



AGENCY FOR PROTECTION OF THE RIGHT TO FREE ACCESS TO
PUBLIC INFORMATION

ANNUAL REPORT

2023



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1. SUMMARY

Access to public information is a fundamental democratic and human right of the citizens in our country, guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia. At the same time, access to information is an important tool for ensuring the rule of law and good governance at all levels of public authority, both at the central and local levels.

The right to free access to information is a preventive tool in the fight against corruption, in a way that it strengthens the openness of the work of the institutions on the one hand and, on the other hand, narrows the possibility of abuse of public powers. It is a guarantee of legality and regularity in the actions of the institutions. In that direction, the transparency and accountability of public authorities at the central and local levels are essential for the smooth functioning of a democratic society and the rule of law.

Through the application of the right to free access to information, the realisation of the public interest is enabled, and it provides insight into the work of the public sector as a whole, which contributes to making better decisions and their better application, enables insight into the spending of public budget funds, as well as strengthening citizens' trust in public institutions.

Through this report, the Agency for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information (hereinafter - the Agency) presents its work and activities during 2023 to the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia.

According to the Law on Free Access to Public Information (hereinafter referred to as the Law on Free Access to Public Information), the Agency is the only state body that works in the sphere of protection of the right to free access to public information. The Agency is an independent state body, i.e. an external body led by a director and deputy director appointed by the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia.

As a secondary authority in the administrative procedure, the Agency, in accordance with its legal competencies, during the year 2023, acted upon 453 cases of appeals within the legally provided deadlines. In addition, the Agency dealt with cases arising from its operation in legal and general affairs in accordance with its other legal competencies. These cases have also been completed promptly during the reporting year.

During 2023, the Agency continued cooperation with several civil society organisations, participating in projects to promote the right to free access to public information. Through the cooperation with the civil organisation "Inklusiva", within the project for inclusion in access to public information for persons with disabilities, financed by the "Open Society - Macedonia" Foundation, the Agency successfully conducted workshops and trainings in several pilot-municipalities.

The Agency, through its team of trainers and experts, held successful presentations and trainings for young people under the title "Together against corruption" in the interest of better awareness of the young population about the basic goals and benefits of LFAPI.

The 2023 report was also successful in terms of the Agency's international cooperation with other related institutions and bodies and with international organisations in the field of access to public information. In doing so, we can emphasise the cooperation and active participation of the Agency in the regional traditional conference of "Initiative 2020", which includes related institutions in the field of free access to information in the countries of the region such as Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia and North Macedonia. Of course, it is no less important to emphasise the active participation of the Agency in the International Conference of Information Commissioners (ICIC) and the cooperation with the organisation.

These activities and achieved bilateral and multilateral contacts are of particular importance for the future work of the Agency in the direction of the exchange of experiences and good practices in the promotion of the right of access to public information and the protection of the public interest.

Continuing the regular activities in the organisation of training for officials to mediate public information in the institutions - holders of information, the Agency, during 2023, realised a total of 13 free training, of which 8 were through the ZOOM platform, and also realised five trainings with physical presence, in the premises of the Agency. The trainings were conducted in two periodic cycles: the first cycle was realised from January to June, and the second cycle of training was realised from September to December. Officials from a total of 1457 institutions were invited to the training. The trainings were attended by officials from 136 institutions (some with more than 1 participant). In contrast, the officials from the rest of the institutions - holders of information, did not show interest in following the training, even though they are of exceptional importance when dealing with requests for free access to information of a public nature, especially due to the importance of the institutions' proactive transparency.

The Agency, through records in the files of the first instance procedure, determined that most of the currently registered officials among the 1457 information holders still do not know the LFAPI sufficiently. There is a tendency to frequently change the existing officials, who have already been trained, with new ones who have not visited training, and consequently, there is a need to continue actively working in the field of their further education through additional training and with advisory participation in building the capacities of information holders both at the central and local level.

The current reporting period for the operation of the Agency as a secondary authority shows the following data:

During the year 2023, according to the data on appeal procedures initiated before the Agency, the right to free access to public information was used for the most part - 235 (51.87%) by natural persons, 190 non-governmental organizations, associations of citizens and foundations and 28 appeals from legal entities.

More specifically, according to the content of the appeals submitted to the Agency, it can be concluded that in the largest number of cases, the citizens use the LFAPI most often when they are unable to exercise their rights and obtain, for them, the necessary information and documents arising from the parent authorities of the institutions - holders of information. This is because the holders of information did not act in accordance with the material laws that they apply during operation and decision-making in a certain administrative procedure, that is, they did not act according to the requests of the citizens as parties in a specific administrative case.

There are also cases of appeal procedures initiated by lawyers and law firms, submitted to the Agency, with the aim of providing evidence for a certain administrative or judicial procedure, without applying the provisions of the material laws regulating the provision of evidence. In this way, inappropriate use of the right to free access to public information is made.

It must be emphasized again that the fact that in the largest number of appeals submitted to the Agency, for the period covered by this report - 277 or 61%, we are talking about cases in which the holders of information did not act on submitted requests in the legally prescribed deadlines (20 days after a request is submitted, or 30 days if the request requires extensive information), that is, due to the so-called "**silence of the management**". The Agency makes great efforts to emphasize the importance of proactive transparency and the publication of information by the institutions - holders of information, especially the timely action on requests for public

information, that is, as long as the silence of the administration, both at the central and at the local level, will not be completely eliminated.

At the same time, the Agency takes continuous measures for **favoring proactive transparency** among the holders of information, combining it with the drafting of additional by-laws.

Because of that, **the Agency, as the only competent state body that takes care of the protection of the right to free access to public information, sets an example, appeals, invites and encourages all institutions at the central and local level to raise the right of access to public information at a higher social level, through increasing and promoting proactive transparency within their own institutions.**

Continuing the professionalism in the sphere of free access to public information, the Agency remains, within its competences, committed to the practice of finding appropriate legal solutions for the revealed problems and issues. For that reason, the Agency will continue, in direct contact with the requesters and holders of information, through its officials, to provide unreserved free legal assistance to the requesters of information, as well as to the officials who mediate the public information with the holders of information. At the same time, continuously and according to plan, throughout the year, the Agency will continue with the implementation of trainings for both stakeholders in the field of free access to public information.

There is no doubt that the progress in the use of the right to free access to public information is evident, but the necessity to further work on the advancement of this process through the proactive transparency of the institutions is increasing, as a top priority when it comes to this human right, guaranteed to all citizens by the Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia (Article 16, Paragraph 3).

Therefore, it is necessary to continue the work of raising awareness, especially among the management structures in the institutions, in order to build a mentality of self-initiative (proactive) publication of information of public interest, without waiting for information requests from the requesters. This is especially important because of the fact that **LFAPI is an extremely important anti-corruption tool and its application is extremely important from the aspect of fighting corruption and strengthening the integrity of institutions.**

2. INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of the Agency is to promote, practice and protect the exercise of the constitutionally guaranteed right to free access to public information. It achieves this through effective, up-to-date and independent implementation of the appeal procedure and through continuous information to the public, as well as education of requesters and holders of information. Accomplishing its intended Mission, the Annual Report for 2023 covers the operation of the Agency for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information in the exercise of its legal powers. For a clearer, more vivid display, we present the following parameters:

During the reporting year 2023, a total of 453 cases/appeals were submitted to the Agency, submitted against administrative and actual acts of the first instance authorities, or due to the so-called silence of the administration. 277 Appeals (61%) were filed against non-action by information holders following requests for access to public information, which speaks of a slight increase in the silence of information holders, in contrast to the previous reporting year 2022. This phenomenon undoubtedly points to the insufficient perception of part of the management structure

in the institutions - holders of information, about the essence and meaning of the right to free access to public information.

Hence, it can be concluded that it is necessary for the Agency to continue with the engagement, commitment and synergy between the administrative officers and the management in realizing the vision and mission of the Agency, with the aim of reducing, but also completely eradicating the silence of the administration.

As for the number of submitted annual reports on the operations of the holders of information in the field of access to information, it can be concluded that out of a total of 1457 holders of information, 1394 holders submitted an Annual Report on the application of the Law to the Agency, i.e. 95.68 %, while the legal obligation is not fulfilled by 55 institutions, or 4.32% of the information holders. It can be seen that from year to year, the number of annual reports submitted increases. This is due to the fact that the Agency, following the legally established practice, through its authorized person, before its Misdemeanor Commission, regularly initiates misdemeanor proceedings against officials for mediating public information who have not fulfilled the legal obligation to timely submit an annual report to the Agency.

We would hereby like to emphasize that even in this reporting year 2023, the Agency was not able to fully exercise its legal competences within the limits of its own modest budget funds at its disposal. As a result of this, the Agency made attempts in several segments, and mostly in the part of the legal obligation to undertake activities for the education of the holders of information, by continuing the cooperation with the existing ones, as well as by establishing cooperation with new domestic and international actors in the field on access to public information. Considering the given circumstances, the realization of the activities was at an enviable level.

In the context of the above mentioned, it would not be immodest to emphasize that **for the more successful implementation of the important role it has according to the legal competences, and relying on European values and good practices, the Agency has an urgent need for quality personnel re-equipment, a spatial solution, but also for significantly stronger budgetary support. This is especially important because the activities of the Agency in the area of the role of a protector in realizing the right of free access to public information is of exceptional importance from the aspect of the fight against corruption and the strengthening of the integrity of the institutions and the protection of the public interest.**

Only with joint engagement **through transparency, accountability, openness, inclusiveness, integrity and proactive publication of public information** to all public institutions at the central and local level, **we can build a better society for all.**

3. STATUS, MANAGEMENT, COMPETENCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Agency for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information has been an independent and independent state body for four years, i.e. an independent body led by a director and a deputy director.

The competences of the Agency are exhaustively determined by Article 30 of the Law on Free Access to Public Information ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 101/2019), the Agency performs the following tasks:

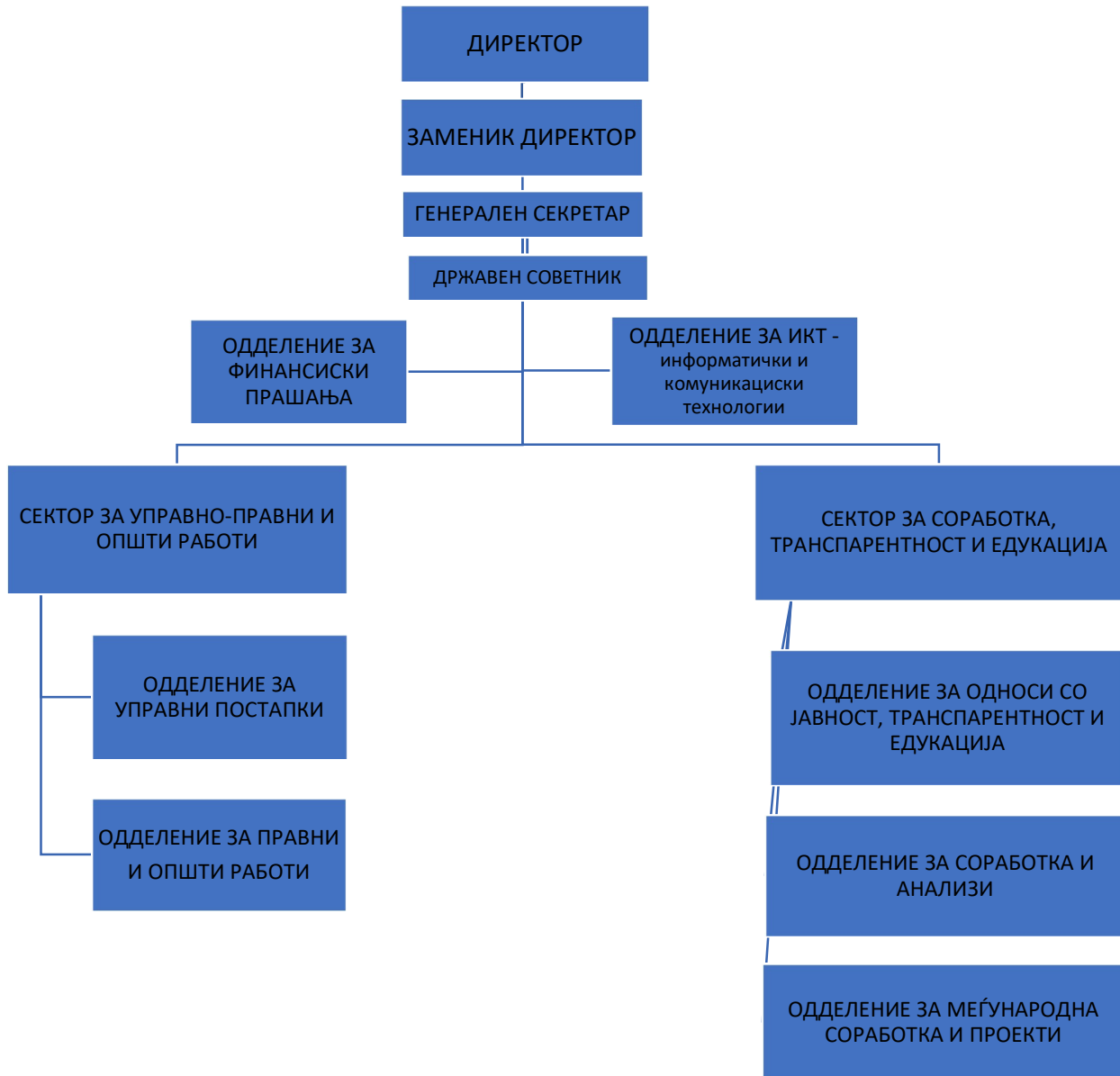
- conducts administrative proceedings and decides on appeals against the decision by which the owner of the information refused or rejected the request for access to information of the requesters,
- takes care of the implementation of the provisions of this law,
- prepares and publishes a list of information holders,
- gives opinions on proposals for laws regulating free access to information,
- develops policies and provides guidelines regarding the exercise of the right to free access to information,
- conducts misdemeanor proceedings through the Misdemeanor Commission, which decides on misdemeanors in accordance with the law,
- undertakes activities related to the education of the holders of information about the right of free access to the information they have,
- cooperates with the holders of information regarding the realization of the right of access to information,
- prepares an annual report on its work and submits it to the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia,
- carries out works of international cooperation related to the execution of the international obligations of the Republic of North Macedonia, participation in the implementation of projects of international organizations and cooperates with the authorities of other countries and institutions in the field of free access to public information,
- promotes the right to free access to public information, and
- performs other tasks determined by this and other laws.

Based on the type, scope and degree of complexity of the works and tasks performed by the Agency, the interconnection and kinship of those works and tasks and other conditions necessary for their performance, in the Agency in accordance with the Rules for internal organization and the Rules for the systematization of jobs, which acts are applied from 13.10.2020, the following organizational units are formed:

1. Department of Financial Affairs;
2. Department of ICT - information and communication technologies
3. Department for administrative-legal and general affairs
 - 3.1. Department for administrative procedures and
 - 3.2. Department of Legal and General Affairs,
4. Department for cooperation, transparency and education
 - 4.1. Department for public relations, transparency and education
 - 4.2. Department of cooperation and analysis
 - 4.3. Department for international cooperation and projects

The organizational structure of the Agency is presented in the following graphic display:

ORGANOGRAM
of the Agency for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information



With the act of systematization, jobs are determined and described for a total of 50 executors, spread over nine organizational units, of which a total of nineteen (19) jobs were filled on 31.12.2023, of which eighteen (18) are employed for an indefinite period and one (1) for a fixed period. Of the total number, sixteen (16) have higher education, and three (3) have secondary education.

The qualification structure of the employees with higher education is as follows: six (6) are law graduates, of which three (3) have passed the bar exam, one (1) is a master of law in the field of criminal law, six (6) are economists of which one (1) is a master's degree in organizational sciences-human resources management, one (1) is a graduate economist in the field of management, one (1) is a graduate manager in human resources, and one (1) is a graduate economist in marketing and advertising, three (3) are from the Faculty of Philology of which one (1) is a master of philological sciences in the field of language science-Albanian language, and one (1) English language and literature, and one (1) is a mechanical engineer graduate.

There are three (3) employees with secondary education, of which one (1) has a high school diploma, two (2) are economic technicians.

According to categories of administrative officers, the situation is as follows:

- General Secretary: - none (0);
- State Counsellor: - two (2);
- Head of department: - one (1);
- Assistant head of department: - one (1);
- Department head: - two (2);
- Advisor: - seven (7);
- Junior associate: - three (3);
- Independent referee: - two (2) and
- Senior officer: - one (1).

From the total number of employees, ten (10) are of Macedonian nationality (52.63%), four (4) are of Albanian nationality (21.05%), one (1) is of Turkish nationality (5.26%), two (2) are of Aromanian nationality (10.53%) and two (2) are of Roma nationality (10.53%).

Percentage of the total number by nationality of employees in the Agency:

	Systematized jobs	Filled work places	Total number of employees (%)	Higher education	Secondary education
Macedonia		10	52,63%	9	1
Albanians		4	21,05%	4	/
Turks		1	5,26%	1	/
Aromanians		2	10,53 %	2	/
Roma		2	10,53 %	/	2
Total	50	19	100%	16	3

The total number of employees in the Agency by nationality is as follows: ten (10) are of Macedonian nationality, of which four (4) are male and six (6) are female, four (4) are of Albanian nationality of which two (2) are male and two (2) are female, one (1) of Turkish nationality is female, two (2) of Aromanian nationality are female and two (2) are of Roma nationality, of which one (1) is male and one (1) is female. Of the total number of employees, seven (7) employees are male, and twelve (12) are female, aged between thirty (30) and sixty-three (60).

In accordance with the Agency's Annual Employment Plan for 2023, which received financial consent from the competent institution, during this reporting year a procedure was carried out through the publication of a public announcement for the employment of one (1) executor, with employment and filling in the following workplace:

1. Public Relations Adviser-PR, Department of Public Relations, Transparency and Education, Department for Cooperation, Transparency and Education - one (1) executor.

After receiving the financial consent, in this reporting year, the Agency announced, through the publication of an internal announcement, the promotion of three (3) administrative officers for the following positions:

1. State adviser for cooperation with the holders of information, international cooperation and projects, two (2) executors, and
2. Assistant head of the Department for Administrative-Legal and General Affairs in the Department for Administrative-Legal and General Affairs - one (1) executor.

After previously receiving financial consent from the competent institution, the Agency extended the contract for a fixed period of time with one (1) executor for a position:

1. Junior associate for project work, Department for Cooperation and Analysis, Department for Cooperation, Transparency and Education - one (1) executor.

During this reporting period, the employment of two (2) executors was terminated, and that of one (1) executor of Albanian nationality with the title of Counselor for Human Resources Management, Department for Legal and General Affairs, Department for Administrative-Legal and General Affairs, their employment ended on 12.01.2023 due to retirement, and the other executor of Turkish nationality from the Department of Cooperation and Analysis, Sector for Cooperation, Transparency and Education, with the title of Junior Associate for Project Work, had their contract terminated for a fixed period of time as of 31.12.2023.

4. REALIZED ACTIVITIES DERIVED FROM THE LEGAL COMPETENCES AND THE WORK PROGRAM

4.1. DECISION ON APPEALS

For 17 years now, the realization of the constitutionally and legally guaranteed right of citizens to obtain public information has been implemented and guaranteed by the Agency for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information, as a secondary authority in the procedure for requests for access to public information.

Namely, the Agency conducts administrative procedures and decides upon appeals from information requesters submitted against the information holders, regardless of whether the

information holders tried to be non-transparent, did not act in accordance with the LFAPI, or passed administrative or real acts by which they refused or rejected the requests for access to public information submitted by requesters.

The right to file an appeal is the right of all natural and legal persons who have submitted an oral, written or electronic request for access to public information to a public authority, at the central or local level, i.e. to any of the holders of information, who in the procedure they appear as first instance officers who act on requests from information requesters.

On the other hand, the Agency, as a secondary authority in the procedure, electronically forwards the received Appeals from the dissatisfied requesters to the holders of information for a decision, with a request that within 7 days they will make a decision on the Appeals and submit a response to the same to the Agency, as well as to attach all relevant documents, in order for the Agency to act immediately and make an appropriate decision within the legally stipulated period of 15 days.

In its actions, the Agency cultivates the educational approach, by initially delivering decisions to the holders of information who have not acted on the requests for access to public information, ordering them to act in accordance with the LFAPI within 15 days of receiving the decision, with an obligation to inform the Agency about their actions within that period. To those holders of information who tried to act, but did not do so in accordance with the provisions of the Law, i.e. responded or notified, but did not pass an administrative act (Decision) with an attached response to the requests, the Agency delivers decisions for renewed act upon the request on their part, indicating how to do it.

In the event that the stated initial decisions of the Agency do not show a result in the direction of achieving the goal of LFAPI - publicity and openness in the operations of the holders of information and providing an appropriate response to those requesting information, the Agency, acting on resubmitted Appeals, prepares and delivers meritorious decisions to the holders of information, with which the majority of them undertake to deliver the requested information to the requesters.

In addition, the Agency provides data on its actions during 2023:

In the reporting year 2023, the Agency received a total of 453 Appeals. Information requesters submitted Appeals throughout the year, at the following rate:

In January, 62 Appeals were submitted to the Agency, in February-34, March-46, April-45, May-36, June-36, July-41, August-31, September-29, October-45, November-26 and in December-22.

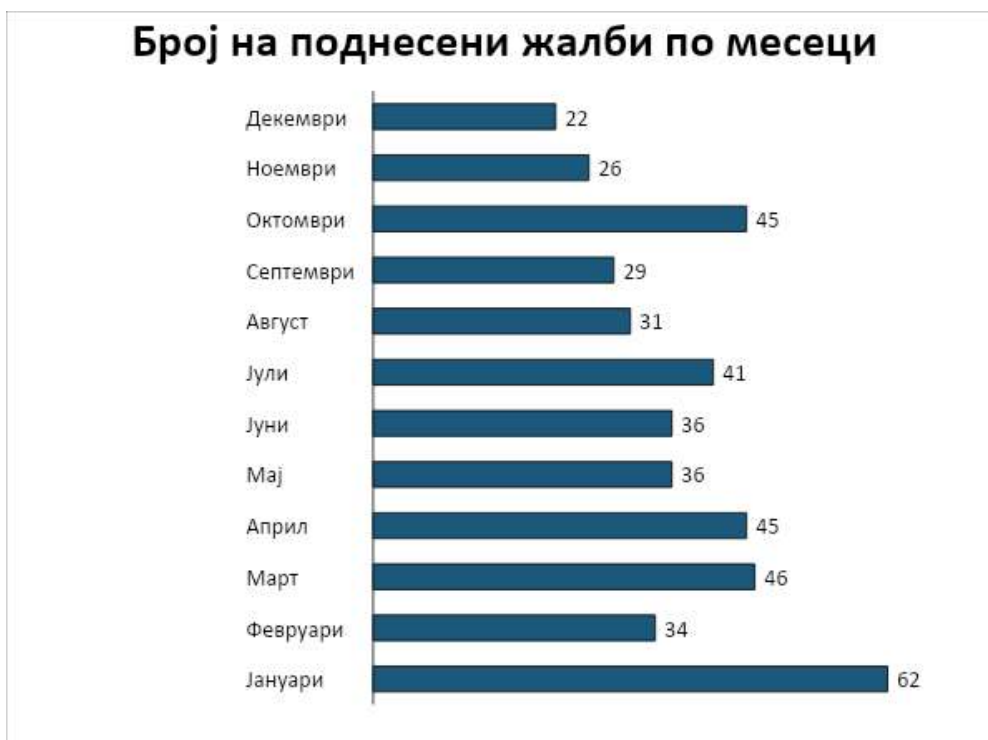


Chart 1: Number of submitted appeals by month

When submitting the above-mentioned appeals to the Agency, for the first time since its existence (including the time of its legal predecessor - the Commission), natural persons lead the way with a total of 235 appeals submitted, followed by citizens' associations and foundations with 190 and legal entities with 28 appeals. In the past reporting periods, without exception, over 70% of appeals were filed by the second-mentioned category of claimants (citizens' associations and foundations), while the number of appeals filed by natural persons was much lower.

4.2. SOLVED CASES AND THEIR STRUCTURE

In the reporting year 2023, until the submission of this Annual Report, the Agency acted upon all 453 established cases and made decisions upon them.

While deciding upon the appeals received in 2023, the Agency made a total of 446 final decisions and 72 meritorious decisions (of which 7 are decisions to reject the appeal as inadmissible, and the remaining 65 were decided upon a second appeal). In order not to cause confusion in the figures presented, we note that their total results from the Agency's actions in accordance with the provisions of the Law on General Administrative Procedure according to which, in addition to the initial decisions with which the first instance authorities were ordered to act in accordance with the LFAP, or were returned to them cases of retrial, meritorious decisions were also made in cases where the holders did not act according to the Agency's final decisions. This legal practice resulted in almost complete action of the first instance authorities in accordance with the final decisions of the Agency. There were also those among the holders of information who did not act in accordance with the decisions of the Agency, and even reached out to request legal protection before the Administrative Court, filing lawsuits demanding the annulment of the Agency's decisions, ignoring the fact that they did not have legal active identification to do it.

Considering that as the first level authorities they acted upon requests for access to public information and decided on the rights and obligations of the information requesters. Therefore, acting upon the initiative of the claimants-appellants, or on the official duty of the authorized person in the Agency, misdemeanor proceedings were initiated against them, which were carried out by the Agency's Misdemeanor Commission.

Here is how the work of the Agency looks statistically in the field of conducting administrative procedures during 2023:

- 136 decisions by which the appeal is respected and the first-instance authority is ordered to act on the request of the applicant in accordance with the LFAPI;
- 47 decisions by which the appeal is respected and obliges the holder to provide the requested information;
- 55 decisions rejecting the appeal as unfounded;
- 12 decisions rejecting the appeal as untimely;
- 7 decisions by which the appeal is rejected as inadmissible;
- 140 decisions by which the appeal is respected and the case is returned to the first-instance authority, and
- 121 decisions stopping the appeal procedure due to withdrawal of the appeal by the applicant, because a response was received from the holders during the second instance procedure.

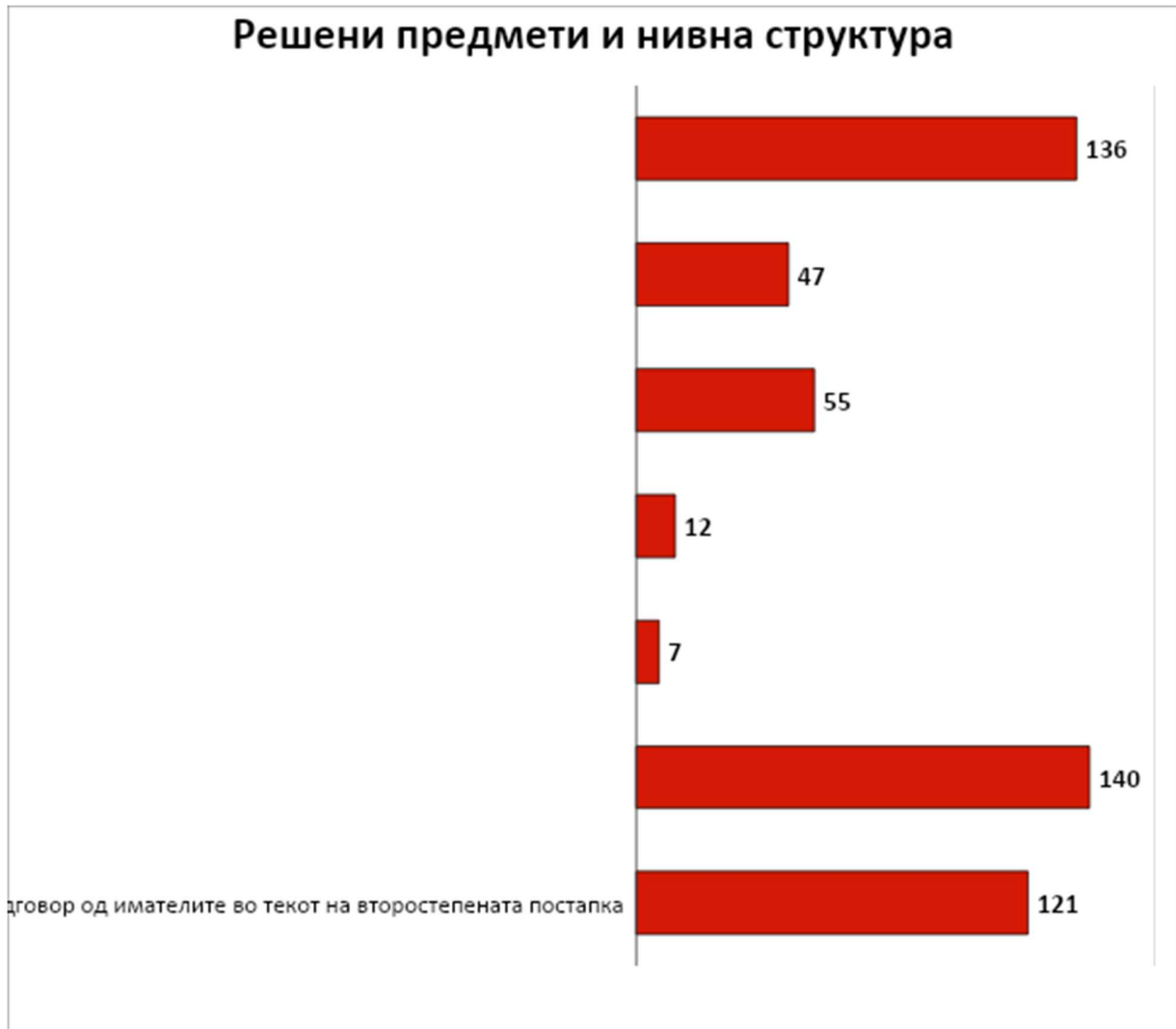


Chart 2: Solved cases and their structure

4.3. APPEALS FILED AGAINST INFORMATION HOLDERS

The analysis of the submitted appeals shows that most often they are directed against the following holders of information:

- 183 against state institutions at the central level,
- 148 against municipalities,
- 41 against public enterprises and institutions,
- 38 against the judiciary,
- 11 against legal and natural persons exercising public powers,
- 15 against educational institutions,

- 11 against health institutions and
- 6 against political parties.

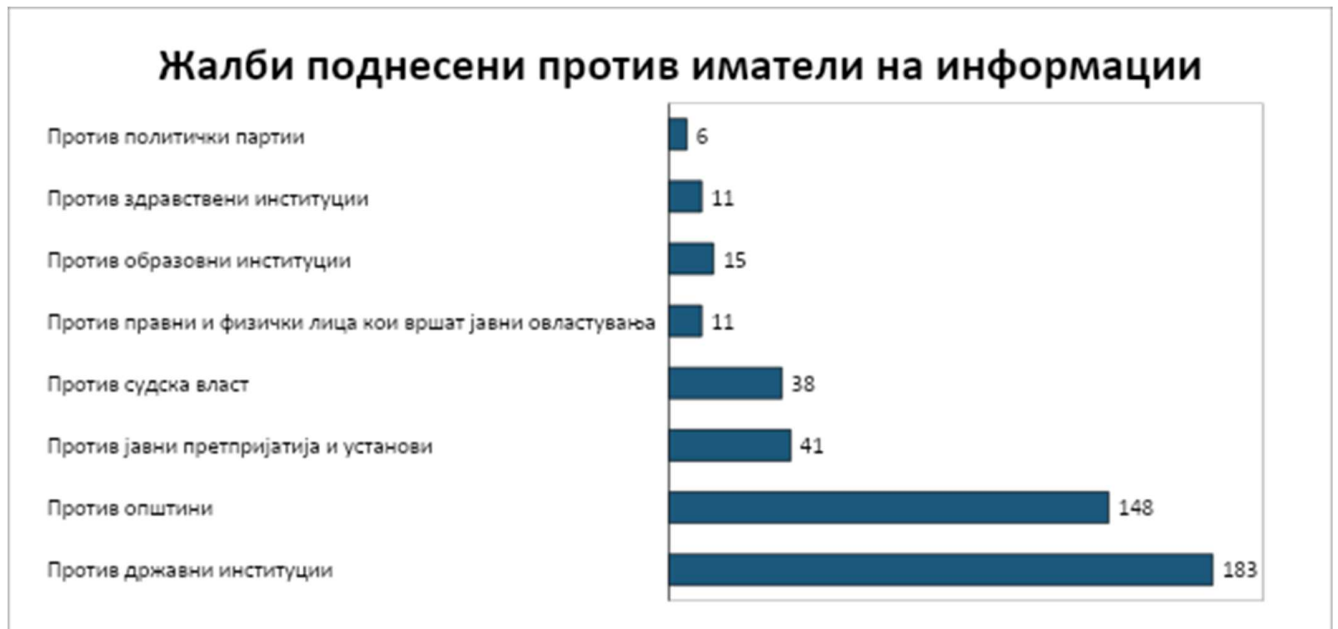


Chart 3: Appeals filed against information holders

4.4. NATURE OF FILED APPEALS

The information requesters submitted their appeals due to:

- 277 due to silence of the administration (61%),
- 123 against decisions from the information holders (27%)
- 45 against response from the information holders (10%), and
- 8 against reportings from the information holders (2%)

In this reporting period, despite the large number of trainings held for officials to mediate information of a public nature to the information holders, the percentage of Appeals submitted due to non-action by the information holders on the requests within the legally provided deadlines, i.e. they have been submitted, is worrying due to the silence of the first instance authority. From the processing of the files in question, as well as from the regular electronic and telephone communications with the officials and with the managers of the information holders, it can be concluded that the readiness for openness to the public is greater among the officials, in contrast to the attitudes of the management structures, which go in the opposite direction. Therefore, the need to organize additional trainings, workshops, round tables and similar presentations of LFAPI to the managers of the holders of information remains current.

It is worth noting that the Appeals submitted to the Agency usually come as a result of the express dissatisfaction of the information requesters with the non-action/action of the information

holders, i.e. from received negative solutions and answers from the information holders, as well as due to the non-action of the first instance authority following the decisions of The Agency in relation to requests relating to:

- Detailed list of legalized illegally built buildings in accordance with the Law on Dealing with Illegally Built Buildings since the entry into force of the legal amendments on August 7, 2021, until today,
 - How many legalized illegally built buildings were located in an area covered by an urban plan,
 - To be provided with all the opinions issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture at the request of the Municipality of Ohrid, in connection with procedures for the legalization of illegally built buildings,
 - The text of "Information on held bilateral screening for Chapter 5 - Public procurement from Cluster 1 - Fundamental values and undertaken obligations, related to item 26 of the 119th session of the Government, held on 17.01.2023,
 - Minutes of all meetings of the Management Board of the Macedonian Sports Shooting Federation (MSSF) from 2020 to 2022,
 - All Decisions of the Management Board of the IFRS made from 2020 to 2022,
 - Integrity Plan,
 - Annual anti-corruption program (for the last year for which you have such a program),
 - Internal procedure for implementation of public procurement procedures and implementation of public procurement contracts,
 - How many funds from the RNM Budget through the Ministry of Culture have been allocated and transferred to the account of domestic and international non-governmental organizations, associations, foundations and other organizations or companies for projects that include Pride Month (for the march, exhibitions, stage performances, musical performances) etc., events during that period) and for Pride Week for the period from 2018-2022,
 - The minutes of all inspections carried out in institutions for the social protection of the elderly during 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023,
 - A list of all the facilities and activities that were planned and not realized from budget item 482 (other construction facilities) of the Budget of your municipality for 2022, with a description of the location and planned value of the individual facilities and activities,
1. Public procurement plan for 2021 with all its amendments and additions, as well as the following information on the procedure for public procurement of (Medical waste) with No. 12690/2022:
 1. The rationale for the reason and need for the purchase;
 2. The way in which the estimated value of the purchase was determined;
 3. The decision on public procurement;
 4. Decision on the establishment of the Public Procurement Commission;
 5. Statements about the existence/non-existence of a conflict of interest in relation to the specific public procurement;

6. Are people with expertise in the field of the procurement included in the committee?
7. Minutes of public opening of bids;
8. Report on the performed evaluation of the offers;
9. Report of the conducted procedure;
10. The received offers from economic operators;
11. Report of the course of the conducted electronic auction;
12. Decision to choose the most favorable offer or decision to stop the procedure or decision to cancel the procedure;
13. Eventual annexes to the public procurement contract;
14. Eventual supporting documentation for concluded (agreed) legal matters;
15. Confirmation of receipt of the object of the purchase in question (delivery note, receipt or other appropriate document);
16. Document on the payments made under the contract for the specific public procurement;
17. The decision to appoint a person to monitor the implementation of the public procurement contract (if such person is appointed);
18. The rationale for the need to amend and/or supplement the public procurement plan for the specific procurement, if it was covered by an amendment or supplement to the public procurement plan, and
19. Report from external experts (if hired),

For budget item 480 – Purchase of equipment and machines:

1. Amounts per analytical account for the synthetic item 480 for the Initial Budget, the rebalancing of the Budget and the Final account (execution) of the Budget for 2022 for your institution;
2. Explanation of the reasons for the reduction and non-realization of funds from budget item 480 - Purchase of equipment and machinery for 2022, in relation to the Initial Budget, the rebalancing of the Budget and the Final Account (execution) of the Budget for 2022 and
3. List of planned (regardless of whether with the initial budget or with the rebalance), but unrealized purchases, purchases and payments from budget item 480- Purchase of equipment and machines from the Budget of your institution for 2022, with their individual value."

For the City of Skopje, i.e. in the municipalities of the City:

1. Newly designed and built public spaces in the period from 30.06.2018 to 30.06.2023, i.e. the last 5 years,
2. Reconstructed existing public spaces in the period from 30.06.2018 to 30.06.2023, i.e. the last 5 years,
3. Has the City of Skopje announced a public competition for the preparation of a conceptual solution for the public spaces that are the subject of this request,
4. For which public spaces the tender was announced and what was the cost of the procedure, i.e. whether these public spaces were constructed in accordance with the conceptual solution,
5. Information on how the cooperation between the City of Skopje and the municipalities in the City is arranged in relation to the financing and execution of the public spaces that are the subject of this request.

- Request to Service for General and Common Affairs for the hiring of the official plane in the period from April 1, 2022 to August 24, 2023, with the names of the passengers and the destination of the trips.
 - Who are the members/experts of the Working Group that prepared the amendments to the Criminal Code that were adopted with a European flag".
 - Agreement for the construction of highway sections of corridors 8 and 10 d with the "Bechtel and Enka" consortium.
 - Data on the number of proposals for revoking the alternative measure of suspended sentence that the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office has submitted to the competent court in the period from 2018 to 2022, in accordance with the provisions of the Criminal Code.
 - Listing of telephone conversations from the official telephone of the President of the Court of Appeal for the period January 2021 - December 2022".
 - From the President of the Judicial Council of the RSM - as the holder of information, we request that it be made available and issued to us - personal and address data, in terms of name and surname, location conditions - place of residence and address data of the individual judge ... who acts according to the case P1 no..., which is pending before the Court of First Instance...
 - Criminal appeal against: a) Vadim Mihailov, chairman of the Board of Directors of TE-TO AD Skopje, b) Sashka Trajkovska, judge in the Basic Civil Court Skopje, c) Snezhana Sardjovska, notary, due to well-founded suspicion of a criminal offense of abuse of office and authorizing and fraudulently inducing bankruptcy, filed by the Financial Police Authority in 2019 with the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Organized Crime and Corruption.
 - Criminal appeal against TE-TO AD Skopje due to well-founded suspicion of a committed crime of intentionally causing bankruptcy, submitted by the Financial Police Administration in 2019 to the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Organized Crime and Corruption.
 - Criminal appeal against three former directors of TE-TO AD Skopje due to reasonable suspicion of the crime of money laundering, submitted by the Financial Police Administration in 2019 to the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Organized Crime and Corruption.
 - Criminal appeal against Marinko Sazdovski, bankruptcy trustee due to reasonable suspicion of a criminal offense of abuse of the bankruptcy procedure and abuse of office, submitted by the Financial Police Administration in 2019 to the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Organized Crime and Corruption.
1. List of persons employed in the political party with position, official email and official phone number and
 2. What are the revenues from membership fees for the period from January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022.

- Funds for regional development from the central state budget to the country's municipalities in the period 2015-2022 in monetary value (in Excel format), divided based on: Investment area, Municipality where the funds are dedicated and year.
- On the basis of which act, a memorial marker was made for members of the police, in honor of which an opening ceremony will be held on August 23, 2023 in front of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kumanovo.
- How many times has the AKMIS system been abused in order to have Judge Marin Stanevski and Judge Dusan Josifov from the Basic Criminal Court Skopje elected as judges in the procedure for evaluating the indictment of the Skopje Public Prosecutor's Office.
- Data on knowledge of foreign languages and their degree for each individual member of the Judicial Council, and
- Other.

4.4.1. Holders of information who did not act upon the decisions of the Agency

It is inevitable to also mention the holders of information who do not act on the decisions received by the Agency, regardless of whether they are ordered to comply with the LFAPI and act on the request in question, are returned to them for further processing, or are obliged to provide the requested information to the requester. Although they are given a legal deadline of 15 days from the receipt of the decision for such action, certain holders of information ignore such decisions of the Agency. Thus, for example, during the year 2023, as many as 30 decisions adopted by the Agency were not acted upon.

First-level public authorities that did not act on the Agency's decisions are:

- The Municipality of Negotino and the Ministry of Political System and Inter-Community Relations (did not act on 4 decisions of the Agency),
- Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (3 decisions each),
- Municipality of Gostivar, Municipality of Bogovinje, Macedonian Sports Shooting Federation and PHI General Hospital with extended activity - Prilep (2 decisions each) and
- (1 solution each): European University - Skopje, Secretariat for European Affairs, OU "Rade Kratovce" - Kratovo, Intermunicipal Center for Social Affairs of the City of Skopje, Wrestling Federation of RSM, Republic Council for Traffic Safety, Agency for Youth and Sports, ESM AD Elektrani na North Macedonia, JP Komunalec - Negotino, the Film Agency, the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), VMRO-DPMNE, the Service for General and Common Affairs, the Veterinary Institute Skopje, the Public Enterprise for State Roads and DMBUC "Ilija Nikolovski Luj" - Skopje.

No less noteworthy is the "practice" of certain holders of information who, instead of acting on the Agency's decisions, make their own decisions contrary to the Agency's decisions, or file lawsuits against the Agency's decisions. ESM AD Elektrani of North Macedonia is the leading one among them, and no less "active" in that field are Struga Municipality and Ohrid Municipality (three lawsuits each), as well as UKIM "Kiril i Metodij" Skopje.

4.4.2. Status of cases after lawsuits

During 2023, a total of 15 of its previously adopted decisions were challenged. Of these, 8 lawsuits were filed by information holders (3 were filed by AD Elektrani na Severna Macedonia, 2 by Ohrid Municipality and Struga Municipality and 3 by sports federations). The remaining 7 lawsuits were filed by natural persons/information requesters, who were dissatisfied with the Agency's decisions.

The Agency acted on all the requests of the Administrative Court and prepared answers to all the mentioned lawsuits.

On the other hand, during this reporting year, the Administrative Court dealt with as many as 40 submitted lawsuits (from the same and previous years, in which several of its rulings on lawsuits were missing). Unlike last year, during 2023 the Administrative Court did not make decisions after only 6 lawsuits.

Otherwise, with 25 of the rendered rulings, the Administrative Court rejected as unfounded the claims for annulment of the Agency's decision, confirming the Agency's decisions as correct and made on the basis of law, with a correctly established factual situation. Also, 10 rulings were passed in favor of the Agency, with the lawsuits being dismissed as inadmissible, and with 2, the procedure was stopped due to the withdrawal of the lawsuit. The Administrative Court accepted only 2 lawsuits, by returning the cases for reconsideration and action by the Agency. For the same, specific guidelines for action are still awaited, which the court failed to state in its rulings. Only in 1 case when the Agency's decision was annulled by the court due to a technical error in the Agency's decision, the Agency acted upon it and a new meritorious decision was made.

In 2023, the High Administrative Court also dealt with free access to public information, to which a total of 16 Appeals were submitted by parties dissatisfied with the Administrative Court's actions. At the same time, the Higher Administrative Court made 6 decisions rejecting the appeals as unfounded, with 2 decisions it returned the cases to the Administrative Court for retrial, and with one decision it rejected the Agency's appeal as inadmissible, even though the Agency did not submit an appeal but a request for directions for action.

All in all, it remains to be noted that in this reporting year, among the initiated administrative disputes, there were also 8 lawsuits filed by holders of information. The agency continued to point out to the court that the holders, according to ZOUN and ZUS, do not have active identification, that is, they cannot demonstrate the protection of their legal interest before the Administrative Court because, as a first instance authority, they are placed in the role of decision-makers regarding the rights, interests and obligations of the requesters. of information. However, the Administrative Court, and in 1 case the Higher Administrative Court, instead of rejecting their lawsuits as inadmissible, allowed the public authorities to initiate an administrative dispute. Thus, during 2023, the Agency was put in the position of defender of its integrity in as many as 35 court hearings.

The Agency appeals and seeks an appropriate way to instruct the Administrative Court and the Higher Administrative Court to stop the practice of dealing with lawsuits filed by public authorities, as first-instance authorities in the procedure for requests for access to public information and to bring consistent decisions rejecting their lawsuits as inadmissible, protecting the Agency's role as a secondary authority in acting in the area of free access to public information, and thus building the transparency of institutions, as one of the most important conditions for the realization of the wishes for building a European future in these areas.

4.4.3. Implementation and experiences from the application of the Law

Free access to public information in the Republic of North Macedonia was legalized in February 2006. The first Law on Free Access to Public Information ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 13/06) began to be applied from the beginning of September of the same year. The Law underwent more substantial changes in 2010 ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" no. 6/10).

The law on free access to public information, which is current at the moment, dates from May 2019 ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" no. 101/19). This Law has implemented several novelties: – the former collegial body - the Commission for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information has been transformed into an Agency, the first independent state non-governmental body in the field of free access to public information; - political parties have been added as holders of public information in the section of their incomes and expenditures; - the public interest in the exercise of the right of access to public information has been taxatively regulated, - the deadlines for action by the holders of information have been shortened by 10 days, - a Misdemeanor Commission has been established in the Agency, with the authority to lead infringement proceedings and to impose misdemeanor sanctions.

The novelties in the Law did not contribute much to changing the mentality of those seeking information, and let's be honest, not even on the side of the holders of information. Namely, the requesters still prefer to submit the majority of their requests to the state institutions as holders of information, and the holders of information, on the other hand, did not significantly reduce the trend of the administration's silence.

In 2023, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, and the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning lead the way in terms of the number of Appeals submitted by public authorities at the central level. At the local level, however, most Appeals are filed against the City of Skopje, the Municipality of Struga, the Municipality of Ohrid and the Municipality of Negotino. The figures showed an upward trend in the interest in the information created and available by AD ESM, EVN, the public prosecutor's offices, the Judicial Council, the Appellate and Basic Courts and public enterprises.

The not-so-small number of adopted decisions of the Agency, which stop the proceedings after 124 of the total of 453 submitted appeals (or 27%), leads to the opinion of changing the approach of the holders of information to the requests for access to information. That result is, actually, due to the persistence, promptness and integrity of the officials in the Agency who act on the cases, that is, to their active mediation between the holders and the claimants, with the aim of enabling access to public information as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Not outside of the mentioned context, in this reported period, as an additional aggravating circumstance, a large number of changes in officials mediating the information of the information holders was also observed. Therefore, in its educational part, the Agency emphasized the training of all newly appointed officials, as well as those from the institutions that gave the least results in the field of free access last year.

Also, during 2023, the established practice of citizens' associations and foundations being the most frequent requesters of information continued. They mainly require information that can and should be made available to them by the information holders proactively (by the holders themselves putting it on their web pages), which should actually be a common practice.

On the other hand, for the first time in this reporting period, the number of Appeals submitted by individuals is greater than that of the above-mentioned associations. However, the

total number of 235 Appeals from natural persons should not mislead, or lead to the opinion that the awareness of the citizens changed overnight, because a large number of their Appeals (79) were rejected or dismissed, because, or are untimely, or are inadmissible, because the holders of information are required to provide information that is not public, but of a personal/private nature, that is, information that results from the legal competence of the institutions, and all in order to exercise some of their personal rights in judicial proceedings or other civil or administrative proceedings, which are carried out according to another material law. Also, from the total number of appeals filed by natural persons, the number of Appeals (34) filed by journalists from several media from the Republic of North Macedonia should be deducted.

Due to the above, the Agency believes that there remains a current need for a wider campaign and education of the citizens, starting with the high school and student youth, the business sector, the legal profession, and all the way to the rest of the citizens, for the reason that the prevailing need is to approach the citizens and explain the purpose of the existence of LFAPI. But unfortunately, the Agency does not have funds available from the budget for this purpose and is forced to find other sources of funding for this type of activities.

No less is the need to train the managers of the holders of information who, using the circumstance (deficiency in LFAPI) for their non-sanctioning for not providing the requested information, simply make it unavailable even to their officials for mediating the information from the public character. Therefore, the conduct of misdemeanor proceedings against the officials with the holders of information proved to be unproductive in terms of enabling access to public information.

However, the Agency for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information remains on its original vision - to be recognized and respected by holders, requesters and the general public as the only competent state institution that takes care of the realization and protection of the right to free access to public information, which contributes to increased accountability and transparency of institutions in our society. The work of the Agency and the implementation of LFAPI is an extremely important anti-corruption tool and its application is of exceptional importance from the aspect of fighting corruption and strengthening the integrity of institutions. The Agency believes that only this trend can lead to the desired European integration.

4.4.4. Misdemeanor procedure

Proceedings in accordance with the misdemeanor provisions of the Law on Misdemeanors and the Law on Free Access to Public Information in the Agency successfully continued in 2023. Compared to the previous year when there were 136 procedures, in this reporting year a total of 50 settlement procedures were carried out. Following a submitted request for the initiation of misdemeanor proceedings, the Misdemeanor Commission acted on a total of 28 misdemeanor cases.

Of the 50 cases filed for failure to submit the Annual Report within the legal deadline, a settlement procedure was successfully implemented for three cases. For 10 cases, against 10 officials of holders of information - a total of 8 political parties, the procedure was not carried out at all because the Agency, after several attempts, failed to get in touch with them on the address data obtained from the Register maintained in the Basic Civil Court Skopje. After a settlement procedure was carried out for nine (9) cases, no proposal was made to initiate a misdemeanor procedure. Misdemeanor proceedings were initiated for the remaining 28 cases, of which four (4) cases were released from liability, three (3) cases were decided to stop the proceedings, and for

the remaining 21 cases, decisions were made that a misdemeanor sanction was imposed, of which a warning was issued for 15 cases, and a fine was imposed for three (3) cases. For three (3) cases, the settlement procedure continued in 2024. During the year 2023, not a single lawsuit was filed before the Administrative Court against decisions made by the misdemeanor commission that imposed a misdemeanor sanction.

For the first time in this reporting year, forced collection was carried out through the Public Revenue Administration of three (3) decisions of the Offenses Commission, of which: one (1) for a fine in the amount of 500 euros in denar equivalent due to failure to appoint an official for mediation with information of a public nature and two (2) for an imposed fine in the amount of 250 euros in denars for not acting on the Agency's decisions.

4.4.5. List of information holders

This reporting year, new holders have been recorded in the List of holders of information, and we should emphasize that they submitted contact data for officials and their institutions on their own initiative. The newly registered holders are registered with educational institutions, political parties and public enterprises and public institutions, thus the total number of registered entities on the List has reached **1.457**. **Five** new holders were recorded in the reporting period, and during 2023 **three** more holders with political parties that are registered as new holders. Since the previous reporting period, three holders have reported that they no longer function, that is, their work license has been revoked. We should mention that the list of holders has undergone changes, i.e. a restructuring of the holders was made, that is, some of the holders were moved to the appropriate links that correspond to their legal competences.

In the reporting year 2023, the List of state institutions, i.e. as it now reads Bodies of State Administration, amounts to **133** holders, while in the link with public enterprises and institutions they are **305** information holders. The link with Health facilities in the Republic of North Macedonia contains **115** holders, while the number of holders of political parties recorded in the single court register of political parties is **60**, noting that for eight political entities, the Agency, despite numerous attempts, failed to provide data on their officials, although the correspondence was delivered to the reported address data in the single court register. The number of holders from the Judicial Authority this reporting year is **65**. There are **72** legal and natural persons who exercise public powers and activities of public interest, while the number of holders at Municipalities and Centers for the Development of Planning Regions is **90**. The number of Educational Institutions this reporting year amounts to **617** holders, due to the aforementioned restructuring of the List of Holders. In every report, but also in its daily operations, the Agency emphasizes and clarifies that the list of holders is variable and the number of institutions published in it depends on new entities that will be detected as carrying out activities of public interest with their competence and vice versa, part of the holders will be removed if it is determined that they do not meet the legal responsibilities.

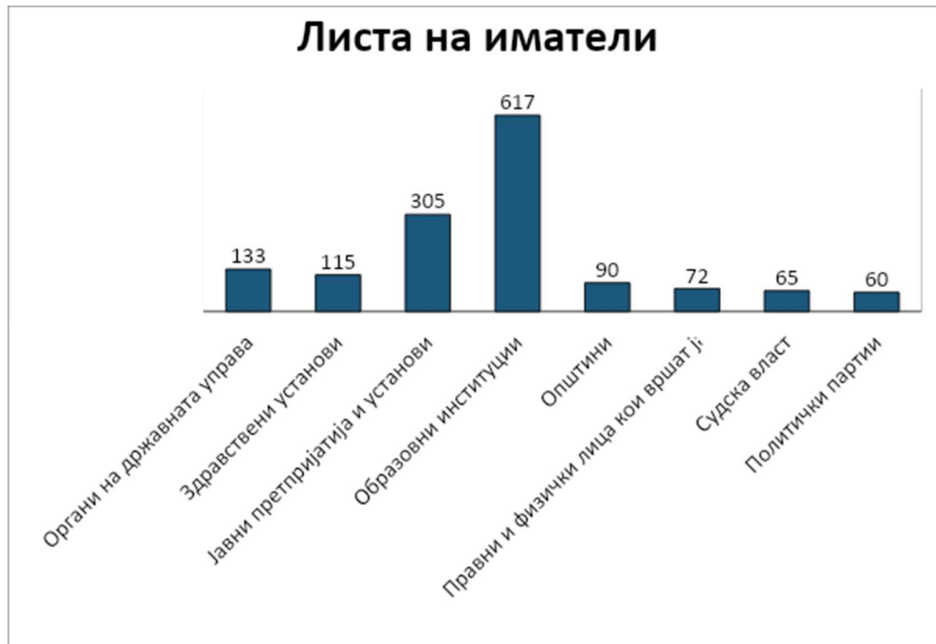


Chart 4: List of public information holders

4.4.6. Annual reports of holders

In the reporting year 2023, within the stipulated legal term, **1394** holders, or **95,68%** submitted annual reports and fulfilled their legal obligation, out of total **1457** holders who are recorded in the List of Holders. The Agency indicates that **8** political parties did not submit reports on the implementation of the Law, for the reasons that, despite numerous attempts, they did not provide contact details to which they would submit the Reminder for submission of annual reports, as was done with all other holders from the List.

The officials, that is, the holders of the total **55** institutions, despite three reminders to submit a completed Annual Report Form, which was distributed to them, did not fulfill the legal obligation arising from Article 36 of the Law. For those reasons, the Agency cannot determine whether claims were submitted to these holders by the claimants. This reporting year, the number of undelivered annual reports is **3,77%** and we can state that from year to year the number of undelivered reports is decreasing, which is evident from the results of the misdemeanor provisions implemented against officials who are ignorant of the implementation of the Law.



Chart 5: Number of Annual Reports

This reporting year, as well as the last, only **one** holder out of **65** registered holders from the judicial authority did not submit an annual report. Among **90** holders from local self-government units, including the City of Skopje, the Community of Local Self-Government Units (ZELS) and Centers for the Development of Planning Regions, two holders did not fulfill the legal obligation to submit a report on their implementation of free access to public information

Out of total **133** holders of state administration bodies, only **2** holders did not submit a report within the legal term. This year, from the group of officials at educational institutions from all levels of the educational system **617** holders submitted a report, **591** holder, while **26** officials did not submit a report to the Agency.

Only **3** health institutions did not submit a report on the implementation of access to public information in relation to their work. Of the recorded **115** health facilities, **112** have fulfilled the legal obligation to submit reports to the Agency.

294 holders showed how public enterprises and public institutions implement the right of free access, while **11** of the **305** holders did not submit an annual report.

From the **72** holders of legal and natural persons exercising public powers and activities of public interest, **66** holders submitted an annual report to the Agency, while **6** holders did not comply with the Law.

Out of the **60** registered political parties, **48** submitted a report, while the officials of **4** parties did not submit an annual report. Despite the initiated misdemeanor proceedings against the

8 political parties, they do not submit a report to the Agency, in accordance with Article 36 of the Law.

Of the received and processed reports (total **1.394**), which were submitted to the Agency by the holders, they show that they, as holders, were submitted to them in total **6.968** requests, of which on **6.542** it was answered positively within the legal term. This reporting year, the holders show that they have received **318** requests less than the last year. The reduced number of submitted requests to the holders is certainly the result of the activities that the Agency undertakes to promote the greater application of the institutions' proactive transparency, through the publication of information from their competence, on their web pages. The proactive publication of information contributes to increasing transparency, because it improves access to public information, but also its quality, and in this way the conditions and opportunities for public participation and influence on the processes of creating policies and bringing decisions are improved. All this contributes to the improvement of public accountability, because it improves the rules, regulations and mechanisms for public responsibility of the responsible persons in the institutions.

In this annual report, the Agency would like to emphasize that for the first time the owners and officials have not submitted an annual report that is not in accordance with the legal obligations arising from the Law, i.e. an incomplete and incorrectly completed annual report, and this is again the result from the work of the Agency, through the conducted trainings for the officials that continued in 2023. With this data, the Agency shows that its educational role has had a great effect, and through the trainings, the officials have realized the mistakes that were presented in the reports in the past years.

The reports that the officials submitted to the Agency also show data relating to the exceptions from free access prescribed in Article 6 of the Law on Free Access to Public Information, or with other legal regulations, which were the reason for refusal or rejection of access for 234 requests, which is 11 requests less than the reporting year 2022. In their reports, the holders also report on 119 unanswered, but also on 13 requests that were transferred for action in 2024, and which were received at the end of the calendar year 2023. For 60 requests shown in the annual reports, the officials do not report on the method of action.



Chart 6: Procedures by request

In the submitted reports, the officials also present data, according to which, as a sign of dissatisfaction with the actions of the officials, the appellants invested **266** appeals against the first instance decisions of the holders, of which, after consideration, the Agency's decision was adopted **204** appeals. The above does not correspond with the number of 453 appeals reported by the Agency, which leads to the conclusion that the officials of the holders of information do not present the appeals in the submitted annual reports.

The annual reports also contain data on **80** modified first-instance decisions, for **33** rejected appeals by the Agency, but also for **13** dismissed appeals.

Among the requesters, again, the greatest interest is of the work of the Local Self-Government Units and planning regions, where the officials report that they have received **2.480** requests, which is about **22** requests more than the last reporting year.

There is an increased number of submitted requests with the state administration bodies to which they were delivered **2.315** requests, which in relation to the reporting year 2022 is an increase by **228** requests. **335** requests were submitted to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which is an increase of **142** requests more than 2022. **110** requests have been submitted by the requesters to the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, followed by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia-General Secretariat with **106** requests. Requesters were also interested in the work of the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Finance, where **101** requests were submitted, i.e. **100** requests for public information. **773** requests were submitted to the judicial authorities which is an increase of **43** requests from last year.

There is an increased interest in the work of educational institutions of all degrees, that have received **435** requests, or **71** request more than 2022.

For two reporting years, requesters have shown a reduced interest in the functioning of political parties, by submitting **56** requests, which is **14** less than the last year.

According to the submitted data from the annual reports, there is an evident decrease in the submitted requests among public enterprises and institutions (**339** requests). This year, **506** requesters requested from this group of holders free access to information. Also, the health institutions show a decreased interest in their work for **337** requests, that is, they have received **271** request. A reduced number is also shown by the officials of legal and natural persons who exercise public powers and activities of public interest and were delivered to them (**132** requests) or **22** requests less than last year.



Chart 7: Number of requests submitted to holders

4 requests were submitted to the Agency for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information as the holder of the information, which were answered positively within the legal deadline.

4.4.7. Contents of Annual Reports

In their annual reports, the holders, that is, the officials, as in every reporting year, report on the requests that were submitted to the institutions. Highest number of requests (4.795), the requesters submitted to the local self-government units and the state administration bodies. The operation and functioning of these holders in continuity are the most interesting for the citizens, i.e. those seeking information and they most often submitted requests for: In how many and in which municipalities urban plans were adopted, lists of illegally legalized buildings, granted building permits, financial reports for capital activities, final accounts for municipal budgets, for public procurement procedures. Then, information regarding the screening process and Chapter 5- Public procurement from Cluster 1, financial resources related to culture, as well as capital investments of state interest. Also subject to requests were the data on hired experts in working groups in connection with the adoption of certain laws, the funds spent by domestic delegations abroad, contracts for capital investments and the financing of marginalized groups and distributed social assistance.

In the reports, the holders show that they were also interested in the work of the management and supervisory boards in public enterprises, as well as in the case of legal and natural persons who perform activities of public interest, i.e. sports federations. Information was also requested on the fees received by the members of the administrative and supervisory bodies, as well as data on their members.

The requesters requested from the judicial authority information related to the operation of the AKMIS system and data from their activity, which are available to the courts.

The requests to the political parties referred to the number of employees in the party, their financial performance, the funds received from donations and how much property they have.

4.4.8. Cooperation with officials at the holders

The Agency intensively cooperated with the officials with the holders of public information in the reporting year 2023, for the reasons that one of the basic prerequisites for the successful implementation of the Law is precisely the cooperation with the persons who have been appointed, i.e. they have been delegated the authority to implement the Law.

The employees' contacts with the officials were used to clarify the legal obligations relating to the obligations of the newly appointed officials, for the way in which the new official is authorized, but also for the correct filling and certification of the annual report form with the signature of the officials, that is, the delegation of competences was explained to them, who, as officials, have this new, but also unknown, legal obligation for them. The employees of the Agency were constantly available to the officials, helping them to respond more successfully to their challenges arising from the law and how to more successfully implement one of the basic human rights in their daily work, which refers to free access to information from public character. This continuous communication eased the dilemmas and ambiguities that arise among the newly appointed officials for the best possible implementation of the law, and the ambiguities and lack of familiarity with the new problem for them resulted in the fact that this reporting year there is not a single incomplete and incorrectly filled annual report. All this is the result of the successful mutual cooperation of the Agency and the officials with the information holders.

This reporting year, too, the Agency highlights the following as a positive example of institutions that submitted requests on their own initiative, as well as the Annual Report, in order to be part of the List of Holders: JOU Cultural Information Center-Bitola, Kindergarten SONCE-DIELI, village of Brvenica, Kindergarten Vinozhito-Strumica, OOU "Besa" - village Mala Recica, as well as the Democratic Movement political party. The Agency, like every reporting year, although there is no legal obligation, prepared a Reminder for the submission of the Annual Report, which together with the prescribed form before the end of the calendar year, was submitted electronically to the holders and appointed officials. The official telephone lines were functioning until the deadline for submitting the annual reports, in order for the officials to consult with the holders about the ambiguities that arise when filling out the Report Form, but also about issues that are part of the successful implementation of the Law.

In 2023, 134 decisions were submitted to the Agency on the appointment of new officials by the holders and for them, as well as for other officials, trainings were held where they were introduced to the Law and its practical implementation.

4.4.9. Monitoring of the owners' websites and educational materials

Public Information is available to citizens in two ways - with the proactivity of the institutions themselves and with reactive means - that is, by submitting a request for information to certain holders. Proactive transparency implies the timely publication of public information by the institutions and who do so on their own initiative, before they are requested orally, in writing or electronically, through clear, transparent and easily accessible websites that contain all information of importance to citizens. Such proactive publication of information contributes to the

strengthening of law and enables the public to become familiar with regulations, decisions, policy-making and other actions that are of their interest and affect them.

In the reporting year 2023, the Agency carried out three monitorings of the websites of the Government of RSM, the ministries, the bodies included in the Strategy for Transparency of the Government (2019-2022), the Municipalities and the Centers for the Development of the Planning Regions and the Public Enterprises under its jurisdiction of the municipalities and the City of Skopje and the public enterprises and joint-stock companies in state ownership. The Agency, in accordance with its competences, but also as an added value of free access to public information in relation to the proactive publication of information, in accordance with Article 10 of the Law, conducted monitoring of the above-mentioned holders, all with the aim of ascertaining the level of proactive transparency of this group of information holders, and the reports presented the findings that examined the extent of published information that is relevant to citizens, for annual reports on their work, whether correct, precise and complete data are provided to information requesters, whether among the holders, there is a designated official person to mediate with the public information, as well as numerous other issues based on which the application of the standards for proactive transparency is evaluated. The monitoring aims to present to the holders to what extent they implement proactive transparency in their work, but also indicate to the holders that by placing a unified banner in which they will publish public information, and also update it, will be more accessible to citizens. In that way, information requesters will be able to access the requested information that is of their interest in a quick and simple way.

The obtained results help the Agency in conceptualizing the trainings for the officials, with the aim of showing the holders that by implementing active transparency and consistent application of Article 10 of the Law, they help the citizens to better understand the functioning of the institutions, their rights and obligations, the way in which they can influence the making of decisions that are reflected on their daily living and work, as well as to make it easier for them to access the services offered by the monitored institutions as holders of public information.

Also, a comparative analysis was prepared that refers to 44 holders of information: the Government of RSM, the ministries and the bodies within it, for the period 2018-2022, and it was made in accordance with the Strategy for Transparency of the Government (2019-2022). The analysis chronologically shows the trend of active transparency over the years shown by the institutions of this category of holders. The analysis is prepared from the monitoring carried out by the Agency once a year on the websites of the holders and it shows the trend of their proactive transparency. It can be concluded that the average transparency and proactive publication of information in the analyzed five-year period for the Government and ministries is 79%, while the transparency of the bodies within the Government is 71%. The average of the transparency of the total monitored institutions for the five years is 74%, which shows a good degree of transparency.

The Agency has also prepared a set of educational materials for the holders of information related to proactive transparency, namely: Transparent institutions, informed citizens - Guide for proactive transparency, Necessary prerequisites for effective access to information and Guidelines for proactive publication of public information for holders of information that does not have an official website. The educational materials are available on the website of the Agency, and the same officials are introduced to the trainings, with the aim of their implementation in practice.

4.4.10. Trainings and education

During the reporting year 2023, the agency placed a special emphasis on the educational part, implementing a greater number of activities in the field of training officials to mediate information to the first-level authorities, as well as to managers of information holders.

Enabling the constitutionally guaranteed right of free access to the information created by, or otherwise available to, public authorities, legal and natural persons exercising public powers and activities of public interest, including political parties (in the area of income and expenditure) was presented to more than 200 representatives from 136 institutions from the Republic.

Due to the budgetary unsupported opportunity for education of all the officials from the 1,457 holders of information, the Agency tried through 8 online trainings and 5 workshops with physical presence to include the newly appointed officials for mediating information with the holders of information, those who felt the need to attend additional training, as well as officials from institutions that the Agency noticed that in the previous period they were not successful enough in dealing with requests for access to public information. Thus, in the first half of 2023, through the ZOOM platform, 137 officials from 104 public bodies were covered by the 8 trainings held, while in the second half of the year, 5 workshops were held attended by 65 officials from 32 institutions - holders of information.

The primary goal of the trainings was to train officials to respond correctly and promptly to requests for access to information. At the same time, a special emphasis was placed on the duty of the holders of information for their proactive action, with the aim of fully publishing the public information that they have at their disposal.

The specific goal of the training was practical training for the adoption of correct and legally based legal acts, familiarization with the goals and activities of the Agency as a secondary authority in the procedure, as well as the practical simulations of the implementation of the harm test in cases of denial of access to the requested information. in accordance with Article 6 paragraph 1 of the Law on Free Access to Public Information.

The Agency cannot be satisfied with what has been achieved in the field of education, not because during the reporting year only 136 of the 1,457 holders of information were covered, but because of the fact that it is not provided with additional funds from the budget for more than necessary necessity to achieve the basic goal of this anti-corruption law – one hundred percent openness and transparency in the operation of the institutions.

In that direction, the Agency reminds and appeals to all officials for mediation with information, especially to the persons responsible for the holders of information, to respond unreservedly to the invitations from the Agency, as well as to register themselves for more massive participation in the free trainings, due to the correct implementation of the Law on Free Access to Public Information, at the same time realizing the right of citizens to be fully informed about the operation of public authorities and other holders of information, at the central and local level.

4.4.11. Website of the Agency

The website of the Agency continued to promote proactivity in its work this reporting year. E-portals are becoming more recognizable by users, and in 2023 they were used by holders and information requesters who use and implement the right to free access to public information.

Citizens and civil society organizations, as requesters of public information, recognized the Portal for requesters - <http://slobodenpristap.mk/> as a tool through which they can quickly obtain the requested information possessed by the information holders. 90 requests were submitted through the E-Portal for information requests, and all of them were submitted to the Municipality

of Prilep by natural persons. All the created requests are publicly available on the portal and the requesters can familiarize themselves with the requests that were submitted to the information holders.

The agency used the Portal for holders to communicate with the holders, and special sessions were organized at the training sessions for officials where it was explained to them how to use it. Through the portal, 52 holders successfully fulfilled this obligation within the legally stipulated deadline for submitting Annual Reports. The agency will continue in the direction of digitization of the processes in its operation to encourage requesters and holders to use the Portals to create their request in order to obtain the necessary public information, but also to fulfill their requests in a fast and efficient way.

In the reporting year 2023, too, the Agency informed the citizens through its website about its activities, as well as about the prepared analyzes and reports from its scope of work. In the PUBLICATIONS section, monitoring reports were published on the proactive publication of information on the websites of the holders, as well as educational materials needed for officials and investigative journalists, all with the aim of this group of requesters to use this tool more in their daily work.

The Agency, on its website, continued the practice of publishing information from its current and financial operations. Data related to financial statements, as well as from the Annual Report, are published in an open format, thus its proactive operation has added value. Also, in the SUBMITTED DECISIONS banner, all Decisions acted upon by the Agency are published. In a special E-LEARNING banner, an e-course has been set up that officials can listen to and finally solve the test, which is a supplement to the regular trainings that the Agency conducts for them.

4.4.12. Public at work

The Public Relations Department represents and promotes the right to free access to public information through strategic media engagement and to promote the importance of the Agency and its work in the eyes of the public. This includes encouraging transparency, accountability and open communication of the Agency with the public and collaborators, as well as strengthened cooperation with the media and other stakeholders in our society.

Media campaigns, organization of events and memorandums

Digital campaigns: The public relations department actively adapts to the trends in the electronic industry, using the already mentioned digital platforms and innovative communication strategies and tools.

For this purpose, the Department of Public Relations created a comprehensive multimedia digital campaign of an educational nature carried out through social network platforms to improve the involvement of the public in the work of the Agency, to raise awareness among citizens of their right to free access to public information, to bring the way of requesting and providing public information closer to all interested parties, as well as to educate citizens about the importance and right of free access to public information.

Organization of events: On September 28, 2023, the Agency for Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information marked the International Day for Universal Access to Information for the 21st time — an event traditionally held under the motto "You have the right to know."

To this end, the Public Relations Department organized an interactive campaign at prominent locations in the largest shopping centers in Skopje (East Gate and City Mall) in order to include a wider demographic picture in the promotion of the right to free access to public information and to encourage public participation as a key stakeholder in a democratic society.

Within the framework of this campaign, the team of lawyers was available from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at these locations in order for citizens to personally talk with and receive legal information and advice, but also to immediately familiarize themselves with their right to access public information, as well as the legal mechanisms for the protection of this right.

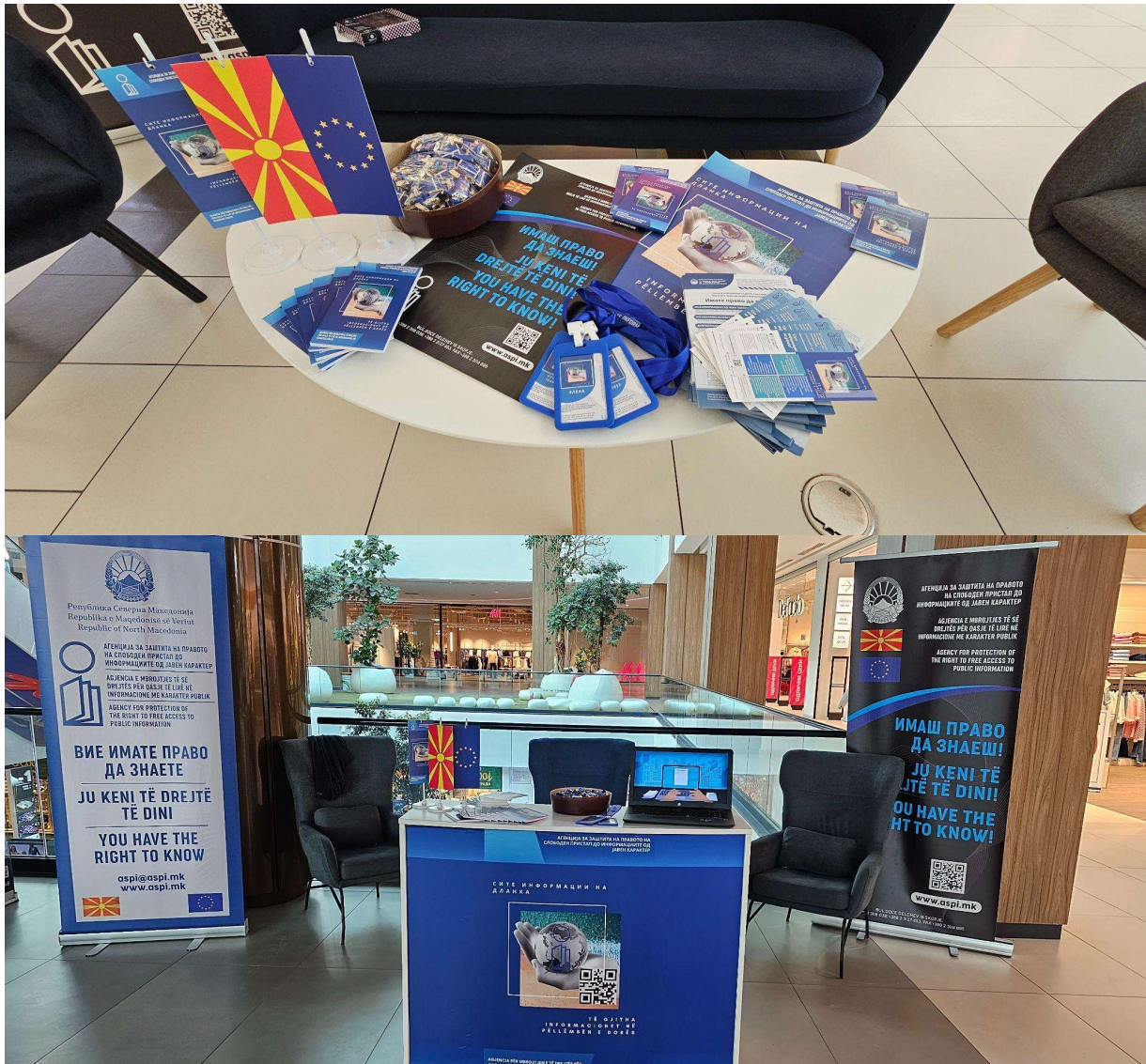


Figure 1. Information points

Media statements and interviews

TV interviews: In 2023, the Department of Public Relations organized and conducted a short cycle of interviews with the director Plamenka Bojcheva and some of the employees of the

Agency with the support of the National Television Service "Macedonian Television" - *Morning program in Macedonian and Albanian*, through which the importance of free access to public information and transparency was articulated, shedding light on the Agency's initiatives, the concept of public information and the nature of citizens' requests for access to public information from a legal perspective, the meaning and importance of informed citizenship, proactive transparency, as well as the way in which citizens can exercise their constitutionally guaranteed right to access public information or file an appeal if they are faced with silence from the institutions.

In this cycle of interviews, the successful examples from the work of the Agency were woven, as well as the challenges that the Agency faces in the efforts for proactive transparency of the institutions, which contributed to increased prominence and understanding of the work of the Agency in the public.

Promotional materials

Infographics, brochures and branded promotional material: In the reporting year 2023, the Public Relations Department was in charge of rebranding the promotional material (banners reflecting the Agency's identity, billboards, posters, t-shirts, pens, badges, notebooks, folders, mugs, flags, umbrellas, headphones, confectionery products, stickers and digital posters intended for social networks), creating a new graphic design of the materials, with slogans and symbols that promote the right to free access to public information ("*You have a right to know*" and "*All information in the palm of your hand*").

AGENCIJA ZA ZAŠTITA NA PRAVOTO NA SLOBODEN PRISTAP DO INFORMACIITE OD JAVEN KAKARTER

И МАШ ПРАВО ДА ЗНАЕШ

ИНТЕРНАЦИОНАЛЕН ДЕН ЗА УНИВЕРЗАЛЕН ПРИСТАП ДО ИНФОРМАЦИИ

28 СЕПТЕМВРИ 2023

"Имаш право да знаеш!"

WWW.ASPI.MK

ШТО Е ЈАВЕН ИНТЕРЕС?

Јавен интерес е интересот на пошироката заедница преку човека кој што има правство пред индивидуалните потреби на поединците.

Ова вклучува сè рефлектира во обврските коишто граѓаните треба да ги исполнат кои државата, т.е. што се покажано на даноци, или почитувањето на сообраќајните прописи. Бидејќи се смета дека почитувањето на овие провоза и обврски е во најдобар интерес на сите граѓани.

Слободниот пристап до информации е едно од најзначајните човекови права и основа на демократијата.

Демократијата на ново значајно да функционира без информациите граѓанство, а таквото граѓанство е неопходно без широк пристап до информации за работата на јавните институции.

Универзалниот пристап до информации овозможува реализација на целосниот потенцијал на граѓаните, обезбедувајќи дава почитувањето на сите провоза и обврски за целото општество, но и сепак.

Со слободен пристап до информации граѓаните имаат нова комуникациска асана за координирање на напореите за борба против корупцијата, злоупотребите, злоупотребите на власта, човековите права, институциите образовани системи и социјалната на неопходно.

AGENCIJA PER MBROJTJENI E TE DREJTET PER QASJE TE JAVENE INFORMACIONE ME KARAKTER PUBLIK

DITA NDERKOMBËTARE PER QASJE UNIVERSALE NË INFORMACIONË

28 SHTATOR 2023

"Ju keni të drejtë të dini"

WWW.ASPI.MK

CILI ESHËTË INTERESI PUBLIK?

Interesi publik është interes i bashkësisë më të gjerë si tërësi, që ka përparësi para nevojës individuale të individëve.

Kjo zakonisht reflektohet në obligimet të cilat qytetarët duhet t'i plotësojnë ndaj shtetit, që është pagimi i takimit, apo respektimi i rregullave të komunikacionit, për shkak të respektimit të legjeve rregullative dhe obligimeve ligjorë të se është në interes më të mirë për të gjithë qytetarët.

Demokracia nuk mund të funksionojë kuptimplotë pa qytetarë të informuar dhe pa qytetari të cilët është e pamundur pa qasje të gjera në informacione për punën e institucioneve publike.

Qasje e lirë në informacione është baza e demokracisë.

Sigurnimi i qasjes informacione do t'u mundësojë qytetarëve të marginalizuar të realizojnë potencialin e tyre të plotë, dhe ofruar përfitime për të gjithë botën.

Me qasje të lirë në informacione, qytetarët kanë një rrymë të fuqishme komunikimi për të koordinuar përpjekjet për të luftuar shpërndarjen e mjerimit, varfërisë e mjerimit, fatkeqësi shëndetësore, shpërndarjen e pasurisë të rëndur, shpërndarjen e shtetmeve dhe përcaktimin e shkurtes.

Повеќе информации: Бул. „Гоце Делчев“ 18, МРТВ 1000 Скопје Република Северна Македонија +389 2 3118 038, +389 2 3127 453

Më shumë informacione: Blvd. "Goce Dellev" 18, MRTV 1000 Shkup Republika e Maqedonisë së Veriut. +389 2 3118 038, +389 2 3127 453.

www.aspi.mk | aspi@aspi.mk | facebook.com/aspi.mk | freeaccesspublicinfo | free-access-to-public-information | aspi@aspi.mk | free-access-to-public-information

Figure 2. Illustration of the bilingual brochure



Figure 3. Illustration of banners

Branded advertising material was distributed at organized events, through online platforms or in direct communication with employees and citizens.

Informing the public

Public announcements (PSAs), publications and social networks: During 2023, the Public Relations Department regularly shared digitally adapted and illustrated announcements and information through the Agency's communication channels (on social networks LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook) for timely information to the public regarding the Agency's activities and work plans, providing accurate, detailed and timely reporting.

To this end, in the reporting period, the Agency's website was supplemented with new news, content and publications, which were simultaneously translated and published in three languages (Macedonian, Albanian and English) in order for the information to reach a wider number of citizens.

Corporate social responsibility and sustainability

Our commitment to corporate social responsibility has been demonstrated through initiatives that promote environmental sustainability and community engagement. For this purpose, the Agency started to apply **QR code** (i.e. a code for quick access to information) in communication with citizens, which represents a step forward in the digitalization of our services,

but also eliminates a large part of paper promotional materials and facilitates access to our services and advice to citizens.



Figure 4. QR code for quick access to the website of the Agency for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information

In this way, the Agency, as a socially responsible entity in our society, successfully managed to connect the commitment to the promotion of the right to free access to public information with the commitment to environmental protection.

Future directions

Looking ahead, the Public Relations Department at the Agency for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information aims to continue its proactive approach in promoting the right to free access to public information. Plans include expanding and modernizing digital access and content, strengthening cooperation with media partners, and exploring innovative ways to connect with a larger number of citizens in order to raise public awareness of the right to free access to public information to a higher level.

4.5. TRAINING OF THE EMPLOYEES

In this reporting year:

During the month of March, the employees of the Agency successfully completed the online training for cyber security that was provided by the Agency for Electronic Communications (AEK), i.e. the National Center for Response to Computer Incidents (MKD-CIRT) for all employees in the public administration.

In the period from 13.03.2023 to 17.03.2023, one employee attended Public Procurement Education - training of persons for public procurement for certification.

Training was held in the premises of the Agency on 04/07/2023, which fulfilled the legal obligation according to the Law on Safety and Health at Work, and all with the aim of improving the level of safety and health of the employees of the Agency at the workplaces.

On March 30, 2023, the Human Resources Network coordinated by the Ministry of Information Society and Administration, in cooperation with the Regional School of Public Administration - RESPA and the University of Nottingham from the United Kingdom, held a "Presentation on the Evaluation of Employee Satisfaction", after which that in May, whether the employees of the Ministry of Information Society and Administration are satisfied with their jobs, and in September, a National Survey was conducted for the employees of the Agency.

On March 30 and 31, 2023, one employee attended the final Regional Conference "Challenges faced by women and girls in the region on the way to the EU" organized by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. At this two-day conference, experiences and good practices from the countries of the region for the promotion of gender equality, measures and activities for the economic empowerment of women, responding to the needs of women from vulnerable groups and investing in the mental health and well-being of women.

On April 4 and 5, 2023 in Skopje, a two-day training was held to build the capacities of institutional representatives to effectively share information about children who are absent from school, within the framework of "**Missing Children Early Warning System Pilot Project**" implemented by the "Journalists for Human Rights" Association, in cooperation and under the project management of "EKPAT Austria". At the training, two employees from the Agency shared practices on access to public information and how to make it available on the website - Early Warning System for Missing Children. Two representatives from the Agency for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information attended the final conference of the "Pilot Project for Early Warning System for Missing Children" project, which was held on December 18.

Two employees attended the informative event (training) for using the TAIEX instrument, which took place on April 20, 2023. The event was intended for officials who are TAIEX contact points in their institutions from the state and public administration at the central level SAVE THE DATE: TAIEX INFO DAY / TAIEX INFO DAY organized by the Secretariat for European Affairs.

During the month of June, two employees of the Agency attended basic trainings in the first phase, as well as advanced trainings for integrating the gender perspective in the work with EU funds (IPA), in the second phase of the trainings. Next comes the third phase of the trainings, which were conducted through the Office of UN Women in the Republic of North Macedonia, within the framework of the project Advisory services for the inclusion of the gender perspective for the administration at the central level - Instrument for Gender Equality (Gender Equality Facility - GEF).

On 15.05. and 09/22/2023, specialized trainings were held for the implementation of the integrity system within the project "Activity for anti-corruption and integrity". With full membership in the NATO alliance, the Republic of North Macedonia is obliged to adapt the defense system, for which, in the organization of the Ministry of Defense, two employees of the Agency participated in a workshop-simulation exercise to determine the bodies of the state administration for the realization of their function in a state of war on September 27, 2023.

On 26.09. and 23.11.2023 on the topic of Assessment of the risk of corruption, organized by CIPFA, in cooperation with IFES, and financed by USAID, attended by administrative officers from the Agency.

On February 27 and 28, 2023 and on November 21, 2023, a multi-stakeholder Training/Workshop on the topic "Developing Reporting Standards in Intelligence and Security Services and Oversight Institutions" was held. Organized within the framework of the Program for

the Reform of the Intelligence and Security Sector of the DCAF in the Republic of North Macedonia, supported by Switzerland, Sweden and the Netherlands.

On October 27, 2024, an employee of the Agency participated in the counseling organized by Pravomatica on the topic of preparation, amendments and additions to the Annual Employment Plans.

From October 31 to November 2, 2023, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) organized the Media and Elections Workshop, using the methodology and Approaches to Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE), which was attended by an Agency's employee.

Through the Inclusion Project in access to public information for persons with disabilities organized by the Association for the Promotion and Development of an Inclusive Society Inclusive, supported by the "Open Society - Macedonia" Foundation and the US Embassy, a two-day event was held on November 23 and 24, 2023 training of the employees of the Agency, in order to strengthen the skills of the employees of the Agency for the inclusion of persons with disabilities, from the aspect of exercising the right of access to information of a public nature. Within the framework of this project, trainings were also held in three pilot-municipalities (Prilep, Gostivar and Dojran).

On 20.10.2023, an employee attended a workshop as part of the project Equality through the prism of statistics.

During October-November, two employees of the Agency attended training at the London School of Public Relations and obtained Certificates on the basics of public relations.

In November 2023, a one-day training was held for the implementation of the census, five employees of the Agency were introduced to the way of using the digital device TS Touch computer as well as the use of the Frontman FIND software related to the implementation of the census.

On 21.12.2023, an employee attended a training on electronic market for small value purchases.

5. INTER-INSTITUTIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND PROJECTS OF THE AGENCY IN 2023

The Agency for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information for the period January 1 to December 31, 2023 from the perspective of inter-institutional and international cooperation, in addition to the continuous maintenance of already established relations with its collaborators and related institutions, was also active in the field of the realization of project activities, preparation of reports, as well as numerous participations in working groups, visits to conferences, trainings and workshops.

5.1. INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION OF THE AGENCY IN 2023

5.1.1. Public Administration Reform Strategy 2023-2030 and Action Plan 2023-2026

In the first quarter of the year, the last report was prepared and submitted to the Ministry of Information Society and Administration for the preparation of the fifth annual report on the implementation of the PAR Strategy (2018 — 2022) for the period January-December 2022.

The representatives from the Agency, as active members of the working group for public administration reform (PAR), were present at all preparatory meetings intended for the final preparations of the Narrative part of the 2023-2030 PAR Strategy, as well as the process of determining the Measures, Activities and Passports indicators for the Action Plan 2023-2026 from the above strategy. A novelty in the process of planning and preparation was the filling of risk forms and the detailed budget calculation for the necessary financial resources for the implementation of the activities specified in the Action Plan. In accordance with this document, the Agency submitted a request for funds from the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia in its budget circular, but these were not approved by the Ministry of Finance in the Agency's Budget for 2024. In the middle of the third quarter of 2023, the PAR Strategy and the Action Plan were adopted. The Agency is an active participant in the work of the Special Working Group for SRYJA.

According to the foreseen activities from the Action Plan 2023-2026, the Agency had the obligation to prepare a report on two activities, A3.4.1.2. and A3.4.1.3, which are contained under PRIORITY AREA 3: RESPONSIBILITY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY, under General Objective: Responsible, accountable and transparent operation of institutions, **Special objective 3.4.:** Increased transparency of institutions at the state and local level, **Measure M 3.4.1.** Improvement of tools for the availability of public information. In connection with **Activity A3.4.1.2.** Preparation of amendments and additions to the Law on FAPI in order to:

1. increasing the competences of the Agency
2. promotion of the right to free access to information.

- The agency reported the following:

1. In 2023, the Agency prepared and submitted an initiative to the Ministry of Justice, from which we were informed that the same was submitted to the Government of the RSM, which at the session held on January 16, 2024, adopted a PROGRAM for the work of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia for 2024, within which the following activity is included for April 2024: **Proposed Law to amend and supplement the Law on free access to public information.**

To this end, within the Action Plan of the National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2023-2026, in Priority Area 1, Measure 5.1. Provision of information and communication in all accessible forms, appropriate to the needs of persons with disabilities, includes the following activity: A 5.1.3 Amendment of the law on free access to information of a public nature by introducing provisions on the ways in which each holder of information will be obliged to provide information to the public in an accessible and accessible way. During the activity **A 3.4.1.3.** Preparation of procedures for proactive publication of information created or available by institutions, their management and updating.

- The Agency reported the following:

In cooperation with numerous partners from the non-governmental sector, several working meetings were held, all with the aim of securing donor funds for the realization of the activity. One project application was prepared and submitted at the request of USAID, which was rejected in the second selection cycle.

Also, in 2024, the Agency is continuously and dedicatedly working on securing donor funds for the realization of this activity.

5.1.2. National strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2023-2026

The Agency, in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, was directly involved in the process of developing the National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2023-2026. Despite the numerous proposals prepared and submitted by the Agency, only one activity related to free access was adopted in the Action Plan, namely:

Amendment of the law on free access to public information by introducing provisions on the ways in which each holder of information will be obliged to provide information to the public in an accessible and accessible way.

The next activity of the Agency in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice was the implementation of an initiative for the ratification of the Convention of the Council of Europe on access to official documents, or the so-called Tromsø Convention (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 27.11.2008). For this purpose, the Agency prepared and submitted a comparative report on the compliance of the provisions of the Convention and the Law on Free Access to Public Information ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" number 101/2019).

5.1.3. PFM Feasibility/Performance Assessment Framework

In the feasibility assessment framework of the Ministry of Finance, i.e. the measurement of work performance whose values for many areas and institutions are contained on the electronic PFM (PAF) platform (pafnorthmacedonia.mk), on an annual basis, the Agency is obliged to report on a total of 5 indicators, that is, 3 indicators located in two areas: Justice and Internal Affairs and Democracy and Governance.

In particular, two identical indicators in the subgroups Fight against corruption and one additional one in Responsibility, accountability and transparency under SRJA. The agency announced the following percentage values for 2023:

1. The rate of received Appeals due to "silence of the administration" is 61%;
2. The rate of decisions respecting access to public information is 70.92%; and
3. The rate of rejected requests for access to public information from public institutions is 3.83%.

5.1.4. Bilateral screening for public administration reform

After the reporting process within the bilateral screening by the European Commission, an additional question was submitted, namely: "How do institutions report to regulators (for example, more than 1,400 holders of public information to the Agency for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to public information)?"

The Agency immediately prepared and submitted the following response:

"There are 3 ways in which information holders can submit their Annual Report to the Agency. On the e-portal for holders of information (community portal), by e-mail (at the specific e-mail of the Agency for this purpose godisniizvestai@aspi.mk) or by mail. According to the Law on FAPI article 36 *paragraph (1)*: *"The official of the holder of the information is obliged to prepare an annual report on the implementation of this law, submit it to the Agency by January 31 of the current year for the previous year and publish it on the website of the holder of public information."*

5.1.5. The Transparency Strategy of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, with Action Plan 2023-2026

During 2023, the Agency participated in several preparatory working meetings of the working group in charge of preparing the three-year Government Strategy for Transparency with an Action Plan, which was adopted in December 2023.

Priority areas in the new Strategy are the promotion of active transparency; improving access to public information; fiscal transparency and improvement of the institutions' digital capabilities to facilitate and automate the process of data opening. The main focus of the strategy refers to the strengthening of mechanisms for accountability in the creation of policies and their transparency, and raising awareness of proactive participation in the processes of other stakeholders in society.

In the Action Plan for 2023-2026, measures are elaborated in more detail, specified with activities, the time frame for implementation, the assessment of the necessary financial resources for the implementation of the activities, the holder of the activity, as well as the institutions involved for the implementation of the activity, among which is the Agency.

5.1.6. National Action Plan for Partnership for Open Government (OPP) 2021-2023

The Agency, as the holder of an activity within the POV action plan, had the obligation to report on the activity **1.2 Proactive publication of public information on the institutions' websites** for the period October 2021 to August 2023.

The commitment refers to the so-called active transparency of the institutions, which implies the publication of information on their own initiative without anyone having submitted to them a request for access to that public information. Additionally, within the commitment **was 2.1. An obligation has been introduced for each institution - holder of information, to inform in its annual report that it submits to the Agency and for the implementation of Article 10 of the LFAPI** which stipulates the obligation for holders to publish all information from their operations on their websites. The goal of the commitment is to provide citizens, companies and all other interested groups with quick, easy and continuous access to basic information about the operation of state institutions. In the fifth report of the POV there is a positive conclusion that this commitment within the POV has been positively realized by the Agency.

5.2. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND PROJECTS OF THE AGENCY IN 2023

5.2.1. Activities of the Agency for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information as a member of the International Conference of Information Commissioners (ICIC)

- Participation in the ICRC International Conference

From June 19 to 21, 2023, the agency participated in the 14th edition of the International Conference of Information Commissioners (ICIC) in Manila, Philippines at the global conference entitled "Bridging information between Nations: Articulating the Global Role of Access to Information for Democratic Preservation, Inclusion and Development". The conference was hosted by the related institution Freedom of Information (FOI) Philippines.

On June 21, 2023, the closed session of the present members of the ICRC was held, at which 12 conclusions were adopted and shared with all ICRC members. These were subject to changes and adjustments and were published in the form of a draft public statement entitled "Bridging information between nations: articulating the global role of access to information for democratic preservation, inclusiveness and development" to be presented at the XIV edition of ICRC .

Cooperation between ICRC and regional networks (including the Agency as an active member) includes support, participation and promotion of their activities, as well as exchange of experiences, research and best practices.

Therefore, during 2023, the team of the Agency for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information actively collaborated with ICRC, developing the Gender Equality Index as the main focus of the UN among the Sustainable Development Goals to be realized by 2030.

For the needs of the International Conference of Information Commissioners (ICIC), during 2023, the Agency's team produced several reports and answers to several questionnaires, according to the needs of the ICIC Secretariat:

1. Survey on Gender and Vulnerable Groups 17.01.2023: Survey of the Working Group (WG) on Gender and Vulnerable Groups of the ICRC that aims to significantly accelerate progress on concrete ways to advance the inclusion of a gender perspective and vulnerable groups in access to information and transparency policies. WG seeks through this survey to promote data collection and experience sharing as a means of encouraging the adoption of best practices for the benefit of the well-being of our communities;
2. Report 29.03.2023: Report: Leaving-No-One-Behind (LNOB): Improving the social and economic inclusion of vulnerable groups at the local level and Initiatives to prevent and protect against gender-based violence in the Republic of North Macedonia / The Principle of Leaving-No -One-Behind (LNOB) is at the core of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
3. Form for relevant subjects 08.04.2023: Preparation of Form for relevant subjects | Working group on legal subjects to integrate into a compilation of information sheets with files on relevant ICRC subjects. The ICRC Legal Subjects Working Group aims to advance knowledge of legal systems and relevant resolutions regarding access to information with the overarching goal of increasing innovation. This working group is coordinated by the National Institute of Transparency, Access to Information and Protection of Personal Data of Mexico;
4. Form for training 20.04.2023: Preparation of Form for training needs | ICRC Training Working Group, to identify training instruments or tools that could be shared or replicated among the ICRC membership, as well as to identify areas and topics of interest in the subject of training to be disseminated and shared. The ICRC Training Working Group aims to both advance knowledge of information access training and increase innovation through promotion activities, knowledge sharing and exchange of best practices. This group is coordinated by the National Institute of Transparency, Access to Information and Protection of Personal Data of Mexico;
5. Electronic voting 29.04.2023: The working group of the Agency participated in electronic voting for the selection of members of the Executive Committee of the ICRC;
6. June-July 2023: Preparation of a submission for the thematic report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression to the UN Human Rights Council: "Freedom of opinion and expression and sustainable development - why voice matters?" — Report on Freedom of information and sustainable development, for the needs of

sustainable development and the media, investigative journalism, whistleblowers and practical implementation of the Law on whistleblowers in the Republic of North Macedonia;

7. Survey 18.07.2023: Research on differences between genders and vulnerable categories;
8. Survey 09.11.2023: Research to collect data on mechanisms for evaluation or monitoring of practices that promote the right of access to information for groups in vulnerable situations.

5.2.2. Twining Lite application

In December 2023, a Twining Light application was prepared, which the Agency submitted to the Secretariat for European Affairs on the topic: "Supporting the free access to information - we rise together."

The purpose of this application is to improve the national policy in the field of transparency and accountability of information holders at the central and local level in North Macedonia in accordance with the best practices and recommendations of the EU.

It is expected to be realized during 2024.

5.3. COLLABORATION WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PROJECT ACTIVITIES

As previously pointed out, the Agency's existing budget is insufficient for efficient and successful functioning. As a result, the Agency's management was encouraged to seek additional support from other sources, such as collaborations and partnerships with numerous non-governmental organizations.

The concluded partnerships resulted in the realization of numerous activities, the results of which remain in permanent and added value in the further work of the Agency, and they are:

● The Agency in cooperation with the Association for Democratic Initiatives (ADI)

In July 2023, the Agency and ADI prepared a project application that was submitted to the open EU call for civil society and media. But unfortunately, the Application in the second round of evaluation was eliminated for implementation.

In the spirit of good cooperation, in the role of an intermediary, the Agency submitted the Questionnaire (survey sheet) for measuring the degree of discrimination to all officials for mediation with public information, all with the aim of collecting data for the needs of project activity within of the project "Equality through the prism of statistics" of ADI and HOPS - Options for a healthy life-Skopje.

On 25.10.2023 in Skopje At the invitation of ADI, the agency takes part in a public debate "*The consequences of the economic crisis and what are the expectations for the next year*". The purpose of the public debate was to present the findings from the comparative reports from two surveys "**Perceptions and attitudes of citizens and households about inflation in North Macedonia**", as well as through the discussion of key actors to help in the efforts to define measures and policies to overcome the consequences of the crisis. The project activity was realized in a joint project of ADI and the Pulse of Democracy from Skopje.

In August 2023, the Agency, for the purpose of marking the International Day for Universal Access to Information, received support from ADI for the printing of an additional 1600 copies of

the promotional material Flyer for requesters, which resulted from last year's cooperation between ADI and the Agency.

● **The Agency in cooperation with the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation - MCMS**

Additional support for the provision of promotional materials based on a mutual understanding for mutual cooperation and support was provided to the Agency on September 1, 2023 through the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation with MCMS. In which both parties declared their interest in providing a joint contribution to the celebration of the International Day for Universal Access to Information. This cooperation was implemented within the project 23 08 SIK 201 "Small development initiatives", financed by MCMS and implemented in the period from February 15 to December 31, 2023.

● **The Agency in cooperation with the OSCE Mission in Skopje**

Within the framework of the partnership between the Agency and the DCSC with the support of the OSCE Mission in Skopje, in 2022 a project activity titled "*Design, Development and Implementation of an E-Learning Course on the Democratic Government Principle of Transparency and Openness*". This joint activity was successfully completed in September 2023.

The general objective of the activity is the development of an e-learning course that is already available on the existing e-learning platform on the websites of both institutions.

The Agency and the DCSC will use the transparency and openness e-learning course as a capacity building tool for nominated integrity officers and public information brokers in central and local level institutions.

● **The Agency in cooperation with the Association for Promotion and Development of an Inclusive Society INCLUSIVE**

In 2023, the cooperation between the Agency and the Association for the Promotion and Development of an Inclusive Society INCLUSIVA began in the direction of familiarizing the employees with the topic and institutional preparation for the realization of the activity within the framework of the National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2023-2026.

On November 23 and 24, 2023, organized by Inkluziva, the Agency's employees strengthened their skills to improve access to public services and information for people with disabilities. At the same time, the opportunity was used to officially sign a Memorandum of Cooperation.

Next, three workshops were organized at which Director Bojcheva and some of the employees acted as lecturers. The trainings were intended for employees in the municipalities of Dojran, Prilep and Gostivar.

As an additional activity, Inkluziva prepared a Report with an assessment of the status of the WAG tools on the Agency's website, as well as recommendations for their improvement. The implementation of the above activities are within the framework of the "Project for inclusion in access to public information for persons with disabilities", supported by the Open Society Foundation - Macedonia.

● **The Agency in cooperation with the Council of Europe**

Cooperation with the Council of Europe within the project "*Protection of freedom of expression and freedom of the media in North Macedonia (PRO-FREKS)*", continues in the

third cycle of the project itself. Namely, in 2023, several meetings were held, all with the aim of preparing activities related to free access to information for the following year.

On May 4, 2023, the First Management Board of the project was implemented. The cooperation continues in 2024.

● **The Agency in cooperation with the Center for Change Management in cooperation CUP**

On February 20, 2023, at a press conference, the "Instructions for improving the transparency of public sector institutions" were presented and promoted, which was prepared by the Change Management Center in cooperation with the Agency for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information and the Cabinet of the Deputy President of the Government in charge of good governance policies.

● **The agency in cooperation with the Balkan Research Network (BIRN)**

On April 19, 2023, at a regional panel discussion organized by the Balkan Research Network (BIRN) entitled "Freedom of Information in the Western Balkans in 2022", experiences from the implementation of free access to public information by journalists, civil society were exchanged organizations and institutions from North Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo and Montenegro, where the director of the Agency, Plamenka Bojcheva, was a panelist.

● **The Agency held a cooperation meeting with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Skopje**

On 24.10.2023, representatives of the Agency attended a working meeting with program level representatives from the Good Governance Department at UNDP. The purpose of the meeting was to familiarize with the competences and activities of the Agency, as well as with the program and project activities of UNDP in North Macedonia.

From the discussion, in fact, from the very beginning, an open consent was given for cooperation through the inclusion of the Agency in the current project activities of UNDP, namely in three active projects: Promotion of environmental rights, Disinformation and Strengthening of Municipal Councils. The cooperation started on 14.11. 2023, and at the invitation of UNDP, the Agency takes an active part in the round table on the topic **"Advancing Environmental Justice - Conditions, Challenges and Prospects"**.

● **The Agency held a meeting for involvement in the "Partnership against corruption" project**

On November 3, 2023, a working meeting with the project consortium was held in the premises of the Agency, where the project "Partnership Against Corruption" was presented, as well as the initial activities of the project, in which the Agency will be involved. The consortium is led by the global company MSI Washington from the United States of America and will be implemented with financial support from USAID.

Presenting the needs and expectations from this project, the Agency gave nine (9) specific activities as well as suggestions on how to implement them. At the meeting, opinions, experiences were additionally exchanged and mutual consent was expressed. The Agency, in addition to the specific activities in which it will be directly involved in the project, should consider the possibility

of including the Agency in the other areas covered by this project, which could be from interest of both parties.

To this end, the Agency was informed by the members of the consortium that the proposed activities will be taken into account and they will inform us what are the possibilities for the project to cover part of them. The Agency was also advised that the planning process involves certain steps, including verification and approval by USAID. Hence, the Agency expects the realization of new project activities within the "Partnership against corruption" project in 2024.

● **The Agency signed a memorandum with the Institute for Communication Studies**

On February 13, 2023, a Memorandum of Cooperation between the Agency and the Institute was signed in the premises of the Institute for Communication Studies.

On 23.02.2023, the Agency at the invitation of the Institute for Communication Studies (ICS) attended the international symposium "**Let's take back the space for digital information**" organized within the framework of the USAID media literacy project "Youth Think".

5.4. REMAINING REALIZED ACTIVITIES

5.4.1. At the invitation of UNESCO in March 2023, the Agency participated in the annual survey on public access to information for 2023 on SDG Indicator 16.10.2

In 2022, UNESCO, through its International Program for the Development of Communications (IPDC), was further mandated to monitor and report on the progress of this indicator worldwide. UNESCO, by measuring the indicator SDG 16.10.2, UNESCO monitors progress in the adoption and implementation of "constitutional, statutory and/or political guarantees for public access to information".

The Agency has been part of this research since the very beginning of an invitation from the UNESCO SDG 16.10.2 Team from the Sector for Universal Access to Information, Sector for Communications and Information, so like last year, as well as this reporting year, it submitted its answers to the Questionnaire to the UNESCO team on 03/28/2023.

5.4.2. Preparation of Reports and Preparation of materials for the contribution of North Macedonia to the Report of the European Commission

Based on the established practice and the letter from the Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighborhood Policy, submitted to the Secretariat for European Affairs, the Agency prepared and submitted a Report for 2023, **for the reporting period from October 2022 to June 2023, while the statistical data covered the period January-December 2022.**

Also, at the request of SEP in part of the screening Report of the European Commission, the Agency prepared and submitted a report on free access to information in relation to two areas, namely in anti-corruption policy and in public administration reforms.

5.4.3. Preparation of materials, reports and attendance at conferences:

On 03/09/2023 for the needs of **12th Meeting of the special group on PAR**, the Agency prepared a Report with a brief overview of achieved results and significant planned reforms for the areas of the RJA subcommittee.

At the invitation of the Cabinet of the Vice-President for European Affairs in coordination with the Minister for Information Society and Administration, and in the organization of the Office

of NIPAK on 19.05.2023, the Agency takes an active part in **6th meeting of the IPA II Sector Monitoring Committee for Democracy and Governance (focus on PAR and PFM)**. This hybrid meeting is realized with the aim of presentation and discussion of the strategic priorities of the sector Reforms in public administration; the relevant strategies, as well as the areas of intervention defined within the Strategic Response for IPA 3 and the indicators for monitoring their realization.

On 18.05.2023, at the invitation of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the Agency participated in **the round table on the topic: "Young people and the use of their personal data on the Internet"** within the project of the Government of Switzerland "*Support for electoral reforms in North Macedonia*", implemented by IFES. The purpose of this event was the exchange of different perspectives on the subject with the aim of preparing the document for public policy, which is jointly prepared by the Research and Analytical Centers (PIAC) of the four political parties and experts on data protection and development of public policies.

On June 15, 2023, at the invitation of the Federal Commissioner for Data Protection and Freedom of Information, from the Department of Freedom of Information, the Agency takes an active part in the two-day workshop on handling freedom of information cases in Berlin.

On October 16, 2023, a representative from the Agency participated in the International Symposium "Portals, Registers, Platforms - Digital and Transparent?", which was held in Potsdam, Germany. The theme of the symposium was how open data platforms, transparency registries, as well as specialized portals for publishing and using them have been developing in recent years. Examples were presented of how administrations in European Union countries proactively publish more and more information on the internet and platforms specialized in open data.

On the 12th and 13th of 2023, in Dubrovnik, Republic of Croatia, it was held **the fourth meeting of Initiative 2020**, composed of state institutions for the protection of the right of free access to information of a public nature, of the member states. During the two working days, Director Bojcheva and Deputy Director Iseni took an active part in the discussions as well as the presentation of the situation in the field of free access to public information in North Macedonia.

The Agency, as a member of the IPA II Technical Secretariat, in the Monitoring Board of the IPA II sector, attended **the 1st meeting of the IPA III Sector Monitoring Committee on Democracy and Governance (RJA and PFM focus)**. The meeting was held online on November 17, 2023. The topic of discussion at this meeting was monitoring and the state of implementation and implementation of IPA projects, as well as operational conclusions and recommendations.

In December 2023, at the request of the IPA Coordinator from the Ministry of Information Society and Administration, a report was prepared as a contribution to **the annual report for the implementation of the IPA projects from the realized contracts from IPA 2017**, with a specific elaboration of the results obtained by the Agency within the framework of the IPA 2 project, including the measures taken for their sustainability.

At the invitation of the Team of the Access to Information Program (AIP) Foundation from Bulgaria, in 2023, the Agency was a participant in two online conferences, namely on 19.07.2023, at which the Report of the activities carried out was presented, as well as on 12.12. 2023 at a conference where the study "Transparency of Administrative Courts" was presented. At the conference, the results of the second survey of the websites of the administrative courts were presented. The conferences were activities within the project "Consultative Center for Access to Information and Transparency", financed by the "America for Bulgaria" Foundation.

On 09.12.2023, on the occasion of the international day for the fight against corruption, the "Metamorphosis" Foundation organized a panel discussion "Through institutional openness to the prevention of corruption - Index of openness" in which the director of the Agency, Plamenka Bojcheva, took part. The event was part of the first "Open Forum on Anti-Corruption" which was organized within the framework of the "Citizens Against Corruption" program and the regional anti-corruption network SELDI - Leadership for Development and Integrity in Southeast Europe (SELDI). Also, during this forum, the Report on the assessment of corruption in North Macedonia for 2023 was presented.

6. BUDGET, FINAL ACCOUNT AND FUNDING

The Agency for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Information of a Public Character provides funds for its work from the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia, under Section 19302 Program 20 - Free Access to Information, to the following accounts:

- Basic budget account 193026288063710;
- Donations budget account 193026288078511;
- Donations budget account 193026288078526;

6.1. BRIEF FINANCIAL STATEMENT

By adopting the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia for 2023 ("Official Gazette of RSM" No. 282/22), the Agency started the year with a budget in the total amount of MKD 17,159,000.00. During the year, following the approved Request for budget expansion on account 193026288078511 with archive number 05-131/2 dated 07.04.2023 and the Decision on the redistribution of funds between budget users of the central government and between funds ("Official Gazette of RSM" No. 207/23), the Agency was assigned a budget in the total amount of MKD 19,588,000.00.

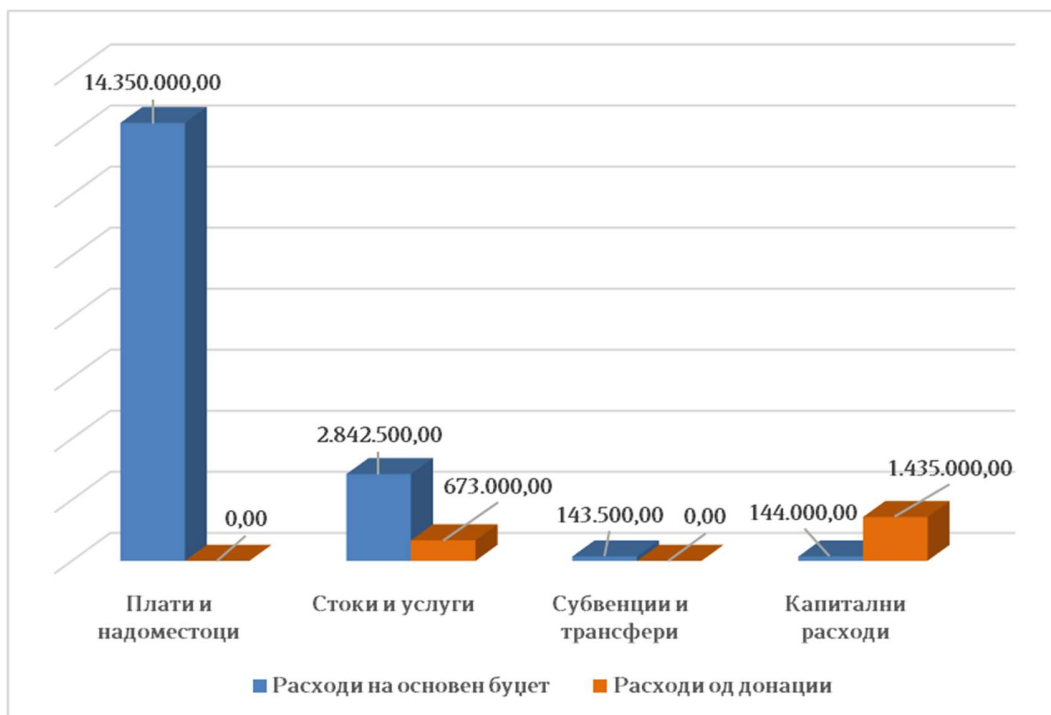


Chart no. 8: Budget for 2023 by funding sources

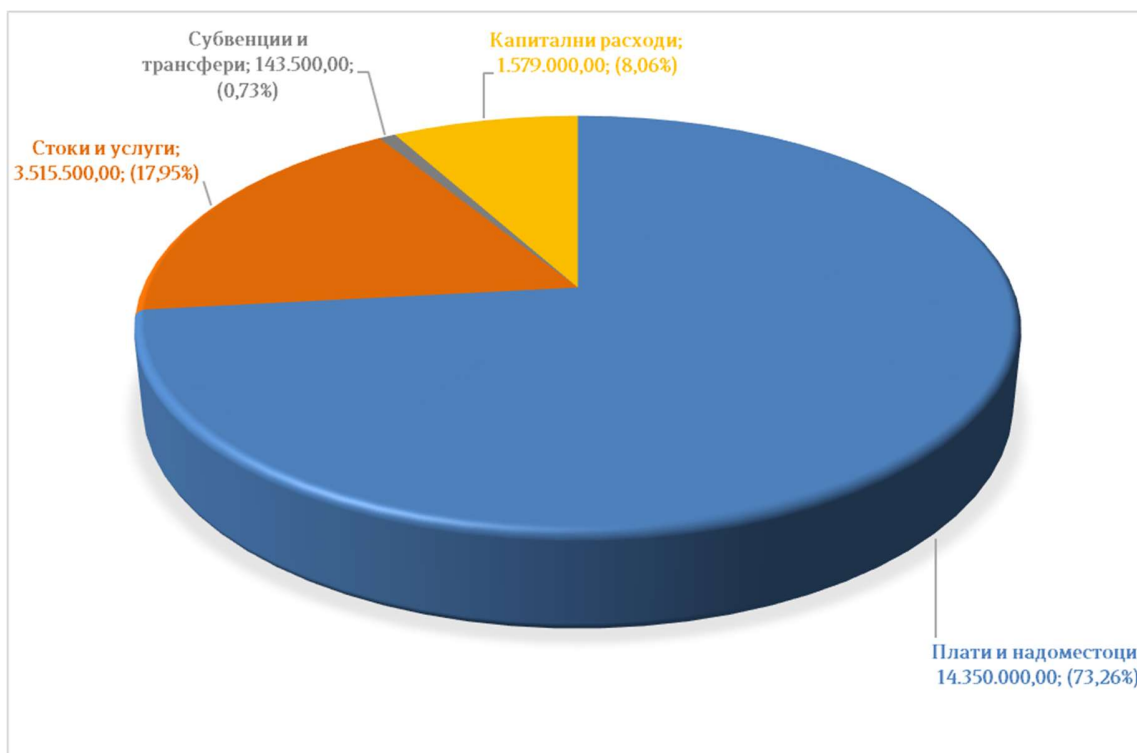


Chart no. 9: Budget for 2023 by economic classification (expenditures)

6.2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BUDGET

From the total budget of the Agency for 2023 in the amount of 19,588,000.00 denars, the total implementation of the budget is 17,418,406.00 denars or 88.92% expressed as a percentage.

All funds were planned and realized in accordance with the competences, rights and authorizations of the Agency, with the aim of their legal, efficient and economical use.

Regarding the structure of the budget, with all approved redistributions of funds during the year, in the following, the distribution and realization of funds by item is shown in tabular and graphical form, collectively for all accounts and individually by account.

Rate	Budget 2023 (all bills)	Budget realization (all accounts)	Percentage of realization
40 - WAGES AND BENEFITS	14.350.000,00	14.242.021,00	99,25%
401 - Basic pay	10.197.000,00	10.121.406,00	99,26%
402 - Social security contributions	3.963.000,00	3.930.615,00	99,18%
404 - Fees	190.000,00	190.000,00	100,00%
42 - GOODS AND SERVICES	3.515.500,00	2.860.144,00	81,36%
420 - Travel and daily expenses	333.000,00	300.033,00	90,10%
421 - Communal services, heating, communication and transport	1.930.000,00	1.813.858,00	93,98%
423 - Materials and small inventory	160.000,00	159.872,00	99,92%
424 - Repairs and ongoing maintenance	672.500,00	171.509,00	25,50%
425 - Contract services	250.000,00	245.694,00	98,28%
426 - Other current expenses	170.000,00	169.178,00	99,52%
46 - SUBSIDIES AND TRANSFER	143.500,00	143.137,00	99,75%
464 - Miscellaneous transfers	143.500,00	143.137,00	99,75%
48 - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	1.579.000,00	173.104,00	10,96%
480 - Purchase of equipment and machinery	240.000,00	173.104,00	72,13%
486 - Purchase of vehicles	1.339.000,00	0,00	0,00%
In total	19.588.000,00	17.418.406,00	88,92%

Table no. 1: Budget realization (total for all accounts)

6.2.1. Account 193026288063710

Rate	Budget 2023	Final account 2023	Percentage of realization
401- Basic pay	10.197.000,00	10.121.406,00	99,26%
402 - Social security contributions	3.963.000,00	3.930.615,00	99,18%
404 - Fees	190.000,00	190.000,00	100,00%
420 - Travel and daily expenses	140.000,00	138.676,00	99,05%
421 - Communal services, heating, communication and transport	1.930.000,00	1.813.858,00	93,98%
Utilities, heating		1.224.880,00	63,47%
Communication		575.456,00	29,82%
Transportation		13.522,00	0,70%
423 - Materials and small inventory	160.000,00	159.872,00	99,92%
424 - Repairs and ongoing maintenance	192.500,00	171.509,00	89,10%
425 - Contract services	250.000,00	245.694,00	98,28%
426 - Other current expenses	170.000,00	169.178,00	99,52%
464 - Miscellaneous transfers	143.500,00	143.137,00	99,75%
480 - Purchase of equipment and machinery	144.000,00	143.004,00	99,31%
In total	17.480.000,00	17.226.949,00	98,55%

Table no. 2.: Realization of budget - account 193026288063710



Chart no. 10: Budget realization - account 193026288063710

6.2.2. Account 193026288078511

Rate	Budget 2023	Final account 2023	Percentage of realization
420 - Travel and daily expenses	193.000,00	161.357,00	83,60%
424 - Repairs and ongoing maintenance	480.000,00	0,00	0,00%
486 - Purchase of vehicles	1.339.000,00	0,00	0,00%
In total	2.012.000,00	161.357,00	8,02%

Table no. 3: Budget realization - account 193026288078511

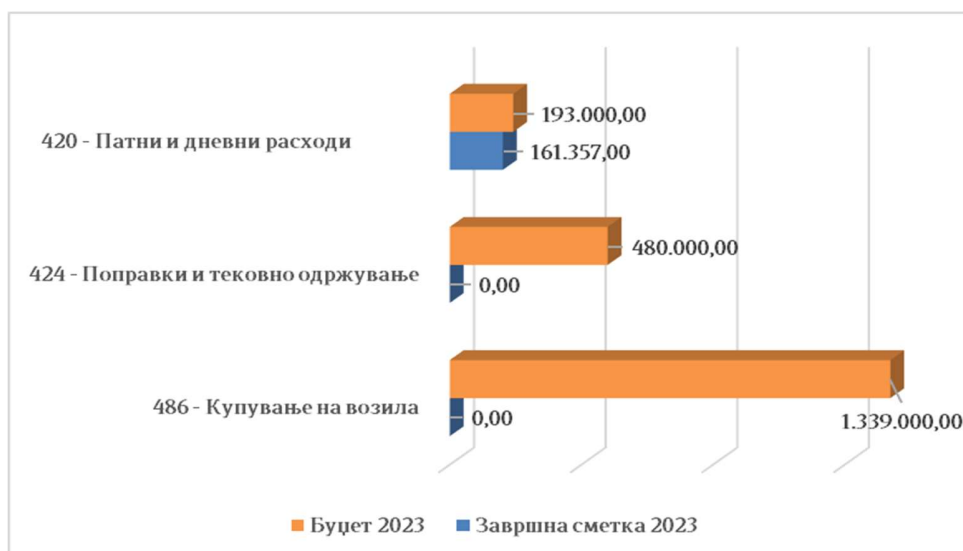


Chart no. 11: Budget realization - account 193026288078511

6.2.3. Account 193026288078526

Rate	Budget 2023	Final account 2023	Percentage of realization
480 - Purchase of equipment and machinery	96.000,00	30.100,00	31,35%
In total	96.000,00	30.100,00	31,35%

Table no. 4: Budget realization - account 193026288078526

6.3. COMPARATIVE TABLE OF BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES IN THE LAST THREE YEARS

In the following, a tabular and graphical comparative overview of the budget and realized expenses from the final accounts of the Agency in the last three years is given.

Ставка	Буџет 2023	Завршна сметка 2023	Буџет 2022	Завршна сметка 2022	Буџет 2021	Завршна сметка 2021
401 - Основни плати	10.197.000,00	10.121.406,00	8.672.000,00	7.691.297,00	7.884.000,00	7.410.759,00
402 - Придонеси за социјално осигурување	3.963.000,00	3.930.615,00	3.343.000,00	2.984.759,00	2.916.000,00	2.905.179,00
404 - Надоместоци	190.000,00	190.000,00	144.000,00	144.000,00	210.000,00	162.000,00
420 - Патни и дневни расходи	333.000,00	300.033,00	108.000,00	107.471,00	55.000,00	53.758,00
421 - Комунални услуги, греење, комуникација и транспорт	1.930.000,00	1.813.858,00	1.963.000,00	1.750.775,00	1.398.000,00	1.384.500,00
423 - Материјали и ситен инвентар	160.000,00	159.872,00	177.000,00	177.000,00	165.000,00	164.727,00
424 - Поправки и тековно одржување	672.500,00	171.509,00	272.000,00	267.618,00	178.762,00	178.654,00
425 - Договорни услуги	250.000,00	245.694,00	355.000,00	351.270,00	227.974,00	221.570,00
426 - Други тековни расходи	170.000,00	169.178,00	290.726,00	287.775,00	140.000,00	139.584,00
464 - Разни трансфери	143.500,00	143.137,00	230.000,00	229.960,00	0,00	0,00
480 - Купување на опрема и машини	240.000,00	173.104,00	1.683.274,00	875.936,00	112.264,00	111.348,00
481 - Градежни објекти	0,00	0,00	4.100.200,00	4.034.133,00	2.600.000,00	69.030,00
482 - Други градежни објекти	0,00	0,00	70.800,00	70.800,00	0,00	0,00
483 - Купување на мебел	0,00	0,00	400.000,00	0,00	400.000,00	0,00
485 - Вложувања и нефинансиски средства	0,00	0,00	525.000,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
486 - Купување на возила	1.339.000,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Вкупно	19.588.000,00	17.418.406,00	22.334.000,00	18.972.794,00	16.287.000,00	12.801.109,00

Table no. 5: Budget and implementation of the budget in the last three years

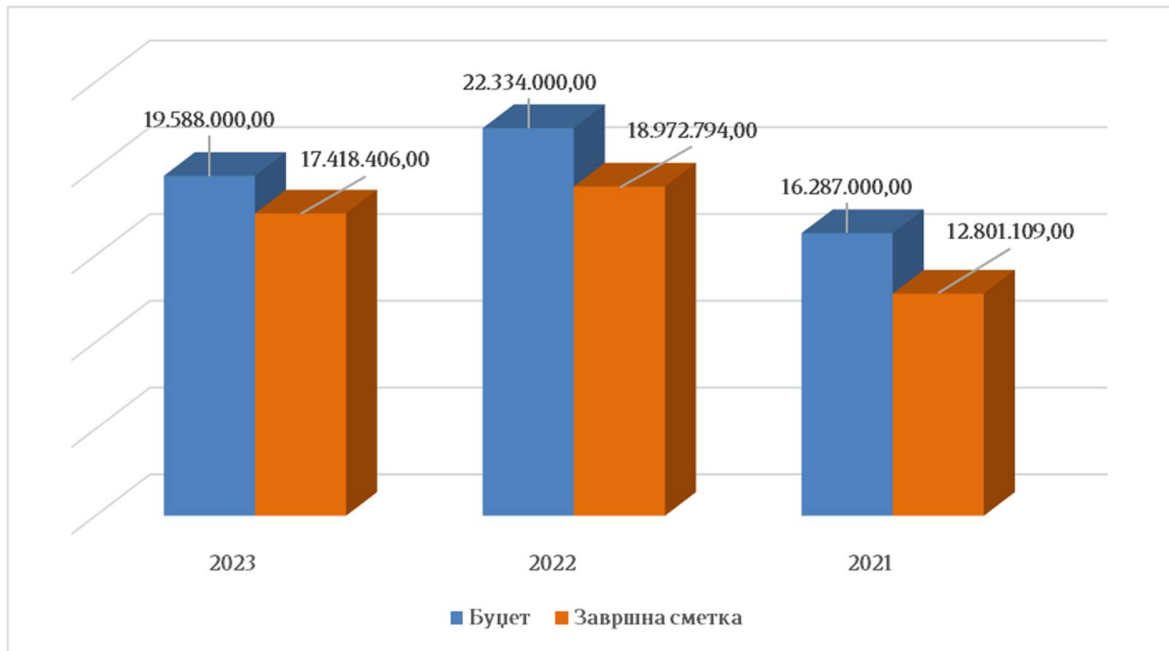


Chart no. 12: Budget and realization of the budget in the last three years

6.4. FINAL ACCOUNTS FOR 2023

Copies of final accounts for the accounting period 01.01.2023 to 31.12.2023, for accounts 193026288063710, 193026288078511 and 193026288078526, are submitted as an attachment to the report.

7. CONCLUSIONS

1. The Agency will continue with activities for the education of the officials among the information holders, as well as the responsible/managerial persons among the information holders in the direction of increasing transparency and accountability, emphasizing the benefits of proactive transparency, as well as for faster and more efficient handling of received requests for free access;
2. It is necessary to continue the cooperation with civil associations and non-governmental organizations from the country and abroad, especially on the plan of educating the general public with the aim of familiarizing citizens with the right of free access to information of a public nature and the method and procedure for using this constitutionally guaranteed right of man and citizen;
3. There is still a need to increase the Agency's budget, with the aim of creating opportunities for its more active and independent operation, based on its own funds, and with the aim of achieving even better results in its operations and raising awareness and public opinion and knowledge. on access to public information. The aforementioned specifically in the direction of developing and greater use of the digital tools that the Agency has already implemented, in accordance with international standards and positive European practices for digitizing work processes.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

A basic recommendation of the Agency for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information is to increase transparency, primarily proactive transparency, which means that information holders should self-initiatively, promptly and regularly publish the information they create or have at their disposal. In this way, the public interest is realized, insight into the work of the public sector as a whole is enabled, which contributes to making better decisions and their better application, insight into the spending of public budget funds is enabled, as well as the confidence of citizens in public institutions is strengthened. The application of the principle of transparency and the provisions of the Law on Free Access to Public Information is of exceptional importance from the point of view of the fight against corruption, strengthening the integrity of institutions and democratic processes in society.

9. APPENDICES

Appendix 1. HOLDERS WHO HAVE NOT SUBMITTED ANNUAL REPORTS:

JUDICIAL AUTHORITY: 1 HOLDER

1. Basic Public Prosecutor's Office-Kumanovo

LEGAL AND NATURAL PERSONS PERFORMING PUBLIC AUTHORITIES AND PUBLIC INTEREST ACTIVITIES: 6 HOLDERS

1. National Boxing Federation
2. Ski Federation of Macedonia
3. Macedonian Traditional Karate Federation
4. Macedonian Fishing Federation
5. Rowing Federation of Macedonia

6. Chamber of Certified Architects and Certified Engineers

POLITICAL PARTIES: 4 HOLDERS

1. Liberal-Democratic Party-LDP
2. Party for the European Future-PEI
3. United for Macedonia-OM
4. Macedonian Era Third - Macedonian independent lists - Bitola

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: 26 HOLDERS

1. Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food - Skopje
2. Gostivar Secondary School - Gostivar
3. SEOU Gostivar - Gostivar
4. Mirce Acev High School - Prilep
5. SUGS Cvetan Dimov - Skopje
6. DUCOR Partenija Zografski- Skopje
7. SOU "ATA" - Center of the Parish
8. Primary school with resource center Idnina-Skopje
9. Primary school Jashar Bey Shkupi-Skopje
10. Elementary school 26th of July-Skopje
11. Rajko Jinzifov Elementary School - n. Drachevo, Skopje
12. Primary school Liria-s. Vrutok
13. Primary school Sally Lisi-s. Dobridol
14. Elementary school Kocho Racin- Prilep
15. Kiril and Methodius Primary School - Kanatlarci village
16. Primary school Peco Daskalot - village. Lower ones
17. Primary school Liria-village Zhitoshe
18. Primary school Straso Pinjur-s. Karbintsi
19. Said Najdeni-Debar Primary School
20. Nikola Vaptsarov Elementary School - Strumica
21. Primary school Kocho Racin-Kratovo
22. OOU Mihail Grameno - village of Brest, Skopje
23. OOU "Krstev Petkov Misirkov" - Radovish
24. Municipal primary music school-Struga
25. Public institution for children - Kindergarten Costa Pop - Ristov Delchev-Bogdanci
26. Public municipal institution for children - Second September Kindergarten - Demir Hisar

PUBLIC ENTERPRISES AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN RSM: 11 OWNERS

1. Public enterprise "Communal"-Struga
2. Public enterprise for communal activities "Turia"-Vasilevo
3. JPKD "Oktisi"-S. Oktisi, Struga
4. J.P. "Stipion 2011" - Stip
5. NU Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments and Museum-Ohrid
6. Center for culture "Aco Karamanov" - Radovish
7. Branko Stanoevic Primary School, Gostivar
8. Student dormitory at DUCOR "Partenija Zografski" - Skopje
9. Public institution Intermunicipal Center for Social Work-Gostivar
10. N.U. Tetovo Theater - Tetovo
11. NU Albanian Theater for Children and Youth - Skopje

HEALTHCARE INSTITUTIONS: 3 OWNERS

1. PHI University Clinic for Psychiatry - Skopje

2. PHI General Hospital "Ferid Murad" - Gostivar
3. "Sante Plus Group" PHU-Skopje

STATE INSTITUTIONS: 2 OWNERS

1. State Transport Inspectorate
2. Financial Intelligence Authority

MUNICIPALITIES AND CENTERS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PLANNING REGIONS: 2 OWNERS

1. Municipality of Saraj
2. Center for Development of Pologsk Planning Region

Appendix 2: Copy of final account for 2023