



**Foundation for Local
Government Reform**

ANNUAL REPORT 2013



FLGR is an independent professional resource centre, supporting local democracy.

Mission of the Foundation for Local Government Reform is to support local democracy and promote effective, partnership-based local development, based on democratic values, social inclusion and prosperity.

For 19 years of existence the Foundation has successfully implemented projects and programmes contributing to the democratization of local government in Bulgaria and enhancement of public awareness on local government issues.

FLGR has a 5-member Governing Body.

The main spheres of expertise of FLGR are:

- **Training**
- **Participatory Local Governance**
- **Good Governance and Integrity**
- **Better Administrative Services**
- **Innovative Practices**

FLGR was part of the European network of local authorities for exchange of experiences LOGIN since its creation in 1999 until its closure at the end of 2011.

FLGR is a founding member of Donor Fund Bulgaria.

FLGR is part of the Mayors Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma Inclusion Network (MERI)

FLGR Governing Body

Lachezar Rosenov, Mayor, Municipality of Dobrich (1995 - 2003), Chair of the Board

Deni Kamenov, Mayor, Municipality of Vidin (1991 - 1995), Vice-Chair of the Board

Ginka Kapitanova, Mayor, Municipality of Zlatograd (1991 - 1995), Executive Director of FLGR (1995 - 2007), Board Member

Roumen Draganov, Director, Institute for Analyses and Assessments in Tourism, Board Member

Zdravko Sechkov, Executive Director of FLGR, Board Member

The Team of FLGR

Zdravko Sechkov, Executive Director of FLGR

Gergana Stavreva, expert

Alexander Mihailov, expert

Rositsa Raycheva, expert

Demir Deyanov, expert

Elvira Koleva, accountant

FLGR has established a countrywide network of external experts.

Contact Information

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■ INFORMATION RESOURCES AND COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Over the years FLGR developed effective and recognizable communication channels to communicate with customers and partners:

- www.flgr.bg – the site of the organization;
- wp.flgr.bg – FLGR blog;
- e-Weekly Newsletter.

Information resources are friendly and continually enriched.

>> **Online Library**

In 2013 were published in electronic form 66 new publications in Bulgarian and 12 - in English, of them the greatest interest attracted:

- Analysis of social entrepreneurship in Bulgaria, 632 downloads
- Integration of Roma in Bulgaria and Romania, 384 downloads
- Inequality in Bulgaria - dynamics, comparative analysis and reasons, 317 downloads
- Youth volunteering in Bulgaria, 304 downloads
- Flexible forms of employment and the competitiveness of Bulgarian enterprises, 266 downloads
- School for all, module training of pedagogical teams for management and financing activities in multicultural environment, 236 downloads
- Practical tool for incentive mechanisms for participation of young people in public life at local level, 197 downloads
- European experience and practices in intermunicipal cooperation. Results of the study of the role of the associations of municipalities in Bulgaria to promote inter-municipal cooperation, 194 downloads
- Citizens and the administration - from both sides of the law, 188 downloads
- What works for Roma inclusion in the EU. Policies and model approaches, 176 downloads

- Good practice for involving citizens in decisions and policies at the local level, 173 downloads
- Development of Civil Society in Bulgaria: Trends and Risks, 145 downloads
- Education and integration of children and students from different ethnic groups and socially disadvantaged backgrounds, 134 сваления
- Guide for local authorities on the implementation of the Law on Community Centers and the Public Libraries Act, 125 downloads
- Handbook of diversity in the media, 125 downloads
- Path to knowledge and positive change, 121 downloads
- Limits of integration? Opinion survey of Roma and non-Roma in six Member States of the European Union, 119 downloads
- Options for economic policy. Advantages and disadvantages, 114 downloads
- Work of the local administration and perceptions of corruption: opinion of the businesses, 114 downloads

>> Online database of innovative practices

15th year in a row FLGR consistently promotes, collects, publishes and widely disseminates innovative practices that foster ingenuity and exchange of experience among Bulgarian local governments and NGOs through its project "Innovative Practices in Bulgaria". Launched in September 1998, the project creates a sustainable model for the collection and dissemination of innovative practices in local government. Since the end of 2001 FLGR awarded local governments for being innovative in different thematic areas, in the period of 2002 – 2009 – with the annual award "Innovative Municipality".

Online database of good practices in 2013 was enriched with 42 new practices.

The total number of published good practices since 1998, reached 1295.

>> **e-Weekly** in 2013 had 48 volumes and presented:

- 632 funding opportunities and competitions;
- 134 training opportunities and internships.

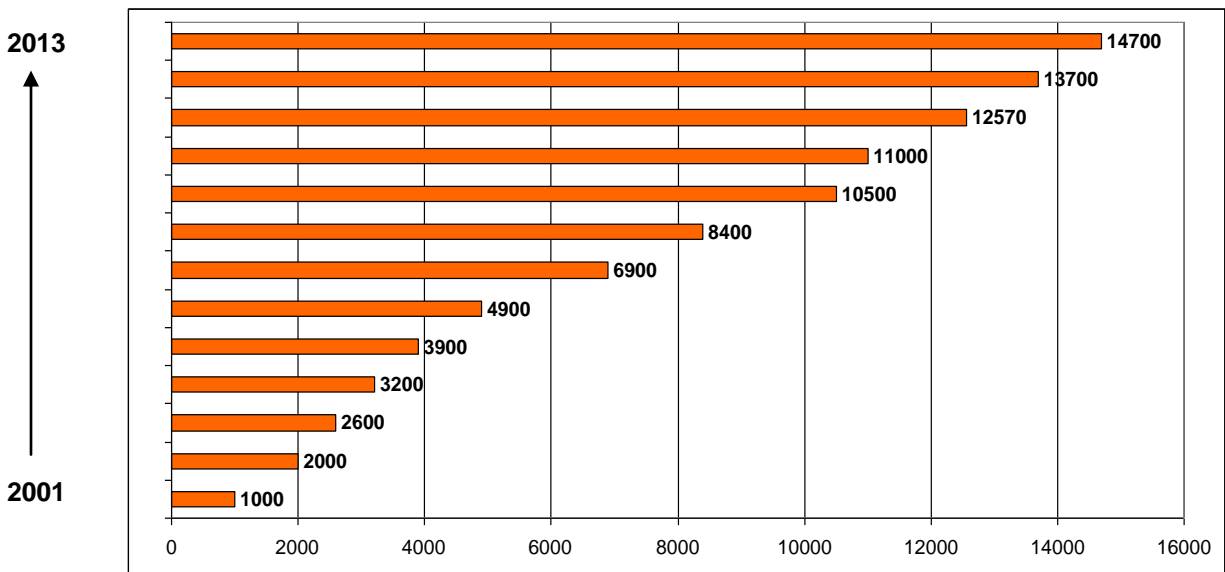
Subscribers to the FLGR e-weekly increased from 13,700 at the end of 2012 to 14,727 at the end of 2013

FLGR enables to NGOs, municipalities, communal centres etc. to publish announcements on their initiatives, and many of them used this possibility.

e-Weekly information is further published by number of municipalities, NGOs and others., for example the National Network of Children, Europe Direct Plovdiv, On competitions, scholarships and projects, "Ethnicity" - Roma Information Portal for development, etc.



E-weekly subscribers



Reviews of e-weekly subscribers:

FLGR E-weekly is one of the most reliable primary sources of information on programs and competitions for us and the people of Smolyan. The selection of the news is good and most importantly - "fresh."

*Antoaneta Nikolova, Europe Direct Smolyan
December 2013*

We in Community Center "Mladost 2003" in Samokov would like to express how useful is the e-weekly! It informs many young people on possibilities to participate in contests and more. We easily find information about projects and training initiatives in which we can participate - and they open new doors to us.

Community center "Mladost 2003" - Samokov

April 2013

■ TRAININGS

The Centre for Training and Qualification within the Foundation for Local Government Reform was established in 2003 aiming at institutionalizing the training activities offered by FLGR.

Distance Learning

In 2013, the FLGR team conducted two Internet-based training courses as part of the program MERI:

- Integration of Roma in Bulgaria in the field of education - the course joined 149 participants, 102 of them successfully completed it.
- Integration of Roma in housing - the course joined 57 participants, 39 of them completed it successfully.

Course participants were experts from the municipal and regional administrations, representatives of NGOs, schools, universities etc. across the country.

Here's what the participants in the courses wrote to us:

I am extremely grateful for giving me the opportunity to be involved in both courses you offered. For me they were very helpful. I learned new things, some not so easy to learn and quite difficult to implement. I hope that this will only be of help in Bansko Municipality to support Roma inclusion.

Maya Stoitseva, Chief Expert "Social Work" - Bansko Municipality

I would like to congratulate you on the free distance course "Integration of Roma in Bulgaria in the field of education." All lessons were extremely useful. The course made me reflect on many issues that affect minorities in Bulgaria and in particular - the integration of Roma in education.

Habibe Rasim, court clerk, District Court - Razgrad

I thought the topics will be "dry", but it turned out it was very up to date and synthesized. During the course I gained new knowledge that will benefit my work.

I would take part in next courses your pleasure.

Sammy Nurel Talib, junior expert "International Projects and Programmes", Municipality Alfatar

I would like to express my satisfaction with the course.

I believe that the material in the six lessons was very interesting.

I am glad that I was part of it!

Svetla Stefanova, inspector "Housing and rentals", Municipality Etropole

■ MERI Bulgaria

Mayors Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma Inclusion Network

The initiative Mayors Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma Inclusion Network (MERI) aims to promote social inclusion and Roma integration through sharing of best practices and training in European countries, as well as highlighting the achievements at local level.

Partners of MERI Bulgaria are the Open Society Institute, Sofia, the National Association of Municipalities in Bulgaria and the organization of European cities Eurocities.

Demonstration of the products of social enterprises in one of the cities program partners - Ghent



In the framework of the initiative there was an exchange of experience between Bulgarian municipalities and European cities with large number of immigrants from these communities, study tours, trainings.

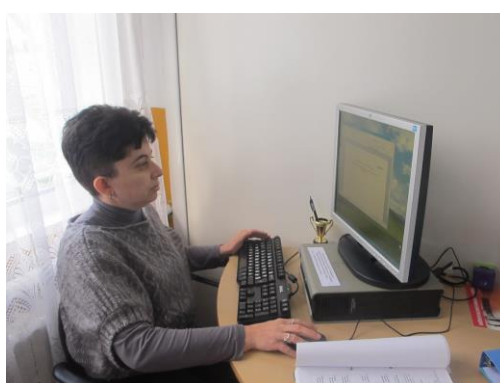
Responsibility of FLGR was the information outreach, creation and maintaining an active facebook page and holding two distance online trainings (see above).

Successful graduates of the courses received certificates.

■ COMPUTERS FOR INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS IN SMALL SETTLEMENTS

In 2013 FLGR provided logistical support to the initiative of the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development and the Swiss Embassy in Sofia to provide computers and office equipment to organizations and institutions from small towns in the country. Those town halls, community centers, etc. are often unable to update their workstations, although their work is crucial for the settlements.

In response to the stated needs to 41 Bulgarian organizations and institutions were provided over 230 computers and laptops. Among the beneficiaries were: two municipal administrations, 6 village administrations, 11 local NGOs, 11 libraries, four schools, three kindergartens, two specialised social institutions, one hospital, one museum.



■ Elaboration of Regional Tourism Strategy - Haskovo

In 2013 FLGR collected data on tourist resources in the region of Haskovo and elaborated regional tourism strategy commissioned by the Regional Administration - Haskovo in the implementation of the project "Joint tourism initiatives aimed at heritage", financed under OP "Bulgaria - Greece 2007 - 2013".

The results of the Foundation's work served for the development at regional level and aimed to unite and encourage links achieved in the field of cultural heritage, natural and tourist sites, to use new attractive forms of communication and promotion of these products and to promote alternative forms of cultural tourism.

■ PARTNERSHIPS

>> For consecutive year FLGR partnered Via Expo in conducting:

- Forum for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EE & RE), which presented the best international practices in Southeast Europe



- Exhibition on Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy for South East Europe
- Conference and Exhibition "Waste Management and Recycling"

>> **Human of the Year**

"Human of the Year" is an annual award recognizing contribution to human rights in Bulgaria.

The award was initiated by the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee in 2008 and since then FLGR acts as a media partner of the BHC.



>> In November 2013 FLGR with more than 240 civil society organizations in Bulgaria signed an open letter addressed to the Attorney General, Minister of Interior, political parties, the media, the President, the Prime Minister and the Ombudsman. The organizations expressed strong concern and indignation on the growing trend fascist and Nazi formations to dictate public policy in the country and urged adequate and legal measures.

■ OTHER ACTIVITIES

In 2013, team of FLGR participated in:

- Evaluation of the implementation of strategic documents 2007 - 2014 and development of strategic documents 2014 - 2020 commissioned by municipal and regional administrations;
- Trainings, researches and analysis commissioned by the LAG in Bulgaria;
- Information support to the National Rural Network (web and Facebook pages, publications), trainings, development of analytical reports.



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