



March 9th 2018

Object: Letter of Interest for OGP Subnational Government Program

To the members of the Steering Committee

As elected mayor of the largest city after Bucharest, the capital of Romania, I firmly support the governance measures of the OGP Action Plan and, generally, any measure to improve local public governance. From the first day of my mandate as interim mayor (May 25th, 2015), and especially after I was elected to this position by the citizens of Iași, the activity of Iași City Hall in this sector was relaunched, and the capacity of the municipality to launch and support gender projects has returned to normal.

Since the above-mentioned date, we have encouraged the City Hall's opening policy towards the citizens of Iași and civil society, but also towards the business environment, which has found in us a constant and honest partner.

All this time, our city has become more opened for our friends abroad, and this has been reflected both in the increased number of tourists as in the significant number of ambassadors and other guests from abroad willing to know more about our city.

TRANSPARENCY

In terms of transparency, we continued the policy of opening the City Hall towards the citizens of Iași and Iași civil society, we continued to communicate fairly and directly with the citizens of Iași and with mass-media and we remained a dedicated and open partner for the other state or non-governmental institutions in the city and in the country. For an even more effective interaction with the citizens, in the new City Hall's organizational chart, approved on April 11th, 2017, we created the Public Relations and Decisional Transparency Division.

In addition, both in the electronic and print media, the citizens of Iași have access to the main documents regarding Iași Municipality.

A summary of the decisions taken over the year is presented yearly in the Mayor's Report, which is brought up to the public by the Mayor in a special meeting of the Local Council of Iași. Therefore, any information of public interest may also be requested from the Citizens Information Center of the City Hall and from the five District Centers subordinated to the municipality.

APPLICATIONS

Iași City Hall has prepared the launch of several tools, including electronic, especially dedicated to improve the dialogue with the citizens of Iași. Thus, at the beginning of this year, the "Iași Official App" application was launched, a facility for both tourists and locals, promoting the City of Iași. The process of diversifying of the communication services for citizens has continued, so another application has just been released: "Iași City Report" available for smartphone or tablet. This allows the community minded citizens to submit various observations and complaints to the City Hall of Iași, but also to the local public services: Public Transport Company, Iași Local Police, Salubris SA, Public Services SA, EcoPiața SA, Veolia Energie Iași SA. The transmitted alerts may be accompanied by photos, GPS description and localization, in order to give the authorities an accurate identification of the location where the problems occur.

PAYMENT OF ONLINE FEES

The City Hall of Iași also provides to the citizens of Iași an easy and modern way to pay the local taxes and duties, as well as other obligations to the local and central budget. Thus, besides the possibility of payments to the Citizens Information Center headquarter and at the district centers, taxpayers can pay



their taxes and fees online by accessing the www.ghiseul.ro or eTax website (the site for paying local taxes and fees) on the internet: <https://dfpl.primaria-iasi.ro>. The Iasi municipality has implemented the online payment system for local taxes, available at <https://dfpl.primaria-iasi.ro>, since 2003. In addition, since 2016, an online module for bailiffs has been implemented, and the citizens of Iasi have the opportunity to check online the state of solving of their petitions.

NEWS IN THE ELECTRONIC ENVIRONMENT

In 2016, a new visual identity was created and implemented on the website of the municipality: www.primaria-iasi.ro, adapted to the requirements of modern communication technology. In fact, all Local Council Decisions and communications are published on both the City Hall's e-mail and in the official Facebook page of Iasi City hall. At the same time, "Curierul de Iasi", City Hall's municipal newsletter, through the electronic page, the Facebook page and the print version, bring to the public opinion the information about and from Iasi City Hall. A communication and information tool is also the City Hall's Youtube Channel, through which the Local Council meetings, as well as the main press conferences of the municipality and civil society events are broadcast.

DEBATES **BUDGET**

We have consistently consulted the citizens of Iasi in important issues for the entire community. Thus, in 2017 we organized the largest public debate campaign concerning the Iasi budget. The actions continued this year. The General Budget of Iasi Municipality for 2018 was unanimously approved by the Local Council, in an extraordinary session on Monday, February 19th. The document, which was also drafted on the basis of more than 4,000 proposals from citizens and five public debates held the previous weeks at the Roznovanu Palace, was debated for over two hours.

REPLANTING THE LINDEN TREES

In addition to the debates of the local budget, the Iasi municipality has held many other debates. Among the first such large-scale events was the decision to re-plant the trees in the central area of the city. The debate took place in 2015 and was organized alongside the members of the civic group "Iașul iubeste teii". On this occasion, 14,244 people signed the written petition for the re-planting of limes. Also, a similar petition, but in the online environment, was signed by about 8,000 people. The decision, which was almost unanimous in favour of replanting, was implemented by Iasi City Hall.

THE SUSTAINABLE URBAN MOBILITY PLAN

Two years ago, the citizens of Iasi could debate the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (PMUD), a strategic plan setting out the key projects to be deployed over the next 15 years for durable and sustainable transport in Iasi. The Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan outlines strategies, policy initiatives, key projects and priorities for sustainable transport that will support socially sustainable economic growth and environmental protection in the growth pole of Iasi, 13 communes and 5 communes with the title of observer member in the Iasi Metropolitan Area. Among other objectives, PMUD will pursue the implementation of projects to ensure integrated, efficient and accessible public transport, encouraging cycling, improving safety and environmental conditions.

INTEGRATED URBAN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

In May-June 2017, all residents of Iași Municipality were invited to contribute with opinions on the development of the city. The call was launched by the City Hall's leadership, the public consultation being part of a broad public consultation campaign. The topic under discussion was the Integrated Urban Development Strategy of Iași Municipality 2015-2030, which prioritized a portfolio of projects worth almost 300 million euros which targeted all areas of public interest. On this occasion, we invited all citizens of Iasi to express their views on the development of the city by completing the available



questionnaires at the district centers, the Citizens Information Center headquarter and at the specially located tents in the neighborhoods. The thoughts of the citizens of Iași came to us and we took them into account.

GENERAL URBAN PLAN

On April 17th 2018, the public debate session of the new General Urban Plan (PUG) of Iași Municipality will be held, a strategic document for the development of the city, which regulates the organization of the street network, the architectural-urban planning, the land use, the development of the urban infrastructure, the legal status and transfer of the land and the protection of historical monuments. At the same meeting, the Environmental Report for this important document will be discussed.

COLLABORATION WITH NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Over the past two years, the services in the municipality of Iași have supported a number of innovative approaches concerning the local public policies. Thus, on the basis of the Grant Regulation of civil society projects (Law 350/2005), the Iași Municipality continued its second year of financing of the civil society domains.

Thus, in 2017, the Iași City Hall financed 5 projects in the field of written culture, 5 projects in the field of culture and 14 projects in the field of youth. With 1 million lei allocated in 2016, Iași was the first city in Romania in allocating funds for youth activities, and for 2017 it retained the same budget allocation of 1,000,000 lei. In fact, Iași has permanently supported the educational, cultural and social projects of non-governmental organizations. A special attention is also paying for the he Civil Society at "Seara Valorilor", an event dedicated to the celebration of the personalities who contributed to Iași, in a dedicated special section.

Also in 2017 we launched the methodology adopted in the previous year to support non-governmental organizations in accessing European funds by covering up to 50% of the co-financing of the applicant to the donor by the Local Council. In the same year, Iași continued to implement multiannual projects, thus improving the impact of social, cultural and youth interventions (15 projects). In addition, it amended and supplemented the composition of the specialized commissions evaluating the projects on the basis of the financing of Law 350/2005 with local councilors, specialists of the institution, and external experts. In the same year, Iași became a genuine center of youth and orthodoxy, hosting the Orthodox Youth Meeting in Romania, attended by more than 3,000 young people from over 20 countries. In addition, the Advisory Council on Youth Issues, a structure of the young people affiliated to the Local Council of Iași.

It is also worth mentioning that almost two years ago, Iași became the Pilot Center for the development of public policy in the social field due to approval in the Local Council of the Regulation of Social Services Contracting, a unique initiative at national level. The Iași good practice model was spreaded at the national level through the international conference "Contracting social services provided by NGOs in the European Union" (March 16th, 2017), organized by the Federation of Nongovernmental Organizations for Social Services.

FINANCING LINE FOR TRANSPARENT GOVERNANCE

At the same time, this year, on March the 9th, took place the public debate on the draft decision regarding the approval of the Regulation for the financing of the civil society projects in Iași based on the Law 350/2005 regarding the non-reimbursable financing from public funds allocated for non-profit activities of general interest. Under this regulation, a new financing line for non-governmental organizations was opened for the first time in Romania: for transparent and participatory governance

INTERNSHIP

As for internships, things have advanced accordingly in Iași. Thus, between June 26th and July 6th, 2017, ten students and master students participated in an internship at the City Hall. They had the opportunity to understand how the main city management institution works and to acquire practical



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knowledge in the field of public administration. The project was carried out in partnership with CIVICA Association.

At the same time, dozens of students regularly participate in internship programs at the City Hall. These are realized in collaboration with several faculties in this field, especially those from the "Al. I. Cuza ", given its specificity.

CONSULTATIONS

At the beginning of this year, Iasi City Hall invited the citizens to evaluate the quality of the services offered by the municipality. Having at their disposal the www.mairesponsabili.ro platform and with the support of the Center for Public Innovation and CIVICA, the municipality wanted to figure out how satisfied citizens are with the public services and, from here, to improve and develop the working procedures in order to meet the citizens' needs. The whole process will take half-year. The project is implemented by the Center for Public Innovation and implemented with the financial support of the Civic Innovation Fund, a program developed by the Foundation for Civil Society Development in partnership with the Romanian-American Foundation, supported by Enel Romania and Raiffeisen Bank.

VOLUNTEERING

Every year the municipality is overwhelmed with volunteers. Certainly the most appreciated by them is the International Education Festival (FIE). At the same time, many other events organized by the City Hall or to which the City Hall is a partner include volunteers. Testimony is "Marsul Absolventilor", a true students' feast, "Sarbatorile Iasului", or the International Literary and Translation Festival (FILIT). As a very special event, I am mentioning "Ziua lei", organized on June 24th, which gathered nearly 12,000 people and which definitely would not have become a success without the volunteers' help.

Actions organized together with volunteers will continue. Thus, on April 21st-25th, the Iasi City Hall and the public universities in Iasi will have a joint action in order to promote the educational offer to the pupils from all over the country. Each university will hold its own events and presentations, and organized groups of students who wish to visit Iasi University Center during the mentioned period will be able to travel free of charge through Iasi on the "University Road" with the help of the public transport. In each station, volunteer university students will direct students to the headquarters of the higher education institutions.

CONCLUSION

We believe that through all the above mentioned we have positively started to prove that Iasi City Hall is opened to the citizens. As a local entity, we are aware of our duty to be much closer to the people and the direct impact that our work has on citizens's everyday lives. As a result we consider that we must strongly commit to protecting civic space and engaging constructively with citizens outside government. Also, we are very open to share our experiences and contribute to the development of a peer learning & networking community.

As a consequence and proof of our long term commitment to the values and principles of OGP, we are very interested to join the first cohort participants and have the opportunity to receive assistance and guidance from the Support Unit and Steering Committee in order to co-create and implement the local action plan together with our civil society partners.

Yours sincerely,

ROMANIA
Mayor of Iași
Mihai CHIRICA
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March '18

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