: Municipal Managers, Mayors, Heads of Municipal Administrations, local entrepreneurs, the local population and the population of Serbia and Montenegro as a whole. Accomplishment of these goals will be pursued through the following activities: selection of the project team, preparatory seminar, public opinion research, training of trainers, study visit to Slovakia, preparation of a study on the institution of Municipal Manager, seminar on the institution of Municipal Manager, preparation of

presentation for citizens on the institution of Municipal Manager, creation of teams for the campaign and the very campaign for the Municipal Manager.

Overall objective of this project is capacity building in local self-governments for the improved management of municipal affairs, both in the municipalities where the institution of Municipal Manager has been introduced and in those where this job has not been finished, as well as raising the citizens' awareness of the need for the improved management in the area of development and municipal affairs. Also, one of the priorities of the project is raising the citizens', as well as the municipal officials' awareness on the need of mutual cooperation and partnership in solving the problems their communities meet with.

Specific goals of this project are the improvement of the role and functioning of the already appointed managers, while in the municipalities where the manager has not been introduced, to emphasise the need and importance of the institutionalisation of this function. This is aimed at stimulating the efficient and functional managerial cadre that will be able to solve efficiently problems of local community and additionally help its development. One of the goals of this project is preparation of recommendations, within the study related to the institution of Municipal Manager, for the purpose of reform of the Law on Local Self-Government, in its part related to the institutions of Municipal Manager and Head of the municipal administration.

Project activities, particularly the campaign and creation of printed presentation for citizens on the institution of municipal manager should additionally help raise the level of information among citizens of local communities on the role of Municipal Manager and the ways the citizens can make contact with him/her with the aim of presenting their proposals, objections or even joint projects. In such a manner, citizens will be stimulated to express broader interest for participation in resolution of problems of the local community and its further development. Particularly significant segment of population in this sense are the local businessmen, who are supposed, in the course of their daily activities, to have the most frequent contacts with municipal managers. Moreover, with the help of public opinion research, whose results will be presented to the municipal managers, presidents of municipalities and heads of municipal administration, the citizens will have a chance to express their views dealing with the work of these institutions, as well as on the most frequent problems they face which could, on their side, be solved by the institutions themselves.