



Foundation for Local Government Reform
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Foundation for Local Government Reform

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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

Yani Dimitrov, expert

Rositsa Raycheva, expert

Demir Deyanov, expert

Elvira Koleva, accountant

FLGR has established a countrywide network of external experts.



Foundation for Local Government Reform (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, found on democratic values, social inclusion and prosperity.

FLGR was established in May 1995.

FLGR has a 5-member Governing Body.

Objectives of FLGR:

- Short-term objectives: Investment in the social capital at local and regional level, increase of the capacity of citizens and NGOs to effectively participate in the decision making process, regional and local governance based on the 12 principles of good governance.
- Medium-term objectives: Support for effective, partnership-based local and regional development, found on democratic values, social inclusion and prosperity.
- Long-term objectives: Building of vibrant dynamic communities with strong participatory local self-government, with high standards of living, sustainable development and competitive local economy.

The main spheres of expertise of FLGR are:

- Training;
- Participatory Local and Regional Governance;
- Good Governance and Integrity;
- Innovative Practices;
- Increasing the Capacity of the NGO sector;
- Strategic planning.

FLGR through study visits and exchanges supported the development of local democracy in Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, Georgia, Kosovo, Romania, Kaliningrad Region, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan.

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 was part of the Mayors Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma Inclusion Network (MERI) 2013 - 2014.

FLGR is a founding member of Donor Fund Bulgaria.

INFORMATION RESOURCES AND COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

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

[>> Website of FLGR](#)

www.flgr.bg

The screenshot shows the FLGR website homepage. The header features the FLGR logo, the text 'Foundation for Local Government Reform', and navigation links: 'e-Brief | Funding | Training | Discussion Forum'. A search bar and 'Site map Contact us' are also present. The main content area is divided into several sections: 'Home' with a 'Happy Baba Marta Day!' article featuring a photo of a traditional Bulgarian doll; 'Best LSG Practice' with a link to the Council of Europe program; and '2016 Information Summary' with a link to a summary of information provided in 2016. A sidebar on the left lists navigation options: 'Home', 'About us', 'Projects', 'Publications', 'E-municipality', 'Training Center', 'FLGR Consult', 'Online Library', 'European Integration', 'Municipalities', and 'Links'. A right sidebar features a '22 YEARS FLGR' anniversary banner, a 'Vaccines should be?' survey with progress bars for 'Mandatory' (100.0%) and 'At the discretion of the parent' (0.0%), and banners for 'MUNICEPS БЛОГ' and 'MERI България'.

The site is actively used, news are published and databases are updated.

[>> FLGR E-Weekly](#)

In September 2016 FLGR e-weekly celebrated its 15th anniversary.

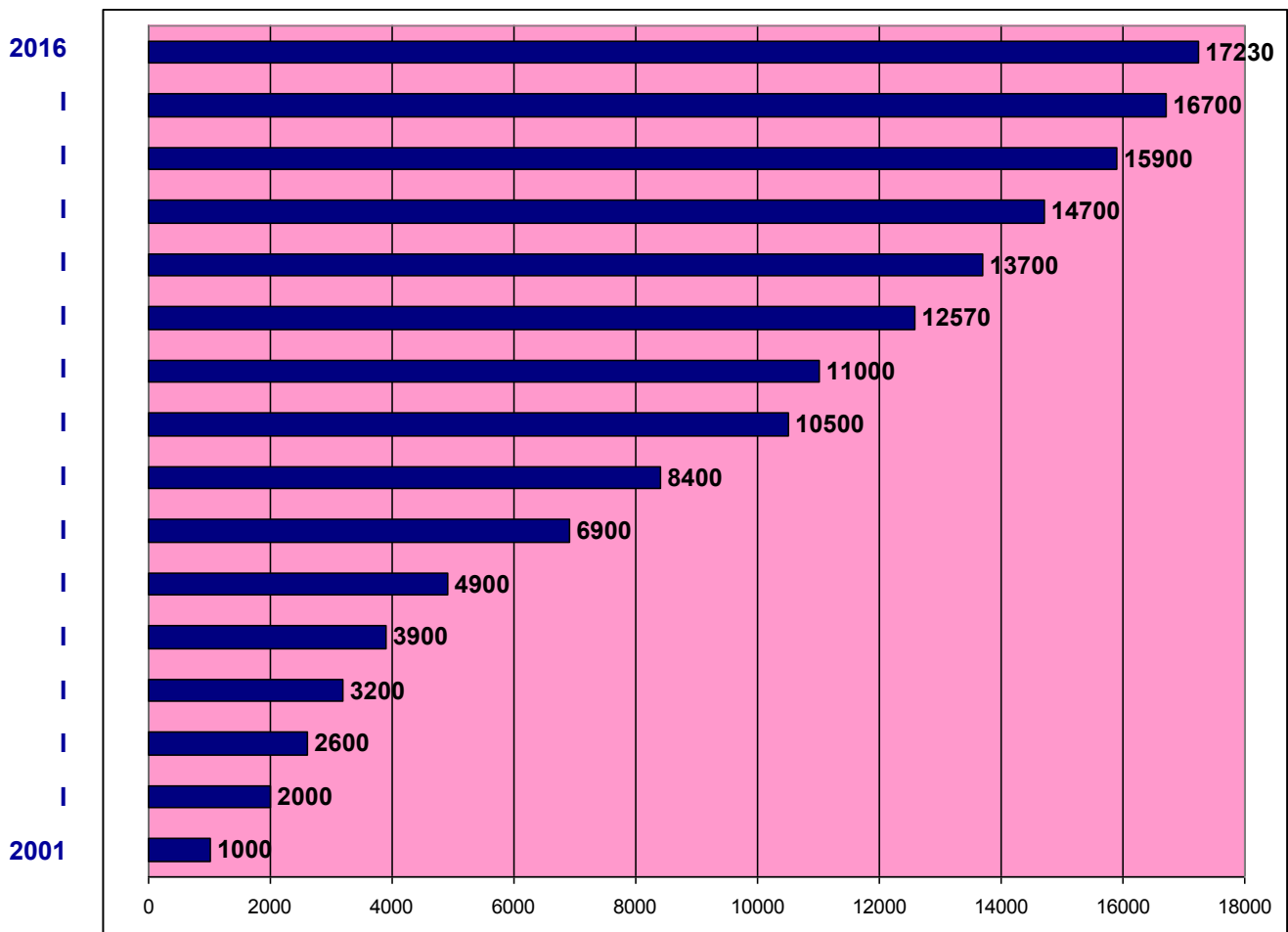
FLGR's E-Weekly in 2016 had 51 issues and presented to its subscribers:

- 619 funding opportunities and competitions;
- 315 training opportunities and internships.

FLGR enables subscribers to publish for free announcements about their initiatives and many NGOs, municipalities, community centers, schools and others sent for publishing and disseminating news on their undertakings.

Subscribers of the FLGR e-weekly increased from 16 700 at the end of 2015 to 17 230 at the end of 2016.

**FLGR e-weekly Subscribers
2001 - 2016**



Diana Bebenova-Nikolova, Silistra:

I express my sincere gratitude for FLGR e-weekly! It was a real achievement that FLGR was for 15 years able to issue it.

For me e-weekly is the most useful source of information, much of my work is related to its content, so it read it "warm" on Tuesday evening.

I wish to e-weekly many more years!

Vessela Chalova, a professor at the University of Food Technologies - Plovdiv:

I would like to sincerely thank you for your e-weekly. Thank you for your efforts to collect, process and present information to people with diverse

interests in the best way. I'm a subscriber of your weekly for years and find it extremely useful.

Indeed, funding opportunities for trainings and internships are announced on the websites of the respective programmes, but the search and reach the necessary information requires a lot of time and carries a real risk of omission of specific deadlines.

Your weekly is probably the only source of concentrated information provided on various programmes.

[>> Online Library](#)

- Online library for 2016 provided access to more than 60 new publications in electronic form in Bulgarian and English.



The screenshot shows the website for MUNICEPS, with the URL wp.flgr.bg. The page features a navigation menu with links for Home, RSS, Online library, and За блога. The main content area displays a news article titled "Отстъплението на демокрацията в България" (Democratic Backsliding in Bulgaria) by traycheva, dated March 21, 2017. The article discusses the political uncertainty and democratic erosion in Bulgaria. A PDF icon is visible next to the article title. The left sidebar contains sections for "Recent Posts" and "Municipes*". The right sidebar includes a search bar, a calendar for March 2017, and an "Archives" section.

The greatest interest provoked publications on topics Civic education; European Integration; Economic development; Social activities.

>> Innovative Practices Online Database



19th 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 2016 was enriched with 102 new practices. Every week FLGR in its e-weekly promotes "Best practice of the week".

The total number of published and disseminated good practices since 1998, reached 1545 practices.

PROMOTING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES FOR REGIONAL AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT



In the period 2014 - 2016 FLGR in cooperation with Mysya Regional Association for Development and Innovation implemented the project „Promoting citizen participation in the formulation and implementation of policies for regional and local development”, financed by the NGO Fund in Bulgaria under the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area 2009-2014.

The objective of the project was to ensure the effective involvement of citizens and their organisations in the process of formulation and implementation of policies for regional

and local development.

Specific objective of the project was to improve citizen capacity and create well functioning forms for real participation of citizens and their organisations in the process.

The principles of project work were:

1. Working in partnership with central, regional, district and local authorities;
2. Implementation of recommendations for improving the mechanisms of civil society participation in elaboration and implementation of policies;
3. Enhancing the capacity of stakeholders - government bodies, NGOs and citizens to effectively participate in elaborating and implementing policies;
4. Popularization of project activities and achieved results in order to raise public awareness about the importance of citizen participation in regional and local policies.

In the framework of the project there were elaborated:

- Analysis of stakeholders in the process of formation and implementation of policies for regional and local development;
- Review and analysis of the legislative policy framework for regional and local development with a focus on problem areas that restrict the participation of citizens in the process;
- Review and analysis of the gathered and summarized primary information on citizen participation in the process of formulation and implementation of policies for regional and local development;
- Recommendations for legislative and institutional changes for the creation of mechanism for citizen participation in the formulation and implementation of policies for regional and local development;
- Mechanism for citizen participation in the formulation and implementation of policies for regional and local development, which was tested as a pilot at regional level (Region Plovdiv).

A Regional Public Forum "Maritsa River as a factor for the development of the South Central Region" was conducted in three sessions between February and March 2016. The Forum brought together citizens, NGOs and representatives of municipalities.

The goal of the Forum was to outline the terms of reference for a future strategy focusing Maritsa River as a factor for the development of the South Central Region in its different dimensions: ecology and the return of wetlands, return of high water and predictability of the river levels, urban development, the river as a factor for development of tourism, etc.

The Forum provoked wide participation of all stakeholders - citizens, municipalities and businesses, as well as branch organisations - to form policies on the Maritsa River.

- Promotional video, provoking discussion on the importance of citizen participation - I. and II. part.

The most important results of the project are: a mechanism for promoting civic participation elaborated, successfully tested model of public forums for the formation of regional and local policies, shared information with stakeholders about the importance of participation in the process of formulating and implementing policies for regional and local development.

The target groups of the project - the decision makers on regional and local development at the central, regional, district and municipal level, public officials and civil society organisations - had the opportunity to get acquainted with the basic

principles of forming the policies for regional and local development and to gain practical skills in the use of the mechanism in the course of the public forums.

The impact on the stakeholders is reflected in their increased capacity to organize the process of shaping policies for regional and local development involving citizens and businesses participation, and their opinion taken into account.

As envisaged, the project partners complemented each other in their expertise.

The contribution of FLGR to the project was based on the expert work of the organisation in formulating the policies of local and regional development, and its longstanding cooperation with regional and local authorities and NGOs.

Activities FLGR supported the project in the following areas:

- Elaboration of the Analysis of stakeholders in the process of formation and implementation of policies for regional and local development;
- Elaboration of the Review and analysis of the legislative policy framework for regional and local development with a focus on problem areas that restrict the participation of citizens in the process;
- Preparation of the conditions to collect, summarize and evaluate primary information on obstacles to citizens and their organisations to participate in policies for regional and local development by poll-depth interviews and focus groups;
- Conducting trainings and public forums.



Best Practice in Bulgarian Local Self-Governments 2016/2017



In October 2016 FLGR started implementation of the Best Practice in Bulgarian Local Self-Governments Programme, aimed at identifying, achieving public recognition and dissemination of best practices among municipalities in Bulgaria.

The Programme has been developed by the Council of Europe's Centre of Expertise on Local Government Reform and is implemented in Bulgaria by FLGR in the period October 2016 - May 2017 with the support of the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works and the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria.

The Best Practice in Bulgarian Local Self-Governments Programme applies a systematic approach, under which will be selected the best practices implemented by municipalities in Bulgaria during the last 18 months, in earlier identified thematic areas.

In the first edition of the Programme three thematic areas were chosen:

- I. Municipal support for civic initiatives
- II. New management technologies and solutions
- III. Social innovation and partnerships

In the period November - December 2016 FLGR published and distributed a brochure and carried out an information campaign to promote the Programme. In 2017 practices for the contest will be gathered (January - March) and the best practices will be awarded (April - May). The best practices will be published and will be widely disseminated among Bulgarian municipalities. The authors of the first two practices in each category will receive a prize trip to Strasbourg, France, and will visit to the Council of Europe.

NGO NETWORK FOR ANALYSIS OF SOCIETAL RISKS

FLGR joined the NGO network for analysis of societal risks. The network was established within the Centre for Liberal Strategies project. The network consisted of local NGOs and specialized in the preparation of rapid and qualitative analysis of the complex mix of supranational, national and regional risks of various public processes, events and policies.



INFORMATION SEMINAR

On May 17, 2016 FLGR held a seminar for municipal experts on the role of municipalities and the operators in the operation and maintenance of municipal dams.

By conducting the seminar FLGR aimed to enrich the knowledge of the municipal experts on the specific requirements concerning technical condition and safe operation of dams that are public municipal property; on the newly introduced requirements for operator selection and interaction between the operator and owner of public infrastructure under the changed regulations for maintenance and operation

of dams and related facilities; to raise the awareness, knowledge and skills of the participants in conducting regular and occasional inspections in terms of the national technical supervision of the state administration.

RE-START PROGRAMME: COMPUTERS FOR INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS IN SMALL SETTLEMENTS



In 2016 for fourth consecutive year FLGR provided logistical support to the initiative of the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development and the Swiss Embassy in Sofia - Programme Re-Start, phases 9 and 10, to provide computers and office equipment to organisations and institutions from small settlements in the country.

In response to the stated needs 167 workstations, laptops, printers and servers were granted to 31 organisations, including:

- Municipal administrations - 13;
- NGOs and community centres - 13;
- Schools and kindergartens - 4;
- A Municipal Hospital - 1.

PARTNERSHIPS

- FLGR in 2016 continued its partnership with the University of National and World Economy - Sofia, incl. enabling students' internships.
- For consecutive year FLGR partnered Via Expo in conducting specialized conferences



- On Energy Efficiency
- On Waste management and recycling
- On Smart Cities

■ Human of the Year 2016

www.humanoftheyear.org

“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 supporting organisation of the initiative.



- Municipalities, community organisations, NGOs publish on their websites and in their publications information from the FLGR's e-weekly section "Financing and Training Opportunities" - for ex. National Network of Children, Perspektivi.info (information site for news and opportunities in education), Information on competitions, grants and projects - Facebook page; VIA Civic Association, National Information System of Youth and others.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

In 2016 team of FLGR participated in:

- Elaboration of Strategies for community-led local development (CLLD) for years 2014-2020 (under the National Programme for Rural Development) of five Local Action Groups;

- Carrying out preparatory activities in research and analysis of the territory in connection with the preparation of CLLD Strategy for one Local Action Group for years 2014-2020 (under the National Programme for Rural Development);
- Evaluation of the programme "Promotion of fresh cherries in third countries (Russia and Norway)", incl. assess of the relevance, effectiveness, coherence and complementarity of the promotional programme with other initiatives for promotion, assessment of the economic impact and feasibility of the programme (added value and impact on target groups), recommendations for overall improvement of the process of promotion of fresh cherries in third countries.



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