

# TRANSPARENCY AND CORRUPTION AT THE LEVEL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

## Abstract

The level of corruption has consistently been a significant social and political phenomenon that affects the level of satisfaction with the current political situation and the support of the political system. Research conducted in recent years by third sector anti-corruption foundations or professional opinion research agencies suggests areas where the public perceives greater or lesser transparency. In the last decade, this significantly included the judiciary, healthcare, political parties, education and distrust grew e.g. also against the media. On the contrary, a relatively high level of trust was maintained by representatives of local governments - municipalities and cities. Given that the perception of transparency is highly emotionally based and the public can make their judgment based on “what I have heard”, the subject of the article is transparency in the local government environment. With the support of the Operational Program Effective Public Administration and the European Social Fund, a survey was conducted among the member local self-governments of the three local action groups (LAGs). From the methodological point of view, two techniques were used. The first was questionnaire survey among the inhabitants of the affected municipalities and at the same time data were requested from the municipalities within selected processes.

**Key words:** transparency, self-government, tenders, public procurement, political participation

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1 PhDr. Miroslav Řádek, PhD., Alexander Dubček University of Trenčín, Department of Political Science, [miroslav.radek@tnuni.sk](mailto:miroslav.radek@tnuni.sk)

Mgr. Marián Bušša, PhD., Alexander Dubček University of Trenčín, Department of Political Science, [marian.bussa@tnuni.sk](mailto:marian.bussa@tnuni.sk)

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the years 2018 - 2019, the local action groups Strážovské vrchy, Naše Považie and Inovec implemented the project “Processes, systems and policies in local governments in the local action groups of the LAG Strážovské vrchy, Naše Považie and Inovec” (Project code ITMS2014 +: 314011L905). The activity was primarily focused on optimizing processes, implementing superior systems and creating better policies. The aim of the project was to propose the introduction of qualitative measures in the field of better functioning of processes in local self-governments. The measures were formulated on the basis of a survey among local governments through which the basic data portfolio was obtained. The findings were then consulted through workshops with representatives of member governments with the civil society and the business sector.

The resulting document “Evaluation Report and Recommended Measures” used data obtained from surveys among associated municipalities and residents of the given municipalities. It dealt mainly with population and personnel conditions and trends; drawing on social programs in cooperation with the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic; basic economic indicators of local budgets in comparison with the state budgets of the Slovak Republic. It also dealt with researching the access to general information by the public; the use of communication tools of municipalities and the degree of intensity of their use; the level of support for culture and sport; infrastructure in pre-primary education policy; the operation of formal local government bodies - councils and commissions and the participation of local governments in the operation of building authorities (either their own or joint).

The reasons for writing this paper are based on the current public debate on the transparency of public life in Slovakia. There are a number of indicators that suggest that the public is dissatisfied with the level of corruption - whether it is (rather emotion-centered) opinion polls or election results in which political parties with an anti-corruption appeal are successful. At the same time e.g., ZMOS has long declared that in case of the opposite is the truth - mayors have long been enjoying public trust. Local governments exercise a substantial part of their competencies within the framework of public administration. „In principle, local level government refers to specific authorities and entities that were created under the national constitution, state constitution or by ordinary law from

the central government. The major purpose of local government is to bring and deliver variety of specific services in a specifically delineated geographical area. Then, the local governance or local administration is considered as a more complex category or concept of administering and executing the collective action at the particular local level. This includes various institutions of local government, networks, community organizations and informal norms that provide for the development and interaction between citizens and state, collective decision making and delivery of local public services. “(Švikruha M. – Mihálik, J. 2014).

For a comprehensive assessment of transparency in the environment of LAG member municipalities, information was collected in the following areas of tenders (selection of local government employees), public procurement, participation in obtaining European Union grants, the number of complaints about the activities of self-governing bodies and political participation. After data collection and assessment, an evaluation in the form of recommended measures was prepared.

## 2 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY MANAGEMENT

Employment relations of employees in the public interest in Slovakia are so-called employment relations in the performance of public service. For these employment relations, the Labour Code is used only if other specific laws or regulations do not take precedence. When we talk about the performance of work in the public interest it is useful to first define the public interest. According to Act no. 552/2003 Coll. “The public interest under this Act is the interest that brings property benefits or other benefits to all citizens or the majority of citizens.” (Barancová, 2004). In such a case, employers are state authorities, municipalities, higher territorial units and legal entities to which the law entrusts the power to decide on the rights and obligations of natural or legal persons in the field of public administration. Furthermore, these are legal entities established by law or by state administration and self-government bodies. According to the Act on the Performance of Work in the Public Interest, any natural person who has the capacity to perform legal acts and is of good repute may become an employee. Other prerequisites and competencies as a prerequisite for performing work in the public interest are determined by a special regulation. It includes, for example, qualifications, medical fitness, prerequisites for acquaintance with classified information and others.

An employment relationship does not arise in the public service only by concluding a written contract. There may also be a case where an employee is

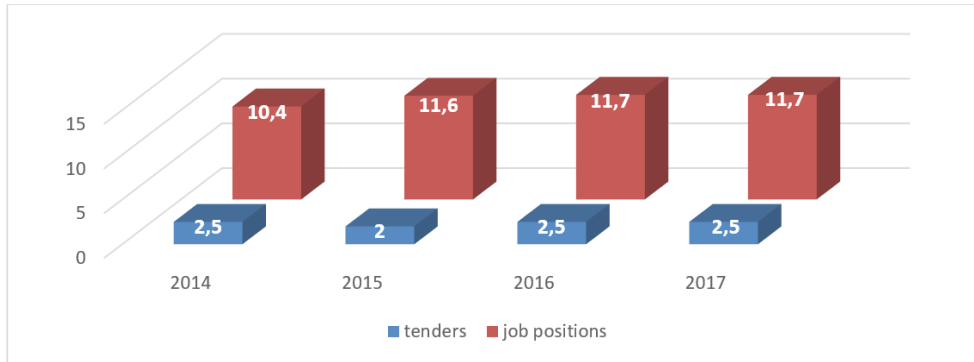
elected or appointed. In this case, he or she signs the employment contract no later than on the day of starting work. The written employment contract must contain exactly the requisites stipulated by the Labour Code (type of work, place of work, date of commencement of work and salary). If any part is missing, it is a breach of duty by the employer towards the employee. The so-called actual employment is thus created, which is without a probationary period and for an indefinite period.

Transparency International Slovakia (TIS) in its analytical material *How to conduct a tender in the local government*, the author of which is JUDr. Pavel Nechala, PhD. (2015) created a comprehensive overview of the selection process of local government employees. According to the TIS, in the case of a transparent selection procedure, it is necessary to focus on the individual phases of the selection procedure, which are:

- Setting conditions - conditions should be set to reflect the choice of the municipal company whose director or the entire management is to be filled; tenders should be conducted for the entire management of municipal companies; since even the selection of an ideal CEO does not necessarily mean a turnaround in the management of the company if, for example, at the same time, the majority on the board of directors remains filled with candidates with different objectives than those promoted by the winning CEO;
- publication of advertisements and active support of publicity – for the selection procedure to be successful it needs gaining the trust of the public, so that as many candidates as possible register; the requirements for filling public sector posts are strict, which in itself discourages some applicants;
- evaluation of the fulfillment of conditions and publication of CVs - the selection committee sets some basic formal requirements for the candidates, the fulfillment of these requirements must be a condition for the acceptance of the candidate's application; but from a practical point of view, it is useful to assume that there will be deviations in meeting the set criteria;
- decision-making on selection into the second round - the main task of the established selection committee is to evaluate the registered candidates according to their qualities and to select the best into the second round; since a public hearing is also a tool to present skills, it is better to set a wider number of finalists, for example 3 to 5 or 5 to 7 people, depending on the size of the company or the interest in the position;
- public hearing - a public hearing can offer a space where the quality of candidates can be realistically and thoroughly checked; but in order for this to happen, several preconditions should be met: the professional public ought to be invited, the members of the commission should be prepared and sufficient time should be left for a hearing (Nechala, 2015).

The average number of jobs in LAG member local governments in 2014-2017 was 11, while at the same time the municipalities organized an average of 2 competitions. That means that every year, a fifth of all job positions were filled in local governments through tenders.

Graph 1 Average number of tenders and job positions (data in%)



Source: authors' questionnaire survey.

The majority of respondents among the inhabitants of member municipalities had confidence in transparent selection procedures. The participants in the tenders had even more significant confidence in the fair selection procedure of the municipality.

Table 1 Number of tenders

No. of tenders	share of municipalities
0 - 2	81,20%
3 - 4	6,30%
5 - 14	9,40%
15 - more	3,10%

Source: authors' questionnaire survey.

Table 2 Number of candidates in tenders

No. of candidates	share of municipalities
none	15,60%
1 - 3	43,70%
4 - 6	27,10%
7 - 10	8,30%
11 - 15	5,20%

Source: authors' questionnaire survey.

Table 3 Confidence in the transparency of tenders public candidates in tenders

definitely yes	18%	42,11%
rather yes	33,16%	28,95%
do not know	33,16%	7,89%
rather no	11,82%	15,79%
definitely no	3,42%	5,26%

Source: authors' questionnaire survey.

### 3 PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Just as well-written legislation plays an important role in public procurement, so does ethics. In our opinion, it is the duty of state and local government employees who deal with public procurement to act in the public interest. This means that they should act so that the procured services, goods or labor fulfill their purpose and satisfy public needs, while being of high quality and economical. For this they should rationally use both public procurement methods and the operation of the market (Vlach - Nemeč, 2003).

In addition to defending the public interest, these persons are also required to be qualified. It is necessary for public procurement personnel to be trained, understand the applicable legislation as well as instructions on how to prepare procurement documents and bids. They need to know how to open and evaluate offers, how to conclude contracts, manage records, how to publish criteria and their importance. It is important that there is a system that allows for the training and education of public procurement staff. Employees must be adequately evaluated for their performance and motivated by the possibility of career growth (Vlach - Nemeč, 2003).

There is a set of phenomena that can be described as corrupt behavior. This includes e.g. accepting or giving a bribe, clientelism, nepotism or embezzlement. In addition, there are differences between countries in what is acceptable in public life and what is not. Another problem with the definition concerns the difference in how the legal order defines corruption and how it is understood by the public (Sičáková-Beblavá - Beblavý, 2007).

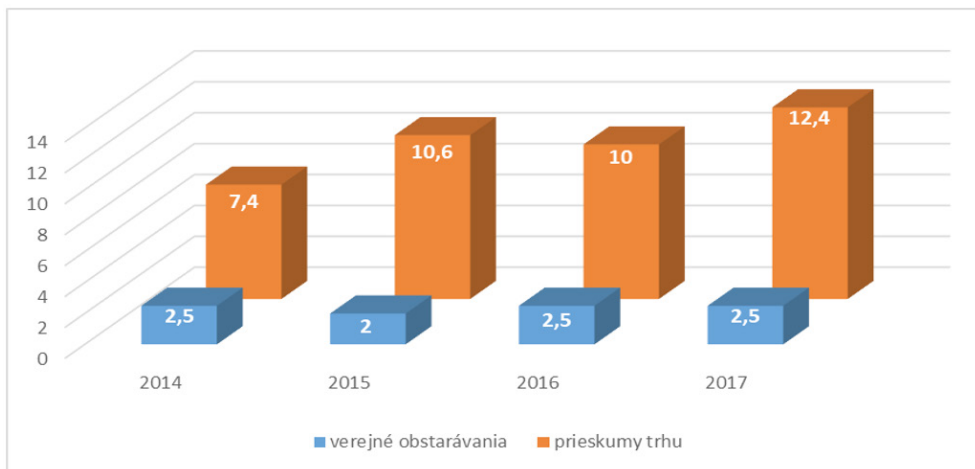
The definition of corruption can be found in the Strategic Plan for the Fight against Corruption in the Slovak Republic: "Corruption can be a promise, offer or grant of a bribe to influence someone's actions or decisions, or a request for a bribe or its acceptance." However, a bribe can take a form other than cash. It can be the provision of a gift, service, information or advantageous position, not only in relation to the person receiving the bribe, but e.g. in relation to a family member or acquaintance of that person. It should be noted here that corruption

is a broader concept than bribery. (Strategický plán boja proti korupciám v SR, 2011).

The simplest definition of corruption says that “corruption is the abuse of power over someone else’s entrusted property or rights in order to obtain personal, private benefits (not only for oneself, but also for relatives or acquaintances.)” (Strategický plán boja proti korupciám v SR, 2011). Criminal Act No. 300/2005 Coll. as amended, classifies accepting a bribe, bribery and indirect corruption as corruption offenses. The issue of accepting a bribe in the field of public procurement is dealt with in paragraph 1 § 329, which states: “Anyone who, in connection with the procurement of a matter of general interest, directly or through an intermediary, provides, offers or promises a bribe, or for that reason provides, offers or promises a bribe to another person shall be punished by imprisonment for six months to three years.” (Vlach - Nemeč, 2001).

Municipalities and cities obtain the goods and services necessary for their operation through public procurement and market research. In practice, these can be demanding processes, especially with regard to obtaining price offers from potential suppliers, administrative complexity, insufficient staff coverage and, in some cases for breach of conditions by suppliers. Market research, being the less administratively demanding process, was clearly more preferred by municipalities and cities.

Graph 2 Average number of public procurement and market surveys



Source: authors’ questionnaire survey.



Table 4 Cases of public procurement cases of public procurement share

none	21,90%
one	15,60%
2 - 5	25%
6 - 10	28,10%
11 - 20	6,30%
21 - 32	3,10%

Source: authors' questionnaire survey.

Table 5 Number of participants in public procurement no. of participants in public procurement share

none	21,90%
one	3,10%
2 - 5	62,50%
6 - 10	12,50%

Source: authors' questionnaire survey.

Table 6 Number of market surveys no. of market surveys share

none	6,30%
1 - 10	28,10%
11 - 20	12,50%
21 - 30	6,30%
31 - 40	19,40%
41 and more	27,40%

Source: authors' questionnaire survey.

Respondents in the research among the public assessed the transparency of public procurement with restraint. The answer “I don't know” was chosen by the largest part of the respondents - almost 2/5 of all respondents. The second largest group - almost a third - expressed moderate confidence in the form of a “rather yes” answer. Overall, only one in ten residents surveyed did not have confidence in the fair organization of public procurement. A more critical attitude was found among public procurement participants - a group of respondents who did not trust the transparency of public procurement was significantly represented here - a total of almost 40%.



Table 7 Public confidence in the transparency of public procurement public participants in PP

definitely yes	21,84%	29,41%
rather yes	31,05%	23,53%
do not know	36,59%	5,89%
rather no	7,63%	29,41%
definitely no	2,89%	11,76%

Source: authors' questionnaire survey.

#### 4 EUROPEAN UNION GRANTS

By joining the European Union, the Slovak Republic obtained, among other things, the right to draw funds from the structural funds of the European Union, the so-called European funds, which aim i.a. to overcome inequalities between economically stronger and weaker regions within the European Union. The European Union's Structural Funds thus mean an opportunity for economically weaker regions to reach the level of other regions, or to significantly accelerate the development process. (Babitzet, 2006)

Thus, European funds make it possible to redistribute the resources of economically stronger states for the development of weaker states and to bring them closer to developed European states. The funds serve primarily to ensure an increase in a country's performance in various areas, living standards of the population, sustainable economic growth and to reduce regional disparities. The basic feature of funds is helping weaker partners, which in turn benefits the developed Union as a whole. To illustrate, we could mention that in the programming period 2007-2013, the European Union approved support for Slovakia of almost 11.5 billion euros (<http://itretisektor.sk/>, February 11, 2015). According to the national strategic reference framework of the Slovak Republic, the condition for the use of funds is compliance with four basic principles:

- the principle of concentration (support is aimed at defining clear priorities);
- the principle of programming (projects are part of strategic plans);
- the principle of partnership;
- the principle of complementarity - funding from the funds should be appropriately complemented by Member States' financial resources and should not replace them (<http://www.nsrr.sk>, February 11, 2015).

Applicants will encounter the first problems immediately when preparing and submitting an application for a non-repayable financial contribution. The application is prepared according to the rules set out in the Call for Proposals, which is announced by the Ministry as a managing authority or an intermediary

body of the managing authority, which is often an agency entrusted by the Ministry.

The call itself is usually brief, but refers to other extensive documents, typically the Applicant's Guide, application form and support forms, but also to the master documents agreed with the European Commission, which describe the rules and limits of each call.

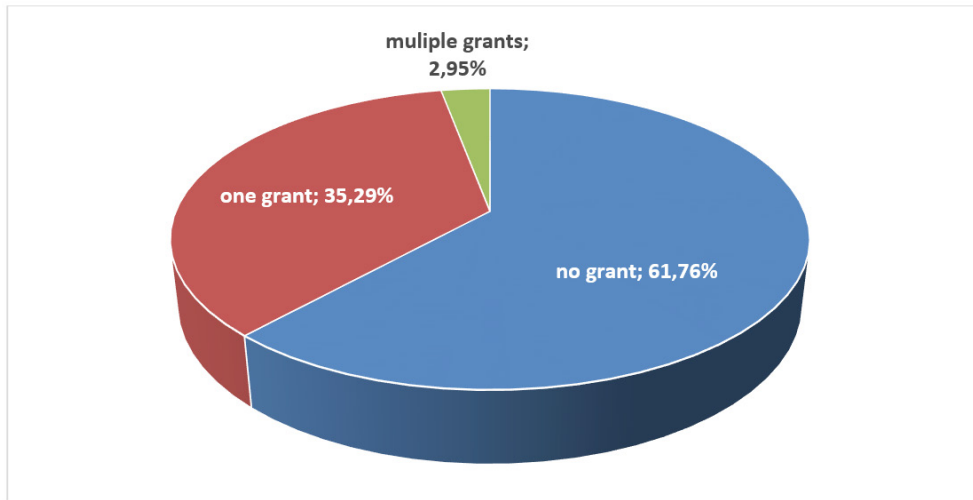
Due to the large size of the documents and the fact that many people from several departments are involved in their processing, there are often discrepancies between the documents. These are solved either by changing a document (which can be very unpleasant if this change affects the ability to submit a project according to plan), or increasingly by the so-called interpretation of the document in the FAQ section which is in conflict with the wording of the document. It is also a problem to get answers to questions about unclear parts of the call - officials do not dare to define the interpretation, so the answers are vague and consist of quotes from existing documents.

After the submission of the project, the phase of formal evaluation begins. Many conflict situations arise here because projects are excluded from evaluation due to errors that either do not meet the definition of an error (for example, an assessment if the project binding is appropriate) or are absolutely marginal in relation to project content (unreadable year at signature date). Inspectors do not follow the legal principle of the obligation to assess documents by content and not by form, and so it sometimes happens that more than half of the applications submitted do not pass formal control.

After successfully overcoming the formal pitfalls, the phase of professional evaluation of the project begins. Expert evaluation is becoming one of the key points of the process, in which experts selected from the list of evaluators participate. The list of evaluators is created at the request of the managing authority and experts meeting the criteria may apply to it. NGOs have the opportunity to monitor the selection process through their experts in these evaluation teams.

More than 2/5 of the member municipalities and cities of our local action groups in the years 2014 - 2017 did not draw any support from EU funds. One third of the surveyed municipalities received one grant and only 6% of municipalities and cities received multiple EU grants at the same time. In further research, the circumstances of the observed ratio should be investigated. Hypothetically, these reasons could be drawing of funds in the previous time or different source of funding, e.g. investment. At the same time, it could be ascertained whether municipalities are able to cope administratively and professionally with the processes of acquiring European funds.

Graph 3 Ratio of municipalities and drawing of EU funds



Source: authors' questionnaire survey.

Table 8 Average number of grants from EU funds and their average value  
average number of grants per municipality value in €

2014	0,5	341 993,30 €
2015	0,9	106 727,95 €
2016	0,6	93 458,95 €
2017	0,7	120 650,76 €

Source: authors' questionnaire survey.

## 5 COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE WORK OF SELF-GOVERNING AUTHORITIES

It is clear from the wording of the Act on Complaints that a submission must always be assessed on its own merits. It is not a decisive criterion if a submission is designated as a complaint, instead the content of the submission of a natural or legal person is essential. Therefore, the public administration body to which the submission was delivered must first assess whether the submission can be legally qualified as a positively or negatively defined complaint pursuant to § 3 or § 4 of Act no. 9/2010 Coll. on complaints.

If the submission is not a complaint, the public administration body shall return this submission to the person who submitted it, immediately after finding out that it is not a complaint, but no later than within 30 working days from its delivery, stating the reason. Such a submission will not be returned by the

public administration body if it is competent to handle it according to another legal regulation.

A complaint is such a submission in which the complainant asserts his rights which concern him personally or interests which he considers to have been infringed by the action or inaction of a public authority. Violation of these rights arises as a result of the failure of the supervision or oversight of a public authority. The complainant points to the deficiencies, asks the public administration body to rectify them and to derive specific responsibility for the identified deficiencies.

At the same time, however, the second condition must be met as well. It is stated in § 3 par. b) of the Act on Complaints and says that the complainant must point out specific deficiencies and errors, especially violations of legal regulations, the elimination of which is within the competence of a public administration body.

The provisions of the Act on Complaints precisely define the scope of this Act, according to which natural or legal persons may file a complaint. In this legal regulation, the concepts of natural and legal persons are based on the Civil Code, as amended.

A natural person is every person as a natural bearer of rights and obligations. The ability of a natural person to have rights and obligations arises at birth. The ability of a natural person to acquire rights and assume obligations through his / her own legal acts (legal capacity) arises in full upon coming of age.

Legal persons are associations of natural or legal persons, special-purpose associations of property, units of territorial self-government and other entities defined by law.

The subject of the right to lodge complaints are all persons if they have the legal capacity to acquire rights and assume obligations by their own actions. The Complaints Act grants such a right to lodge complaints to natural persons, but also to legal persons.

When lodging a complaint, the complainant may choose a representative to lodge the complaint on his behalf. However, the complaint must include an officially certified power of attorney to represent the complainant in lodging the complaint and in actions related to the handling of the complaint. A natural or legal person has the right to lodge a complaint and specifically to point out deficiencies, to request an investigation and to remedy the deficiency, without making the complaint an incentive or reason to draw consequences that would cause any harm to the complainant. The public authority is also obliged to keep the identity of the complainant secret if the complainant so requests.

Any public authority is obliged to accept a complaint. Where a complaint has been received by a public authority which is not competent to deal with it, it

is the duty of this public authority to forward the complaint no later than within ten working days from the delivery to the body responsible for handling it. In this case, the public authority is obliged to notify the complainant of the referral of the complaint.

When receiving complaints by public authorities, it is necessary to keep a separate, central register of complaints, which is separate from the register of other documents. Such records enable quick orientation in the mutual cooperation of public administration bodies. It is necessary that all submissions that meet the requirements of a complaint under the Act on Complaints are duly registered. It must be clear from the records who filed the complaint, when it was delivered to the competent public administration body. A repeated complaint and further repeated complaint shall be recorded in the year in which it was received, and the note shall state the number of the complaint to which it relates. Each complaint must be assigned a registration number.

In the member municipalities and cities of the studied local action groups, we found high satisfaction with the performance of the local government representatives. In the years 2014 – 2017, complaints were filed in just one municipality - 2 complaints against the mayor and 2 complaints against the chief inspector. Residents had several options to lodge complaints against the mayor, the chief inspector of the municipality or municipal deputies - in writing, in person, by telephone or by e-mail. Among responses from municipalities there were also included ones such as “legally” and “anonymously”. However, more than a third of municipalities and cities did not answer the question asked.

## 6 POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF POPULATION

Democracy has been divided into two forms during its historical development - direct democracy and representative democracy. While in the first form the decisions depend on the vote of the citizen through a referendum, he thus enters the decision-making process directly, in the second form the citizen participates in the administration through the representative he has elected. Representative democracy now addresses most public issues, with citizens expressing their sympathy for certain representatives on the basis of their vote. The elected representatives then decide on public affairs in the interests of the citizens.

Public administration in municipalities is exposed to the control of citizens, through evaluations, observations and inspections. It is not just institutions that have the opportunity to participate in the administration of public affairs. The non-institutionalized form of control is also verified and effective: public discussion of problems, activities of civic associations, activities of non-governmental organizations and the pressure of public opinion (Machajová,

2000). Citizens demonstrate and exercise their right to participate in public events in the municipality by these various means of public administration control. In this way they express the need to co-decide on important issues concerning their lives. Participation is a direct testimony that citizens care about the direction society will take. Public control of the public administration underlines the need of the individual to participate in public life and also reflects his expectations towards the development of civil society.

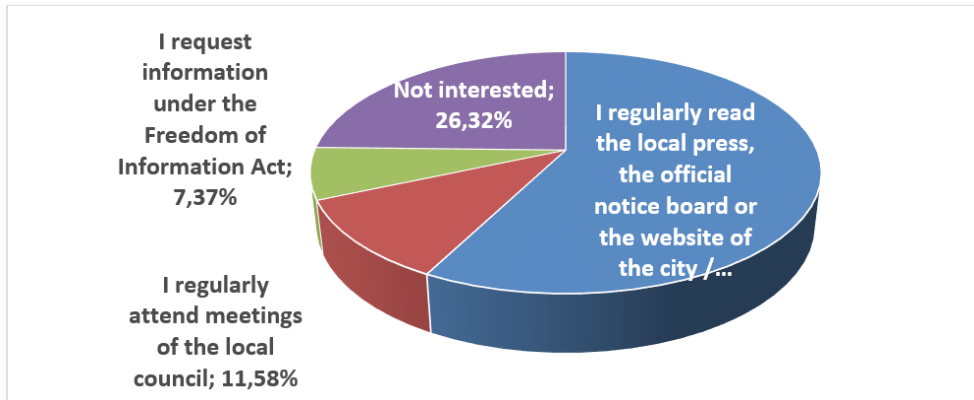
In an environment of self-government, participation is based mainly on a plurality of political and social interests. The participation of citizens in the management of the municipality is underlined by cooperation with self-government entities. The state administration recognizes certain tasks of self-government entities and therefore they become public entities (Škultéty, 2008). Local administration can be defined as the administration and organization of things that are not controlled by the state. It handles matters at its own risk. It is governed by the laws and regulations, which are managing the implementation of its administration. Self-government can be divided into two parts - territorial and interest self-government. The relationship of the citizen to these two forms of organization of public affairs of the municipality is different. "While in local - territorial self-government he is automatically included in this system according to the place of residence (the intensity of his actual participation in self - government is left to his will), he enters the system of interest self-government of his own choice - voluntarily." (Škultéty, 2008).

The extent to which an individual engages in self-governing life and participates in governance is based on his own decision, while this decision defines the basis of civil society. Interest groups formed on the basis of the right of association participate, to a greater or lesser extent, in the administration and organization not only of political life but also of civil society. Citizens' associations include, for example: unions, clubs, guilds, civic associations and others (Škultéty, 2008).

Within the territorial self-government, the inhabitant of the municipality has the right to participate in its management. He has the right to vote, to participate in public meetings, to participate in referendums, to submit suggestions and complaints. At the same time, residents manifest their right to participate in the management of the municipality as a citizen also through voting.

According to the respondents' answers to the question in the part of the research on the evaluation of transparency by the public - specifically in what way are the inhabitants of municipalities and cities taking interest in public events, almost 12% of respondents declared that they regularly participate in council meetings.

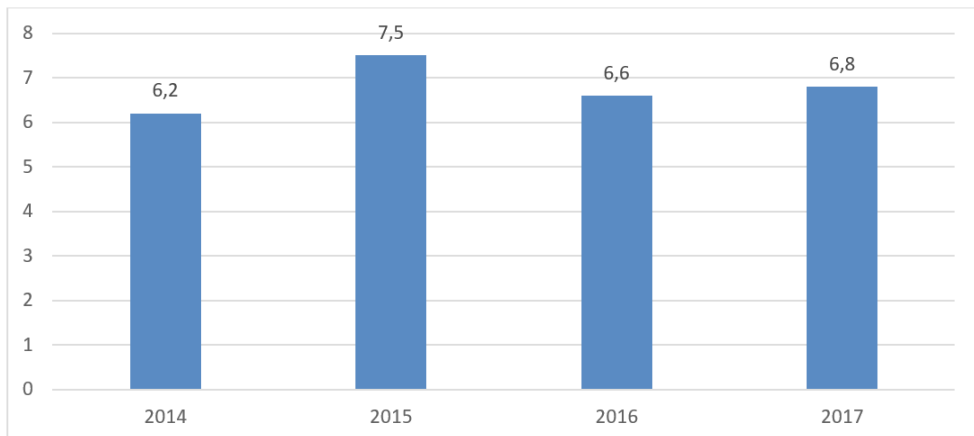
Graph 4 Forms of public interest in public events



Source: authors' questionnaire survey.

However, this statement of the respondents does not correspond to the number of registered participants by municipality in the graph below. If the answers of the respondents were correct, the number of participants in the councils would have to be clearly higher.

Graph 5 Number of participants in council and commission meetings



Source: information requested from local governments.

## 7 CONCLUSION AND SWOT ANALYSIS

Local self-governments associated in the local action groups Strážovské vrchy, Naše Považie and Inovec were evaluated in terms of transparency in the organization of tenders, organization of public procurement and market research, drawing European Union funds, receiving complaints against local



government officials and publishing the content of council meetings. The research also sought to identify the degree of authentic public interest in what is happening in the local political life of its own municipalities and cities.

Given the average number of local government employees, the number of tenders was adequate. Every year, local governments organized an average of one or two tenders, filling a fifth of the jobs. Public confidence in the transparency of tenders is high. The majority of the public trusts the job positions to be fairly filled. Confidence in the transparent selection of local government employees is even higher among their participants.

According to the respondents, public procurement is also organized transparently. However, among the public procurement participants, the view that procurement processes were rather unfair was relatively more prominent. On the part of local governments, opinions were expressed that public procurement is a demanding administrative process at the end of which they procure for themselves goods and services that do not necessarily have to be delivered in the required quality.

Complaints about the performance of self-governing functions were marginal. They occurred in only one municipality. Almost all municipalities were able to receive complaints against their officials by all existing means. These circumstances also supported a generally high level of public confidence in local governments. There were also no criminal prosecutions or offenses against local government representatives in the surveyed municipalities.

Part of the transparent behavior of the municipalities and cities represented in the local action groups was the proper publication of the minutes of the local council meetings. The scope of the information may be questionable. The most transparent way of publishing this type of information is to publish unabridged videos, which allows the public to form the most comprehensive opinion on the decisions of elected representatives.

When comparing the opinions and experiences of the public on corruption in public life, almost the same areas were identified as affected by corruption in both categories. In both cases, these were law enforcement agencies - the police, the prosecutor's office and the judiciary; healthcare, education and sport. The view of corrupt practices in the field of the media was uncommon. Here, however, a comparison of opinions and experiences indicated that the respondents tended not to trust the media as such and did not directly indicate their corrupt behavior. The key element in this investigation can be that the rating of local governments, according to the degree of transparency, expresses a high level of trust in the management of municipalities and cities.

In our research of transparency and reduction of corruption in public administration, the public has declared its interest in local politics, but e.g. according to the responses of local governments on participation in the meetings

of local councils, the participation of citizens was significantly lower. The real interest in local events in the bodies of cities and municipalities was lower than the respondents declared. This current phenomenon may secondarily express the absence of major transparency problems in municipalities and cities that are members of the local action groups Strážovské vrchy, Naše Považie and Inovec.

Table 9 Swot analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• relatively high rate of the number of tenders compared to the number of employees</li> <li>• preference for market research over public procurement</li> <li>• almost zero number of complaints against local government officials</li> <li>• publication of records of local government meetings</li> <li>• high level of confidence in the transparency of local governments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number of tender participants</li> <li>• critical evaluation of public procurement by participants</li> <li>• some local governments approach the possibility of filing complaints formally</li> <li>• the operation of some council committees is formal</li> <li>• public opinion on corruption is generally worse than is its experience with it</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appropriate selection of local government employees will enable quality performance of self-government services</li> <li>• local governments and their professional associations should put pressure on changes in the relevant legislation</li> <li>• the low number of complaints will allow for the smooth development of local governments</li> <li>• building of trust between the political leadership of local governments and the local public</li> <li>• strengthening of public confidence in democratic processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a higher number of participants in tenders would enable a better selection of local government employees</li> <li>• questioning the legitimacy of responsible officials</li> <li>• incorrect approach to complaints will reduce the voter support of the local government representatives concerned</li> <li>• formalism in self-governing processes reduces the attractiveness of political life in municipalities and cities</li> <li>• a critical perception of corruption can be part of the general radicalization of society</li> </ul>

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