

1. INTRODUCTION

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Since the adoption of the Law on Free Access to Information in the Parliament of Montenegro on November 08 2005, as one of the most important mechanisms in the procedure aimed at building responsible and efficient authorities, MANS submitted over 8000 requests for free access to information.

With a view of better informing of citizens on the right to free access to information which provides a possibility to them to request and obtain information held by the state authorities, in the period from November 01 2007 until March 31 2008 MANS realized the project „Do you know you have the right to know" .

The project „ Do you know you have the right to know", within which this publication was developed, was aimed at raising public awareness on the importance of the right to free access to information and respect of the legal mechanisms for its protection, through provision of legal assistance to citizens in all Montenegrin municipalities and putting of pressure on institutions so that they implement adequately the Law on Free Access to Information.

This publication includes all the experience and practice obtained during realization of the project, experience of citizens in the application of this right and the use of legal mechanisms for its protection, case studies and the statistics developed during the project realization. With a view of acquainting the citizens with this law, especially those in smaller municipalities, MANS organized a public campaign in 21 municipalities in Montenegro.

Apart from distribution of promotional material, during the public campaign and through direct contacts, the representatives of MANS explained to the citizens in more detail provisions of the Law on Free Access to Information as well as data which refer to the phases of the administrative procedure and the administrative dispute.

The results of the public campaign have shown that citizens are not yet ready to implement independently the Law on Free Access to Information. Still, many citizens asked from MANS by means of the INFO telephone to formulate their requests, determine the competent institution for acting pursuant to the request in question, to submit the requests and feedback information on the outcome of the procedure, so that in the period from November 01 2007 until March 31 2008 - the period of project duration, 113 request for information were submitted upon a request of citizens. Access to information was allowed based on 65% of requests, MANS lodged complaints pursuant to 17 and complaints to courts pursuant to 8 requests for information.

This publication presents case studies which show the manner in which MANS used the Law on Free Access to Information to assist the citizens in the exercise of their rights and revealing of cases of corruption.

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