

Date: 28/09/2018

No.: 02-06/741

The most difficult access is to information related to the way public funds are spent

Although about two-thirds of public authorities in RS and FBiH submitted information on the way grants, subsidies and scholarships has been spent, 70% of RS institutions and 50% of FBiH institutions has not delivered all requested information, but only partial replies and total amounts, without any details about final users of the funds.

Sarajevo, 28th September, 2018 – Transparency International in BiH (TiBiH) organized conference on the occasion of **the International Day of Free Access to Information** at which it presented research on the availability of public funds for grants, subsidies, patronage and sponsorships, scholarships and single financial aid for the period 2016-2017.

Preliminary results of the research, that covered all levels of government, showed that one-third of public authorities did not submit information within the prescribed deadline. Although about two-thirds of public authorities in RS and FBiH submitted information on the way grants, subsidies and scholarships has been spent, 70% of RS institutions and 50% of FBiH institutions has not delivered all requested information. It was most difficult to access information about final users of public funds, especially when it comes to users of agricultural incentives. Public organs frequently submitted incomplete information or documents which had not contained information about final users of public funds. Also, the main explanation for failing to submit requested information was the alleged volume of requested documentation, and the reference to exceptions such as protection of personal data and confidential commercial interests.

One of the topics at the conference referred to the obstacles all applicants of the public call related to distribution of self-employment funds and announced by the Federal Employment Agency faced. Due to the lack of valid information and the way in which it had been implemented, this public call has been defined as an example of bad practice, or an illustration of the lack of transparency. In this specific case, upon the complaint filed by organization Glas zene, TI BiH submitted a complaint to the Institution of Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which confirmed that the good governance principle was violated. Public funds had been allocated to the applicants on the basis of the speed they submitted their applications and there were no other criteria or clear information about the way the funds would be distributed.

The last panel presented the Open Government Partnership Initiative, of which Bosnia and Herzegovina is a member. Although BiH joined the Partnership in 2014, it is expected to prepare Action Plans for all levels of government aimed at improving the transparency of all public authorities in the coming period. Members of the BiH Advisory Council for the Open Government Partnership Initiative agreed that in the coming period it is necessary to harmonize Action Plans and to precisely define measures to finally make the open data, facilitated access to information and proactive transparency part of official public policies.

Association for the Fight against Corruption „Transparency International“ in Bosnia and Herzegovina
No. UP08-7-1-616/11, Ministry of Justice BiH, Sarajevo

The seat of the Association is: Banja Luka, 2 Gajeva
The seat of the Association's regional office is: Sarajevo, 9/1 Mula Mustafe Baseskije
Email: info@ti-bih.org
Web: www.ti-bih.org