

CASE STUDY: MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE SPENT HALF THE ANNUAL BUDGET IN ONE MONTH

I: INTRODUCTION: In May 2016, on the eve of the entry of representatives of the opposition into the Government of Electoral Trust, the Ministry of Agriculture transferred almost €700,000 to the municipalities and municipal districts for local infrastructure, or half of the estimated budget for this purpose in 2016, i.e. 20 times more than it was spent in the same period last year.

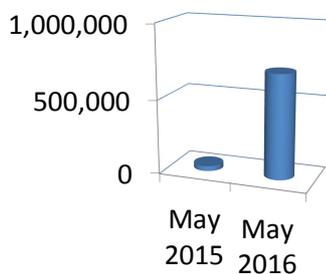
II: PUMPING MONEY BEFORE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE OPPOSITION ENTERED THE GOVERNMENT:

In 2016, the Ministry of Agriculture allocated the budget of nearly €1.4 million for the local infrastructure for two programs - water management and rural development.¹

At the close of May 2016 the Government of Electoral Trust was elected in Montenegro in order to prepare the free parliamentary elections.² The agreement reached between the government and the opposition entailed that the position of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development was to be occupied by the opposition representative. However, Petar Ivanovic, the former Minister of Agriculture, a member of the ruling Democratic Party of Socialists, before leaving the government, in just one month, channeled nearly half of the money, mainly to the municipalities and municipal districts.³ The municipalities and municipal districts can use these funds for building water supply systems, clearing, grubbing and filling roads, purchasing rainwater tanks, etc.

Comparative data for 2015 show that in May last year, which was a non-election year, the Ministry of Agriculture spent about €35,000 for the local infrastructure, which means that in the same period of the election year a whopping twentyfold increase was recorded.

Payments for local infrastructure



Graph 4: Enormous increase in comparison to 2015

In May 2016, the municipalities received around €520,000 from the Ministry of Agriculture, but most went to those local governments where the ruling party was in power. Thus, Niksic received €65,000, Podgorica €55,000, Danilovgrad €55,000, Mojkovac €45,000, Savnik €40,000, Cetinje and Petnjica €35,000, each.

The Municipality of Zabljak received €33,500, Rozaje €30,000, Pljevlja and Pluzine each received €25,000, Andrijevica and Bijelo Polje €20,000 each, and Plav and Bar each received €10,000, Tivat €5,000, whereas the Municipality of Berane, where the ruling party is not in power, received only €2,000.

¹ Link: <http://www.sluzbenilist.me/PravniAktDetalji.aspx?tag={8AF90021-7610-4C09-89EC-7C232F5177C1}>

² Link: <http://www.skupstina.me/zakoni/web/dokumenta/zakoni-i-drugi-akti/1076/1129-7289-23-3-16-1.pdf>

³ Source of the data is the SAP system, which is kept electronically, and it refers to the total spending of the State Treasury of the Ministry of Finance; NGO MANS received this data from the Ministry of Finance on the basis of the Law on Free Access to Information

The Ministry of Agriculture provided funds to the municipal districts, so the municipal districts Krusevice and Prijedor in the Municipality of Herceg Novi were each awarded €25,000. Two other municipal districts in Herceg Novi - Kumbor and Baosici - received the sum of €5,000 each from the Ministry, while a total of €10,000 thousand was set aside for the municipal district Kaludra in Berane. The municipal district Mrtvo duboko in Kolasin was granted €4,000 in May and the same sum was granted to the municipal district Kalace in Rozaje.

In addition, Podgorica-based *Vodovod i kanalizacija* d.o.o. (Water Supply and Sewage Company) received around €55,000, but certain primary schools also received grants totaling several thousand euros.



Former Minister Petar Ivanovic opens water supply system in Rozaje at the end of election campaign

However, the Ministry of Agriculture's 2015 budget allocated for the local infrastructure amounted to €1.2 million. However, right before the end of the year, the Ministry redirected half a million to the municipalities and municipal districts.

In practice, this meant that the municipalities could report these funds in 2016 budgets as "transferred funds" from the previous year, and then use them for construction works in the election year.

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