



## PUBLISHING INFORMATION ON THE PUBLIC SERVICE IN NORTH MACEDONIA: WHY IS TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IMPORTANT?

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Institutions are transparent when they enable stakeholders to understand and recognise that they operate honestly. With a view to achieving transparency, an institution must provide information about its activities to stakeholders that is accurate, complete, and made available in a timely fashion. Transparency ensures accountability. The 2019 OECD Recommendation of the Council on Public Service Leadership and Capability presents 14 principles of a fit-for-purpose public service.<sup>1</sup> It includes a principle related to developing “a long-term, strategic and systematic approach to people management based on evidence and inclusive planning that: is informed by evidence-based assessment of skills needed and skills available to meet current and future core business requirements, using HR and workforce data for strategic and predictive analytics, while taking all necessary steps to ensure data privacy”.<sup>2</sup>

In North Macedonia, the public has to be informed about official data and reports on the civil service and employees in the central state administration. This is a legal obligation deriving from the Law on Administrative Servants (LAS) and the Law on Public Sector Employees (LPSE). In the context of properly designing and implementing a human resource management (HRM) policy, it is of the foremost importance that in-line authorities possess complete and reliable data about their human resources.<sup>3</sup> This does not mean that all HRM information should be made publicly available, since there are certain types of information that may not be provided publicly, such as personal data. However, the lack of efforts for the promotion and dissemination of data on civil service may suggest that governments either do not recognise the importance of accountability, or that they are concerned about potential public reactions to what can be seen as oversized and inadequately efficient administrations.

1 Recommendation of the Council on OECD Legal Instruments Public Service Leadership and Capability, <https://www.oecd.org/gov/pem/recommendation-on-public-service-leadership-and-capability-en.pdf>

2 Ibid

3 Western Balkan PAR Monitor 2019/2020, <https://weber-new.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/23203507/Western-Balkans-PAR-Monitor-2019-2020.pdf>

The competence of the Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA), to establish and maintain a single Register of employees in public sector institutions is stipulated in the LPSE. The Register is created by filling in the Human Resources Management Information System (HRMIS), which contains the following data: name, date of birth, gender, incumbent position, education, and termination of employment. Regarding public service positions held, the HRMIS has the functionality to keep track of previous employees' jobs.<sup>4</sup> The HRMIS has the functionality for data entry for performance assessment results and disciplinary sanctions. However, although the system has various functionalities/modules, data have not been regularly entered and updated by institutions. The 2019 Report offers detailed information about the ethnic and gender structure of employees and presents crosscutting data where possible, per type of institution. Data on the ethnic structure are provided per institution of the central administration, as well. Data are not fully segregated, considering that data are not divided per rank and position.<sup>5</sup>

According to SIGMA/OECD, the HRMIS is still underperforming. It is very robust and complete on paper, but the database still lacks important data from various public bodies, despite the legal obligation to submit said data.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, the 2020 Annual Report<sup>7</sup> is only partially based on the central HRMIS and is mainly statistical and not analytical.<sup>8</sup> The current use of the system shows that, although data are collected by institutions, there is not yet a data-driven culture in the definition of the HR strategy, either at the central level or at public bodies themselves.<sup>9</sup>

In-line institutions for reporting about the public service policy are the Agency for Administration (AA) and the MISA. In its Annual Report, the AA reports on the following key issues: recruitments (job announcements, selection procedures and exams); disciplinary procedures and decisions; corruption/integrity issues and measures. It also contains information about activities for improvement of the work of the AA, measuring the service user satisfaction level, etc. On the other hand, according to the LAS, the MISA reports about assessments and trainings. The MISA is responsible for the Register of assessments and for providing generic trainings. However, the Annual Programme on generic trainings does not provide analytical data on delivered trainings (number of trained administrative servants, evaluation of the trainings, etc.), providing only information about the topics, the manner of conducting the training, categories of servants for which trainings are intended, time-period for conducting the training and budget. Furthermore, there is no Report about the implementation of the Annual Programme of Generic Trainings.<sup>10</sup>

Even though there is quite comprehensive reporting about the public service, there had been no publicly available reports about the entire public service policy for three consecutive years prior to the measurement, including for 2019. The reports do not include substantiated information concerning the quality and/or outcomes of the public service. In addition, there is no institution, which reports about issues, such as career development (promotions and demotions) and salaries. Reports about career development should be delivered by the AA and data on salaries should be reported by the Ministry of Finance.<sup>11</sup> These issues had not been addressed in the latest amendments of the LAS, which were published on the ENER on 17 September 2021.<sup>12</sup>

According to SIGMA/OECD, there has been a clear improvement in the quality of policy documents prepared by the MISA, as core documents concerning the HRM strategy of the civil service. The 2018-2022 Public Administration Reform Strategy is more precise and complete than the previous documents, encompassing milestones and targets, as well as deadlines and budgets. The document still lacks quantifiable targets and is not based on a quantitative analysis.

4 EPI, PAR Monitor for North Macedonia 2019/2020, [https://epi.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/National-Par-Monitor-Macedonia\\_Final\\_eng.pdf](https://epi.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/National-Par-Monitor-Macedonia_Final_eng.pdf)

5 Ibid

6 Sigma/OECD, The Principles of Public Administration, Republic of North Macedonia, November 2021 <http://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Monitoring-Report-2021-Republic-of-North-Macedonia.pdf>

7 Register of Public Employees

8 Sigma/OECD, The Principles of Public Administration, Republic of North Macedonia, November 2021 <http://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Monitoring-Report-2021-Republic-of-North-Macedonia.pdf>

9 Ibid

10 Ibid

11 EPI, PAR Monitor for North Macedonia 2019/2020, [https://epi.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/National-Par-Monitor-Macedonia\\_Final\\_eng.pdf](https://epi.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/National-Par-Monitor-Macedonia_Final_eng.pdf)

12 Ibid

## STATE OF PLAY IN REGIONAL TERMS

There have been efforts to develop the HRMIS in all administrations of the Region, yet they have shown differing rates of success.<sup>13</sup> No state administration in the Region has a completely developed system for collecting and monitoring Human Resource (HR) data. The currently operational HRMISs in Albania, Montenegro, and North Macedonia are assessed somewhat better than HRMISs in other regional countries.<sup>14</sup> However, data stored are incomplete and not entirely functional, which means that HRMISs (such as those in Albania and North Macedonia) do not enable generating quick reports on divisions of public servants (for instance, administrative bodies where they work, or by average salaries for different staff categories).<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, no administration in the Region has a fully established system for collecting and monitoring data on public service.<sup>16</sup> While Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have a centralised HR database at the state level and decentralised information was unavailable, HRMISs in Montenegro and Serbia lack interoperability and data are not regularly updated. Kosovo's administration did not provide data for assessment purposes and Albania and North Macedonia are assessed somewhat more positively, having invested efforts in developing reliable information systems, even though not yet complete and fully functional.<sup>17</sup>

As regards the issue of whether governments (or in-line institutions) regularly publish basic official data on the numbers of civil servants, best practices are observed in North Macedonia.<sup>18</sup> Namely, the MISA regularly publishes easily accessible, annual reports from the Register of Public Employees. Such data are also published by the Civil Service Agency in Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding state level institutions. Furthermore, Montenegro's administration publishes all requested data, but not regularly, with Kosovo and Serbia disclosing no cumulative numerical data on civil service, while Albania does publish certain types of information.<sup>19</sup> Out of the administrations that do publish data on their civil service, only Montenegro and North Macedonia include employees other than full-time civil servants. Also, there are no open data practices regarding civil service data, recorded in the Region.<sup>20</sup>

In the context of reporting practices on more specific areas, such as planning and recruitment, promotions, appraisals, disciplinary procedures, and integrity and anti-corruption measures, the situation is different. North Macedonia somewhat lags behind other public administrations in this regard, considering that the majority of reports on the said issues are either not adopted or published. Likewise, reports from Kosovo are not available. As for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia, reporting is moderately comprehensive with the report from Albania being available and covering almost all of the key issues although the information is of descriptive nature and lacks analysis.<sup>21</sup>

With regard to whether governments engage in any dissemination or promotion of data on civil service, only Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia appear to invest efforts in this area.<sup>22</sup> They promote data through ministries' websites and social media channels. Data on civil servants is not actively promoted in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, while in the case of Kosovo it was not possible to determine the presence of promotion efforts due to the dysfunctionality of the webpage of the ministry.

13 Ibid

14 Ibid

15 Western Balkan PAR Monitor 2019/2020, <https://weber-news3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/23203507/Western-Balkans-PAR-Monitor-2019-2020.pdf>

16 Ibid

17 Ibid

18 Ibid

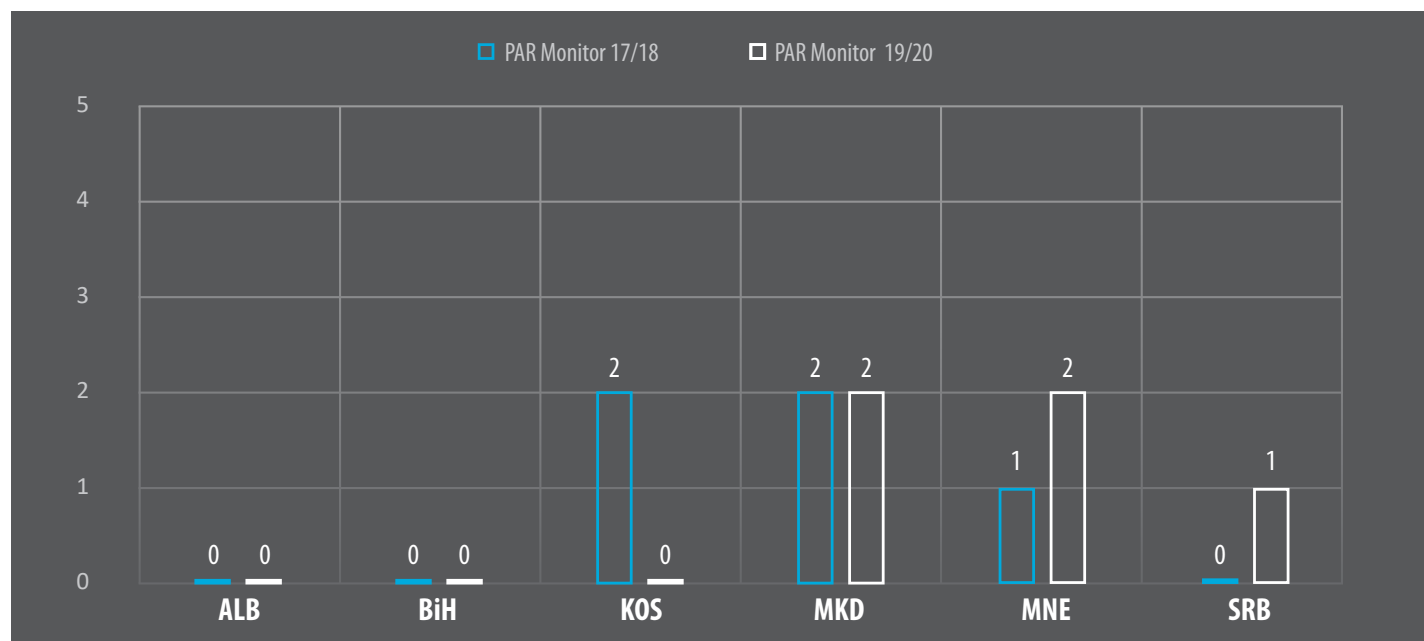
19 Ibid

20 Ibid

21 Ibid

22 Western Balkan PAR Monitor 2019/2020, <https://weber-news3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/23203507/Western-Balkans-PAR-Monitor-2019-2020.pdf>

## Public availability of official data and reports about the civil service and employees in central state administration



## RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS AREA

- » The MISA should continuously provide data on temporary employments, which should be contained in the Report on Public Employees and qualitative and comparative data that should be contained in reports developed in accordance with the LAS. It should also publish reports on career development (promotions and demotions) of public sector employees.
- » The Ministry of Finance should in short terms publish reports on salaries (and awarded bonuses) of public service employees.

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