

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

CODE OF ETHICS

**for administrative officers in the Agency for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to
Public Information**

Skopje, December 2024

Based on Article 34 paragraph 1 of the Law on Free Access to Public Information ("Official Gazette of RSM" No. 101/19), and according to the Outcome of the Draft Minutes of the Thirty-Eighth Session of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia held on December 10, 2024, Point 27 and the conclusion under point 1, the Director of the Agency for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information passed:

CODE OF ETHICS
for administrative officers in the Agency for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information

I. BASIC PROVISIONS

Article 1

The Code of Ethics for Administrative Officers in the Agency for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information (hereinafter: the Agency) establishes and prescribes the ethical standards and rules of professional conduct of the administrative officers employed in the Agency (hereinafter: the employees).

The purpose of the Code of Ethics is to encourage the good conduct and behavior of the employees, to promote and affirm the dignity and reputation of the employees, and to strengthen the trust of the general public in the work of the Agency.

Employees apply and adhere to the ethical rules and standards from the Code of Ethics in relation to colleagues, management staff, supervisors, holders of information, public information seekers, public information brokers, and legal and natural persons employed. in other bodies and associations with which they cooperate, the profession and the community in accordance with the legal regulation.

Article 2

Employees conscientiously perform their work tasks and their professional knowledge and experience through the promotion of tolerance mutual respect, and cooperation.

In their professional activities, employees respect basic human rights and values towards the principle of social justice and equality regardless of existing differences and are obliged to maintain their expertise, competence, and integrity in their work.

Article 3

The employees protect the reputation of the agency in which they work, and regardless of the position they are in, they contribute to the advancement of the agency's work and improve its efficiency.

Every new employee who establishes an employment relationship for the first time familiarizes himself with the provisions of the Code of Ethics.

Employees in the performance of work act in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Ethics.

The gender-specific expressions used in the Code of Ethics are used neutrally and refer equally to men and women.

II. ETHICAL STANDARDS AND RULES OF CONDUCT

Article 4

The behavior of employees should be based on the principles of legality, subsidiarity, personal integrity, respect for democratic values, social justice, equal treatment and non-discrimination, transparent and responsible handling of information, professionalism, expertise, efficiency, economical and efficient use of resources, political neutrality, confidentiality, openness in work, good behavior with colleagues and superiors and decent clothing.

Article 5

In performing the work duties given in accordance with the legal competencies, the employees are obliged to perform their work and tasks in accordance with the Constitution and laws of the Republic of North Macedonia, other by-laws, and ratified international agreements.

Employees should never work in a way that they know or suspect is illegal, irregular, or immoral, and if they are given such work tasks, they should immediately report the case to authorized persons and institutions.

Article 6

Employees promote democratic values and the rule of law with their work and behavior, do not discriminate, do not use hate speech and insults, do not humiliate or discredit, and are not involved in corruption or any other type of abuse of office.

Employees ensure equal standards in work performance through fair and equitable treatment and avoidance of discrimination on any basis.

Article 7

The employees take care of and promote their dignity and the reputation of the Agency in which they work, both during working hours and outside of it. In doing so, they do not use their official position for private purposes and do not present official data that could damage the Agency's reputation and trust in the institution.

When performing their work, employees respect the rights, dignity, and integrity of others, but they also take care of their integrity. The integrity of a person includes honesty, truthfulness, and commitment to one's moral values and duties.

When participating in work meetings, training, and other types of professional training and improvement, employees have the obligation to represent the Agency in a worthy manner.

In all public appearances and presentations of the Agency to others, employees present the views of the Agency in accordance with legal regulations and competencies, professional knowledge, and the Code of Ethics.

Article 8

When working in the area of free access to public information, employees request access only to the information they need to perform their jobs and tasks and use it in a manner prescribed by law. At the same time, employees provide accurate and complete data for which they are authorized within the scope of their work unless access to data is limited according to the law, and they keep official secrets and confidential data entrusted to them.

III. BASIC RULES OF DRESS AND BEHAVIOR IN THE WORKPLACE

Article 9

The employees have a neat appearance, pay attention to their personal hygiene and dress in an adequate way that does not damage their reputation and the reputation of the Agency. The employees' clothes should be clean, formal and neat so as not to cause the impression of indecency and damage the reputation of the Agency. Too short, tight, open, or vulgar clothes containing obscene inscriptions and short pants are not allowed in the Agency.

At the workplace, they do not express their political, religious, and other personal views or groups to which they believe, which could lead them to a situation of suspicion of bias or violation of the neutral attitude they should have toward others.

Smoking is prohibited at the workplace and on the premises of the Agency, and the use of alcohol, drugs, or other psychotropic substances is prohibited, as well as working under the influence of alcohol or narcotics.

Employees do not highlight or impose their political and religious affiliation on others and may not wear or highlight symbols of political parties.

Employees are obliged to perform their work professionally, dedicatedly, and in a timely manner, respecting the priorities and order of tasks. To carry out work and tasks responsibly, professionally, and efficiently by applying their best knowledge and skills, to follow the development of their field, to continuously upgrade and train and apply the acquired knowledge for the sake of personal progress and increasing the efficiency of The agency.

Article 10

Employees cultivate the spirit of the principles of teamwork, mutual respect, respect for diversity, solidarity, and cooperation in their relationships with their colleagues.

The privacy and discretion of colleagues and superiors are respected. Communication and cooperation take place in a way that does not harm dignity and personal integrity but contributes to creating a pleasant working atmosphere, tolerance, transparency, and mutual understanding.

Article 11

Employees ensure economical and efficient management and use of material assets, equipment and objects entrusted to them in performing work tasks prevent their illegal use and disposal, and do not use them for private needs.

IV. EMPLOYEE AND MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

Article 12

All forms of communication between employees are based on mutual respect, trust, cooperation, decency, and responsibility.

Employees provide access to colleagues to the necessary information of work interest, develop forms of organizational learning, and accept and value colleagues with their professional achievements.

Employees are continuously educated and professionally trained to ensure a high level of professional and ethical competence.

Article 13

The Director of the Agency/the deputy director of the Agency sets an example of ethical behavior for other employees and encourages a positive atmosphere for quality and timely performance of work tasks, mutual respect, and cooperation.

The Director of the Agency appoints the administrative officer who performs the work and tasks from the scope of human resources as the Commissioner for Ethics. The Commissioner for Ethics takes care of the application of this Code and monitors the application of the Code of Ethics, as well as points

out to the employees the omissions in the work and takes necessary measures for applying the ethical rules and standards.

The employees and the director of the Agency/the deputy director of the Agency develop cooperation and partnership with other institutions and the civil sector to advance the work of the Agency.

The employees, with their statements and comments, do not question the decisions, reputation, and dignity of the director of the Agency/deputy director of the Agency.

Employees do not receive gifts and must not ask for, accept, or allow another person to ask for, give, or receive a gift, service, or any other value, help, or other benefits in connection with the performance of their duties, on their behalf or for their benefit, which would compromise their work in any way or put them in an inappropriate position and obligation.

V. AVOIDANCE OF CONFLICT OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INTERESTS

Article 14

Employees, in performing their work tasks, powers, and duties, avoid any conflict between public and private interests, as well as any suspicion of a conflict of interest.

In their actions and behavior, employees are guided by the public interest in accordance with the Constitution, laws, by-laws, and principles and act conscientiously, professionally, without discrimination, and without any private interest.

In the event of a conflict of interest, they are obliged to immediately, without delay, report it to the director of the Agency and, in the absence of the director, to the deputy director of the Agency.

Article 15

Employees sign a statement confirming that they have read and understood the principles and standards of behavior and work in this Code.

The signed statements are submitted and kept in the employee's personnel files.

The form of the Statement is an integral part of this Code and is given in Attachment 1.

VI. ETHICS COMMITTEE

Article 16

The Agency for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information established an Ethics Committee.

The Ethics Committee monitors the application of this Code of Ethics.

The ethics committee comprises three members: the commissioner for ethics, the person for communication with citizens who have some type and degree of disability, the Agency, and the person for integrity.

Article 17

The Ethics Committee acts on complaints and findings about unethical behavior of an employee that is contrary to the Code of Ethics for employees of the Agency.

The ethics committee examines complaints and knowledge of unethical behavior of the employee and compiles a report on the ascertained situation, which may also contain a proposal for disciplinary responsibility according to the Law on Administrative Officers.

If it is ascertained that an employee of the Agency acts contrary to the Code of Ethics while performing the work, the employee of the Agency shall be subject to disciplinary action for non-compliance with the provisions of this Code, in accordance with the Law on Administrative Officers.

Article 18

The director of the Agency adopts the code of ethics and it is publicly published and available on the website of the Agency.

VII. TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 19

All employees are obliged to familiarize themselves with the Code of Ethics provisions and take care of its correct application.

Article 20

This Code enters into force on the day of its adoption.

Director

Plamenka Bojcheva

Appendix 1

Based on Article 15 of the Code of Ethics for employees of the Agency for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information, I make the following statement:

STATEMENT

I (name and surname) _____ an employee of the Agency for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information, at a position _____ in a Sector/Department _____ I confirm that I am familiar with the rules of ethical standards and laws of professional conduct of the Agency's employees (the Code of Ethics). I hereby declare that I will consistently respect them and adhere to the provisions of the Code when performing work and work tasks.

Signature
