

**Project title:** Increasing Government Transparency and Accountability Through Electronic Access to Information

**Date of visit:** March 23, 2007

**Place of visit:** Town of Montana, Bulgaria

**The following issues were discussed during the workshop:**

1. Conditions for proper implementation of the Bulgarian Access to Public Information Act (APIA)
2. Weaknesses of Bulgarian legislation regarding access to information
3. Results from the assessments which Access to Public Information Foundation (AIP) conducted in March 2006 and March 2007 of 411 institutional web sites from the point of view of the APIA
4. Foreign legislation providing for electronic access to information (Hungary, Estonia, USA, Serbia) - publication schemes, list of categories of information subject to active publication
5. Problems with active provision of information, particularly publication on institutional web sites, that officials encounter in their work:
  - financial problem with the maintenance of the web sites by external companies;
  - big volume of information that shall be uploaded online;
  - sometimes, external maintainers improperly edit the information that institutions send for uploading on web sites;
  - lack of responsible information officer;
  - Public Relations officials are overwhelmed with responsibilities different from updating and uploading information on the web site;
  - frequent change of officials leads to inconsistency in the efficient work.
6. Categories of information that shall be actively provided by the institutions by publishing them on the web sites:
  - information about the remuneration of the members of the local parliament;
  - asset declarations;
  - drafts of all acts before their final adoption, as well as information about the opportunities for public discussion/consultation on them;
  - draft budget and adopted budget;
  - annual and six-month activities reports of the particular institution;
  - description of the data volumes and resources, used by the respective administration;
  - results from different kind of inspections and imposed sanctions;
  - public procurement committee minutes, as well as the signed contract.
7. The role of the head of administrations in the active provision of information

**On the bases of the discussion, the following recommendations were given by the participants in the workshop:**

1. Internal record management system to be connected with the web site
2. Provision for the appointment of a responsible information official to be introduced in the APIA
3. The date of last updating of the online documents shall be signified
4. Training of heads of administration how to upload information on the web sites
5. Unification of services and procedures for active publication of information on institutional web sites (starting with domain names, for example)
6. Drafting of an Instruction by the Ministry of State Administration and Administrative Reform to the heads of the relevant administrations with a model of a web site will facilitate the active provision of information online.