

SAA Implementation at the Municipal Level

Achievements and challenges
in seven major municipalities



This publication is supported by the Democratic Society Promotion (DSP) Project - funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DANIDA) and managed by the Kosovo Civil Society Foundation (KCSF). The content of this publication is under the responsibility of GAP Institute and can in no way be considered as a standpoint of SDC, DANIDA or KCSF.

Executive Summary

Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA), ratified in Kosovo Assembly in November 2015 provides a range of objectives and reforms our country needs to undertake in order to integrate into European Union (EU). A number of these measures fall under the competence of Kosovo municipalities.

GAP Institute findings show that municipalities face expressed challenges in implementing their commitments related to this agreement. General assessment is that Regulation 08/2011 of the Office of Prime Minister, related to the role of municipal European integration offices, is not properly implemented. This Regulation provides that all municipalities should have a unique European integration structure that is not observed on ground. Some municipalities have only one integration officer, while others have European Integration offices or directorates. In addition, Regulation 08/2011 requires that municipal European integration officers 1) are represented on all regular meetings of the Board of Directors in the municipality, 2) take part in the development of municipal legal and strategic acts, 3) are included in budgetary plans and also 4) are consulted related to municipal work plans. GAP Institute findings show that none of these is respected by the municipalities.

One of the major achievements of municipalities related to the European Agenda includes specification of commitments of municipalities related to the SAA. In case of municipalities, SAA process is coordinated and managed by the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA). However, this Ministry doesn't conduct field assessments in order to verify whether the reports of municipal officers are full and accurate, but it takes into account written reports submitted by European integration officers to MLGA.

None of the European integration offices attended any trainings on application for EU funds dedicated to Kosovo. Not being able to apply for these funds, deprives municipalities of an opportunity to implement some of their plans. European integration offices have no access to municipal databases, in order to learn about trainings are attended by the staff and they have no information related to the number and nature of non-governmental organizations operating in relevant municipalities.

European integration offices in municipalities are also faced with the challenge of staff dismissal, damaging in the majority of cases the institutional memory related to implemented activities and future plans.

Municipal European integration officers held no meetings throughout the year with the Ministry of European Integration leadership (MEI). Local level contribution is not stressed and assessed by this Ministry, impacting thereby negatively motivation of these officers for the work they do.

Major achievements at the local level in terms of SAA implementation relate to founding and inclusion of minorities in community safety councils, implementation of legal obligations related to use of official languages, undertaking of personal data protection measures, recording of school dropout levels, elimination of illegal landfills from the populated areas and development of municipal energy efficiency plans, as another achievement.

However, major challenges faced by municipalities related to SAA implementation include public administration reform at the local level, cultural heritage protection, agricultural land and forest resources protection, implementation of auditor's recommendation and public health protection.

This report presents the achievements and challenges faced by municipalities in SAA implementation and it offers a range of recommendations with a view of empowering municipal European integration offices and addressing challenges faced by the local government in implementing criteria deriving from the European Agenda.

Introduction

By ratifying Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) by Kosovo Assembly, Kosovo has undertaken to fulfil all criteria stipulated therein. SAA is based on three pillars, namely political, economic and European standards. These three pillars are divided into ten chapters that affect the governance system in whole, including local governance as well. Pursuant to it, Kosovo is required to fulfil technical and legal conditions related to justice, security, energy, administration and public services. In addition, it requires inter-institutional coordination and cross-border cooperation, free and competitive market up to human and communities' rights, education reforms, strengthening and protection related to culture and addressing of social and urban issues.

At the national level, SAA criteria implementation is managed by the Ministry of European Integration (MEI), while the criteria under the competence of municipalities are managed by the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA). MEI develops National SAA Implementation Plan and it submits it to Kosovo Assembly for approval. This is a four year plan (2018-2022) that specifies strategic plans on steps to be undertaken at the institutional level in order to fulfil SAA provisions.

However, SAA fulfilment process itself is not time-bound. Taking into account the experience of other countries such as Albania, that signed the SAA in 2006, 12 years had to pass in order to get an opportunity to open negotiations (opening of 34 chapters) for EU membership¹. SAA criteria fulfilment process is conducted jointly between the signatory country and EU mechanisms.

In order to specify and focus on priorities deriving from the SAA, Kosovo and EU institutions developed a document known as European Reform Agenda (ERA). For this purpose, one-year priorities related to good governance and rule of law, competition and investment climate and employment were set.

2016 SAA Implementation National Plan shows that a range of criteria to be fulfilled fall under the competence of the local government. MLGA assumed the task of specifying these commitments and coordinating and managing the whole process at the local level. This survey was conducted by GAP Institute in seven Kosovo municipalities (Prishtinë/Priština, Prizren, Peja/Peć, Mitrovicë/a, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Gjakova/Đakovica, Ferizaj/Uroševac) in order to assess the responsibilities of municipalities in SAA implementation and in order to review achievements and challenges in this process.

¹ European movement in Albania. Membership of Albania into European Union. Background of relations. Reference: <https://bit.ly/2MrmvKh>

Methodology

While compiling this report, interviews with all European Integration Officers were held in seven major municipalities (Prishtinë/Priština, Prizren, Peja/Peć, Mitrovicë/a, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Gjakova/Đakovica and Ferizaj/Uroševac). MLGA high officials, Association of Kosovo Municipalities and European integration experts were also consulted and interviewed. Also, seven focus groups were held in seven Kosovo municipalities including municipal officials, Ministry of Local Government Administration officials, civil society, media and connoisseurs of local and European integration policies. Dozens of official documents received from municipalities, MLGA and MEI were used while drafting this paper.



Role of Municipalities in European Integration Process

Responsibility of municipalities in the European integration process is based on the national documents. Initially, in 2013 municipalities were included in repatriation of persons denied asylum in EU countries. This responsibility was transferred to them by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare². In 2015, municipalities took a role in fulfilling some conditions related to visa liberalization for Kosovo citizens that wish to travel to EU countries³. In parallel, municipalities received guidelines from MLGA and MEI related to their commitments deriving from annual findings published by the European Commission through its country report. On the other hand, in 2016, municipalities started addressing fulfilment of criteria deriving from the SAA⁴.

All Kosovo municipalities have operational European integration offices. These offices were established in 2008 after the closure of offices that had been working on standards before status⁵.

Up to 2011, role of these offices was unclear. Precisely at this time, Office of Prime Minister issued Regulation Nr. 08/2011 exclusively regulating duties to be assigned to municipal European integration offices⁶.

This Regulation specifies that European integration offices exist in all municipalities and are responsible to coordinate the process of developing regulative framework and municipal policies related to European integration process arising from both national and local strategic documents. In coordination with mayors and all other municipal decision-making structures, these offices take part in the development of municipal annual plan, in order to reflect priorities and objectives contained in the municipal strategic documents.

In addition, this Regulation tasks European integration offices with oversight of municipal legal acts and their compliance with EU directives. Also, these offices are responsible to build staff capacities related to European integration issues in cooperation with municipal personnel offices.

This Regulation does not specify the number of staff this office should have and also salary coefficient of European integration office officers and heads.

Although this regulation entered into force in 2011, municipalities took an active role related to European Agenda only in 2014. The reason behind it is that in 2013, MLGA established its European Integration Directorate in order to coordinate and manage European Agenda at the local level⁷.

In terms of criteria Kosovo had to fulfil for visa liberalization, some of them fall under responsibility and competence of the local level. Initial responsibilities of municipalities in this process related to updating of civil status data and making transparent municipal counters during the contact of citizens with these officers. Additional duties included provision of space for unhampered access of persons with disabilities to public facilities, opening of Ombudsperson Institution office in municipal premises, use of official languages in public documents, founding of local public safety councils and inclusion of minorities in these councils, strengthening of the role of municipalities in repatriation and reintegration process and facilitation of business registration. Apart from these obligations that are directly related to municipalities, the latter also had a limited responsibility to address issues of domestic violence, gender equality, child protection from heavy labour and issues related to fight against corruption and nepotism⁸.

2 Kosovo Government. Office of Prime Minister. National Strategy for Reintegration of Repatriated Persons. Pg 19 & 20. Reference: <https://bit.ly/20e62uR>

3 Ministry of Local Government Administration. Guidelines on role of municipalities in the European integration process. Pg 35. Reference: <https://bit.ly/20rZfPS>

4 Interview with Director of European integration Directorate in Ministry of Local Government Administration Shkelqim Jakupi.

5 Ibid

6 Kosovo Government. Office of Prime Minister. Regulation on organization and responsibilities of European Integration Offices. Regulation 08/2011. Entered into force 30.06.2011. Reference: <https://bit.ly/2PuKbQS>

7 Interview with Director of European Integration Directorate within the Ministry of Local Government Administration Shkelqim Jakupi

8 Ministry of Local Government Administration, Visa Liberalization Guidelines. Prishtinë, November 2013. Reference: <https://bit.ly/2LXN89D>

Tasks of Municipalities related to SAA Implementation

SAA does not specify institutions responsible to fulfil objectives provided therein⁹. This process is managed by MEI. This Ministry developed National SAA Implementation Plan (NSAAIP). Initially, this document was valid for one year only (2016), then it became a four year plan 2017-2021, however, due to some amendments and supplements it had to be returned to Kosovo Assembly for adoption and now NSAAIP is valid throughout 2018-2022¹⁰.

This plan stipulates responsibilities and duties of both levels of government, central and local. Then, on this basis, action plans, work plans and activity matrix are adopted. MLGA is responsible to prepare the matrix and action plan related to responsibilities of municipalities pertaining to SAA. This ministry plays an active role not only related to preparation of these documents, but also related to coordination and monitoring of the whole process of SAA implementation at the local level.

Based on the matrix of activities to be undertaken by municipalities in order to implement the SAA, prepared by the MLGA, municipalities have 146 specific objectives to be undertaken. These objectives are divided in three areas, political, economic and European standards¹¹.

Municipal Achievements related to Fulfilment of SAA Commitments

Kosovo is the only country in the region that included its EU integration aspirations in its Constitutional Preamble¹². This commitment encouraged institutions to establish different bodies and mechanisms in charge of fulfilling integration commitments. Kosovo has its Ministry of European Integration and every Kosovo Government ministry established its European Integration Department. Municipalities established Integration offices whereas Kosovo Assembly has its Assembly Committee on European Integration, Association of Kosovo Municipalities established its

European Integration Collegium, while Kosovo Presidency established its National European Integration Council.

Municipalities started working on objectives arising from the SAA by the second half of 2016. A special achievement includes specifying of commitments of every municipality individually in terms of SAA implementation. This process has been managed by the MLGA.

Another achievement related to this process at the local level includes periodic reports submitted by all municipalities to MLGA related to fulfilment of commitments from the SAA. During 2016 and 2017 reporting was done four times a year, while in 2018 changes have been made and now the municipalities report twice a year¹³. Since then, MLGA sends its overview of findings to Ministry of European Integration.

Opening of Ombudsperson Institution offices in municipal premises, facilitation of physical access to public facilities to persons with disabilities and provision of support to NGOs and other interest groups from the grants' budget are just some of other achievements of municipalities, in fulfilment of SAA commitments¹⁴.

In addition, seven major municipalities saw progress in founding and including minorities in community safety councils, implementation of legal provisions related to use of official languages, implementation of personal data protection measures, recording of school dropout levels, elimination of illegal landfills from the populated areas while another achievement includes development of municipal energy efficiency plans¹⁵.

Based on MLGA reports, approximately 70% of all criteria valid for municipalities related to SAA have been fulfilled. This assessment arises from the reports submitted to MLGA by municipalities themselves and is not based on MLGA assessment and monitoring from the ground¹⁶.

Establishment and operation of European Integration Collegium within Association of Kosovo Municipalities may be considered another achievement of this process. This Collegium meets up to six times per year and it discusses and presents concerns and joint requests of all municipal European integration officers. Thereafter, MLGA leadership addresses these issues with institutional decision-makers¹⁷.

9 Ministry of European Integration. Stabilization and Association Agreement. Reference: <https://bit.ly/2o3HqcY>

10 Ministry of European Integration. National SAA Implementation Plan 2018-2022. Reference: <https://bit.ly/2Px0ufZ>

11 Ministry of Local Government Administration. SAA Implementation Activity Matrix. See Annex 1

12 Republic of Kosovo Constitution. Preamble. Reference: <https://bit.ly/2N8dGxe>

13 Interview with Director of European Integration Directorate within the Ministry of Local Government Administration Shkelqim Jakupi.

14 Information from seven focus groups in seven major Kosovo municipalities.

15 Ibid

16 Ibid

17 Interview with Gani Berisha from Association of Kosovo Municipalities.

Municipal Challenges related to Fulfilment of SAA Commitments

Municipalities face a range of problems on their path towards fulfilment of commitments arising from country European agenda.

Despite the existence of a national regulation issued by Kosovo Government, Office of Prime Minister, that aims to regulate structure and competencies of municipalities related to European integrations, the situation on ground differs. Most of Kosovo municipalities have European integration offices, while others have only European integration officers (Prishtinë) and haven't established designated offices. In two municipalities (Peja/Peć and Mitrovica) European integration directorate was established, changing completely the structure of municipalities related to the European integration process at the local level¹⁸.

Another issue related to municipal European integration structure relates to salary coefficients. In some cases, European integration officers are paid using coefficient 9.5, while in some other cases their salary coefficient amounts to 6.5¹⁹.

In some municipalities, these offices have up to four employees, while in most of municipalities, European integration offices are made of only one officer that is the head of this office at the same time. In some cases you can see titles such as Head of European integration office.

European integration officers in municipalities above all feel neglected by local decision makers. These officers in the majority of cases are not represented at municipal Board of Directors meetings and consequently are not informed related to municipal plans and unable to impact these plans, although this is required by the Office of Prime Minister Regulation on European integration offices in municipalities²⁰.

European integration officers in surveyed municipalities have no access to database of trainings attended by municipal staff. This prevents them to understand internal municipal resources if a need arises to develop different projects²¹.

Ministry of European Integration has no communication or cooperation whatsoever with European integration officers in municipalities. Contribution of municipalities to European Agenda is recorded and reported by MLGA to the Ministry of European Integration²².

One issue faced by European integration offices throughout municipalities includes lack of human resources that would facilitate application and use of EU funds dedicated to Kosovo. Apart from that, a number of heads of European integration offices in municipalities do not speak English fluently, preventing them to have direct access to these funds or to take part in trainings or presentations requiring knowledge of English language²³.

In general, European integration officers in municipalities face difficulties to obtain information from directors of directorates and other municipal centres, related to their activities falling under the scope of SAA.

Another issue that has been following European integration offices in municipalities includes their different distribution. Some of them operate as offices within Administration Directorate, while others are a part of the Mayor's Office. Thereafter this presents problems in the reporting lines. Some of them need to report to Administration Director and he/she submits the report to MLGA related to undertaken activities, while others report directly to the Mayor who signs the report on implemented activities and address the same to MLGA²⁴.

Cooperation between civil society and European integration offices in municipalities lacks. In the majority of cases these offices have no records in terms of local non-governmental organizations that would be able to offer their cooperation in implementation of some activities stipulated by the SAA, such as promotion of gender equality, fight against drugs in schools and different campaigns related to fight against domestic violence, school dropout or illegal immigration²⁵.

None of the surveyed municipal European integration offices assess compliance of municipal legal acts with EU directives, although this is expressly requested by Kosovo Government, Office of Prime Minister Regulation 08/2011²⁶.

Municipalities predominantly do not publish any notification, report or activity organized by European integration offices at their official web sites. In addition, a large portion of bi-annual and annual reports of the Mayor's Offices do not include or mention anywhere any initiative or activity undertaken by European integration offices²⁷.

Another challenge faced by the local government in the

18 Interview with the heads of European integration offices in Prishtina (Ajshe Berveniku), in Peja/Peć (Syzana Muriqi), and in Mitrovica (Sadije Jashari)

19 Interview with the heads of European Integration offices in seven major municipalities in Kosovo.

20 Interview with the heads of European Integration offices in seven major municipalities in Kosovo.

21 Ibid

22 Ibid

23 Ibid

24 Ibid

25 Information from seven focus groups in seven major municipalities in Kosovo.

26 Interview with European Integration office heads in seven major municipalities in Kosovo.

27 Information from seven focus groups in seven major municipalities in Kosovo and research of major municipal web sites.

SAA implementation includes also public administration reforms. In this process, European integration officers need to coordinate with the Administration Director, Mayor's Office and Personnel. In general, this process is unclear to municipalities and they have still not managed to define their role in this direction²⁸.

In addition, most of municipalities lack regulation on promotion and protection of children's rights. This is another commitment deriving from the SAA and falls under the competence of the local level. Lack of this regulation is justified by the lack of a national law regulating this matter.

Municipalities also lag behind in terms of protection of cultural heritage. Generally speaking, municipalities have no regulation addressing this issue, they have not specified measures to be undertaken in this direction, they haven't developed local cultural heritage protection strategies and there are no local officers in charge of dealing with cultural heritage protection²⁹.

Also, a low level of cooperation or inter-municipal initiatives is observed related to infrastructure, environment, tourism, public services, but also related to issues of forest protection, water protection and noise protection.

Most of municipalities haven't appointed any Anti-corruption officers or 'Integrity Officers' as stipulated by the SAA. Also, a large portion of municipalities have no local anti-corruption plan or strategy, although SAA requires and obliges the local level to develop such plans and strategies³⁰.

Municipalities have no specific budget code to support activities related to European integration. Some municipalities considered this necessary, as some activities related to information campaigns or support of specific projects cannot be implemented due to lack of budget. Also, municipalities haven't still started developing rural and agricultural land management plans. Apart from that, although requested by the SAA, municipalities still have no well-regulated system for payment of funds by individuals or entities using public space for their benefits. Auditor-General's reports in the majority of municipalities identify dozens of omissions of this nature³¹.

Also, majority of municipalities still face obstacles in making transparent the whole procurement and budget expenditure process, in putting an end to illegal construction in protected zones and lack specific plans to integrate RAE communities. MLGA was unable to make all municipalities report to this ministry related to their activities related to SAA implementation. Zubin Potok Municipality still doesn't report to MLGA. Moreover, there are no information whether this municipality appointed a European integration officer.

On the other hand, the last European Commission Country report (2018) assesses in reference to the municipalities that this level of power has to work more on inclusion of women in decision-making. In addition, increase of budget transparency, treatment of illegal construction, increase of budget based on own-source revenues, public transport upgrade are requested. Also, local government should exercise its competencies related to protection of persons affected by domestic violence and persons with disabilities. Country report underlines that municipalities do not exert proper control related to customer protection and that municipalities, in the majority of cases, do not comply with recommendations provided in Auditor-General's Annual reports³².

28 Interview with European Integration office heads in seven major municipalities in Kosovo.

29 Interview with European Integration office heads in seven major municipalities in Kosovo.

30 Ibid

31 Ibid

32 Ministry of European Integration. Country Report. 2018. Reference: <https://bit.ly/2Mublt0>

Case Studies: SAA implementation in seven Kosovo municipalities

SAA criteria fulfilment assessment by the municipality was done based on interviews with heads of European integration offices, based on information received in focus groups, based on interviews done in MLGA and also based on reports the municipalities submitted to MLGA related to activities undertaken to fulfil criteria deriving from the SAA.

Municipality of Prishtinë/ Priština

Prishtinë/Priština Municipality has no European Integration Office, however one person is in charge of duties of European integration officer, as a part of the Mayor's Office. Prishtinë/Priština Municipality is the only one among all municipalities, whose report addressed to MLGA is not signed by the Mayor but by Integration Officer only³³.

The major achievements of this municipality in terms of fulfilment of SAA commitments include transparency of administration, facilitation of physical access to public facilities for persons with disabilities, support to NGOs and other interest groups from the grants budget, undertaking of personal data protection measures, recording of school drop-out levels and elimination of illegal landfills from the populated areas.

Moreover, the achievements of this municipality in this area include modernization and facilitation of property tax payment procedures, exercise of property rights, transparency in budget development procedures and participation and increase of participation of children in pre-school education institutions.

Despite this, challenges or issues in this municipality related to fulfilment of commitments deriving from the SAA are considerable. European Integration Officer is not invited to any Board of Directors meeting and there is no communication or cooperation with the most of political representatives of the municipality and consequently she has no information related to investments and plans of different municipal sectors. This officer reports to Administration Director, a practice that cannot be observed in other municipalities where European integration officers report directly to the Mayor. This is also stipulated by Office of Prime Minister Regulation 08/2011³⁴.

European Integration Officer has no access to the municipal database related to professional qualifications of the employed staff and she isn't informed related to the trainings attended by the staff. This prevents her to use internal resources to apply for different funds offered by EU. Municipality lacks regulation on human rights and children's rights. Also, municipality has no relevant plan or strategy on cultural heritage protection in the capital, as one of the commitments deriving from the SAA.

Prishtinë/Priština Municipality has no records of the number of businesses registered and those terminated within a year, although figures in this direction are also published by Kosovo Business Registration Agency.

Prishtinë/Priština Municipality has also not managed to develop a regulation, plan or strategy against corruption, to address conflict of interest cases and it has not appointed its Integrity Officer.

In addition, municipality has no plan on agricultural and rural land management. A high level of informal economy still prevails in sectors falling under the competence of the municipality and it still did not develop any plans in written to promote gender equality. Apart from that, non-compliance with noise protection standards by Prishtinë/Priština Municipality is still considered challenging.

Level of implementation of commitments deriving from the SAA related to Municipality of Prishtinë/Priština, based on 2018 MLGA Matrix



³³ Interview with Prishtinë/Priština Municipality European Integration Officer, Ajshe Berveniku.

³⁴ Ibid

Table nr.1

Level of implementation of commitments deriving from the SAA related to **Municipality of Prishtinë/Priština**, based on 2018 MLGA Matrix

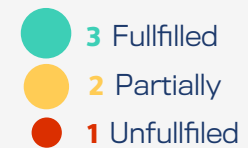
Political Criteria

- Strengthening of local level administration capacities
- Implementation of national legislation on public administration reform
- Increase of transparency of work of all local level bodies
- Recruitment of staff based on legal criteria and professional merits
- Create conditions to Ombudsperson Institution operation within municipal premises
- Implementation of Ombudsperson recommendations
- Ensure public financing for civil society
- Increase cooperation between civil society and municipalities
- Ensure anti-terrorism measures
- Initiate campaigns to raise civic awareness against radicalism
- Create mechanisms for mandatory reporting of conflict of interest
- Municipality should have anti-corruption strategy
- Implementation of human rights law packages
- Gender equality measures
- Adoption of children's rights regulation
- Implementation of property rights, especially for women
- Recording of human trafficking cases
- Budget allocation for minority protection
- Full implementation of the law on use of languages
- Development of specific heritage protection plans
- Ensure measures for protected zones



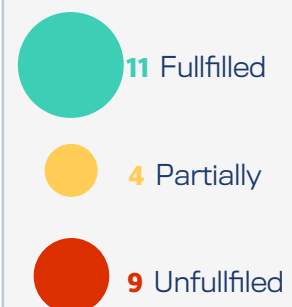
Economic Criteria

- Municipality should facilitate business opening and development
- Does "One Stop Shop" exist and is it operational
- Are budget development procedures transparent and clear
- Reducing of informal economy in areas under municipal competence
- Planning of municipal property in order to enable economic development
- Construction of complete infrastructure for businesses



European Standards

- Municipalities should have agriculture and rural development plan
- Does municipality have a master plan for agricultural land
- Does municipality have information on the irrigated agricultural land
- Does municipality have a specific centre to train farmers
- Does municipality have information on use of municipal property
- Does municipality have any plans to implement auditor's recommendations
- Are there any plans on when and where to offer municipal land for use
- Does municipality have any energy efficiency plans
- Did municipality hold trainings for energy efficiency officers
- Does municipality have any statistics (trend) related to energy efficiency
- Did municipality appoint Anti-Discrimination Officer
- Does municipality have Free Legal Aid Office
- Is personal data protection officer appointed
- Is there Municipal Communities Office and is it in operation
- Did municipality establish Repatriation cases committee
- Does municipality have minority protection and integration plan
- Are there education opportunities in municipalities for children with disabilities
- Does municipality have information on number of school dropout levels
- Did the municipality implement any campaigns to promote professional schools
- Does municipality have a waste management plan
- Does municipality have an air quality action plan
- Did municipality undertake any measures to eliminate illegal landfills
- Does municipality have any agriculture inspectors
- Does municipality have any rural land management plan



Municipality of Prizren

Prizren Municipality has a designated European Integration Office within the Mayor's Office. This office consists of one officer who is at the same time the head of this office. In terms of her work, she reports to the Mayor and reports sent to MLGA are signed by the Mayor³⁵.

Major achievements of this municipality related to implementation of commitments deriving from SAA include initiatives for public administration reform, transparency of work, inclusive budget development with the participation of citizens, "One Stop Shop" capacity development, opening of Ombudsperson Office in municipal facilities, gender responsive budgeting, realisation of property rights, implementation of the Law on Use of Languages, building of professional capacities related to personal data protection, recording of school dropout levels and undertaking of measures to repatriate and reintegrate persons denied asylum by EU states. In addition, Prizren has an operational Municipal Communities and Returns Office and also a designated personal data protection officer³⁶.

Similar with the case of Prishtinë/Priština Municipality, head of European Integration Office in Prizren is also not invited to attend regular Board of Directors meetings. Moreover, this office does not take part in discussions related to budget and work plan.

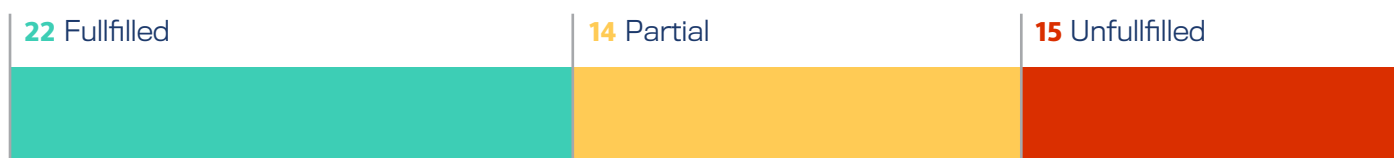
Another issue related to Prizren pertains to the lack of budget for its Integration Office that has a negative impact on the fulfilment of some SAA criteria.

European Integration Office in this municipality considers that inclusion of several profiles in the work of this office would enable municipality to apply and benefit from EU funds dedicated to Kosovo.

This office has no database on civil society organizations in this municipality that would be able to support some of its activities and also this office has no access to municipal data on professional qualifications of its employees and also the trainings attended.

Meanwhile, it seems that the major challenges include lack of implementation of cultural heritage protection legislation, undertaking of measures to address problems related to illegal construction in protected zones and reducing of informal economy in areas under municipal competence. Also, challenges include lack of action plan for implementation of auditor's recommendations, construction of a complete physical infrastructure ready for business activity, lack of municipal strategy or plan to protect agricultural land. Prizren has still some work to do in order to fulfil commitments deriving from SAA also in terms of training its staff related to Municipal Energy Efficiency Plan implementation. Lack of consultative committee for persons with disabilities, lack of an office in the municipality for free legal aid, lack of projects pertaining to inter-municipal cooperation and failures related to protection of public health, specifically in terms of law on smoking prohibition in enclosed spaces are just some of the remaining challenges.

Level of implementation of commitments deriving from the SAA related to Municipality of Prizren, based on 2018 MLGA Matrix



³⁵ Interview with the Head of European Integration Office in Prizren Eleonora Fetollari.

³⁶ Ibid

Table nr.2

Level of implementation of commitments deriving from the SAA related to **Municipality of Prizren**, based on 2018 MLGA Matrix

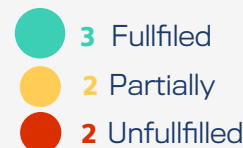
Political Criteria

- Strengthening of local level administration capacities
- Implementation of national legislation on public administration reform
- Increase of transparency of work of all local level bodies
- Recruitment of staff based on legal criteria and professional merits
- Create conditions to Ombudsperson Institution operation within municipal premises
- Implementation of Ombudsperson recommendations
- Ensure public financing for civil society
- Increase cooperation between civil society and municipalities
- Ensure anti-terrorism measures
- Initiate campaigns to raise civic awareness against radicalism
- Create mechanisms for mandatory reporting of conflict of interest
- Municipality should have anti-corruption strategy
- Implementation of human rights law packages
- Gender equality measures
- Adoption of children's rights regulation
- Implementation of property rights, especially for women
- Recording of human trafficking cases
- Budget allocation for minority protection
- Full implementation of the law on use of languages
- Development of specific heritage protection plans
- Ensure measures for protected zones



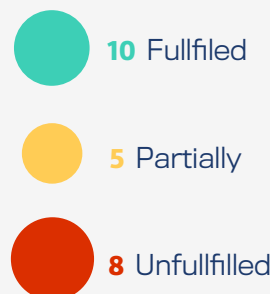
Economic Criteria

- Municipality should facilitate business opening and development
- Does "One Stop Shop" exist and is it operational
- Are budget development procedures transparent and clear
- Reducing of informal economy in areas under municipal competence
- Planning of municipal property in order to enable economic development
- Construction of complete infrastructure for businesses



European Standards

- Municipalities should have agriculture and rural development plan
- Does municipality have information on the irrigated agricultural land
- Does municipality have a specific centre to train farmers
- Does municipality have information on use of municipal property
- Does municipality have any plans to implement auditor's recommendations
- Are there any plans on when and where to offer municipal land for use
- Does municipality have any energy efficiency plans
- Did municipality hold trainings for energy efficiency officers
- Does municipality have any statistics (trend) related to energy efficiency
- Did municipality appoint Anti-Discrimination Officer
- Does municipality have Free Legal Aid Office
- Is personal data protection officer appointed
- Is there Municipal Communities Office and is it in operation
- Did municipality establish Repatriation cases committee
- Does municipality have minority protection and integration plan
- Are there education opportunities in municipalities for children with disabilities
- Does municipality have information on number of school dropout levels
- Did the municipality implement any campaigns to promote professional schools
- Does municipality have a waste management plan
- Does municipality have an air quality action plan
- Did municipality undertake any measures to eliminate illegal landfills
- Does municipality have any agriculture inspectors
- Does municipality have any rural land management plan



Municipality of Peja/Peć

Peja/Peć Municipality has set up its European integration structure, by establishing a designated directorate entitled 'European Integration and Diaspora Directorate'. Raising this issue on the level of a directorate is in contradiction with Office of Prime Minister Regulation that stipulates that European integration issues in municipalities shall be treated at the Office level. This directorate was not specifically intended to deal with European integrations, but as its name says it also deals with diaspora³⁷.

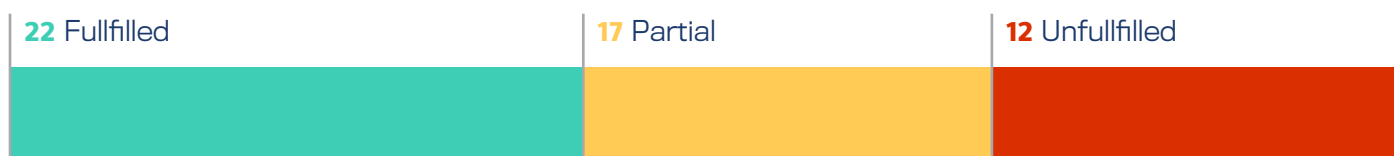
European Integration Directorate existence changes completely the structure of municipalities in terms of European integration. Unlike Integration offices, the Director of this Directorate is able to attend all Board of Directors meetings and he/she can thereby be informed in detail related to municipal plans and achievements in areas reported to MLGA.

However, the head of municipal directorate is not a civil servant, unlike integration offices' heads or officers. Directors are appointed by Mayors and are also dismissed by them and also end of Mayor's mandate implies the end of tenure of directorate directors. This has a negative impact on the institutional memory.

Unlike other major municipalities in the country, apart from European Integration Directorate, Peja/Peć Municipality has an officer in each of 14 municipal directorates in total, in charge of reporting to Integration Directorate related to measures undertaken to fulfil SAA commitments.

Major achievements of this municipality in terms of fulfilment of commitments deriving from SAA include facilitation of physical access to public facilities for persons with disabilities, provision of support to NGOs and other interest groups from the grants budget, undertaking of personal data protection measures, recording of school drop-out levels, opening of Ombudsperson Institution office in the municipal premises and gender responsive budgeting.

Level of implementation of commitments deriving from the SAA related to Municipality of Peja/Peć, based on 2018 MLGA Matrix



³⁷ Interview with European Integration and Diaspora Directorate Director in Peja/Peć Municipality Syzana Muriqi.

Aside from that, another achievement of Peja/Peć Municipality related to SAA criteria includes digitalization and facilitation of property tax payment procedures, inclusive budget development process together with citizens, development of One Stop Shop capacities, existence and operation of Municipal Community and Returns Office and also appointment of a specific personal data protection officer.

Meanwhile, major challenges include lack of implementation of cultural heritage protection legislation. Municipality also lacks Regulation, plan or strategy on children's rights, anti-corruption and conflict of interest, and an appointed Integrity Officer.

In addition, municipality has no management plan for agricultural and rural land. A high level of informal economy is still prevalent in sectors under municipal authority and municipality still lacks a plan in writing on gender equality promotion. Also, lack of action plan to implement auditor's recommendations, construction of complete physical infrastructure ready for business activity, are just some of the remaining challenges that Peja/Peć Municipality has to overcome in order to fulfil criteria deriving from the SAA.

Table nr.3

Level of implementation of commitments deriving from the SAA related to **Municipality of Pejë/Peć**, based on 2018 MLGA Matrix

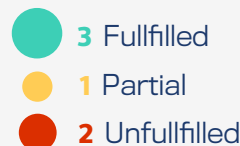
Political Criteria

- Strengthening of local level administration capacities
- Implementation of national legislation on public administration reform
- Increase of transparency of work of all local level bodies
- Recruitment of staff based on legal criteria and professional merits
- Create conditions to Ombudsperson Institution operation within municipal premises
- Implementation of Ombudsperson recommendations
- Ensure public financing for civil society
- Increase cooperation between civil society and municipalities
- Ensure anti-terrorism measures
- Initiate campaigns to raise civic awareness against radicalism
- Create mechanisms for mandatory reporting of conflict of interest
- Municipality should have anti-corruption strategy
- Implementation of human rights law packages
- Gender equality measures
- Adoption of children's rights regulation
- Implementation of property rights, especially for women
- Recording of human trafficking cases
- Budget allocation for minority protection
- Full implementation of the law on use of languages
- Development of specific heritage protection plans
- Ensure measures for protected zones



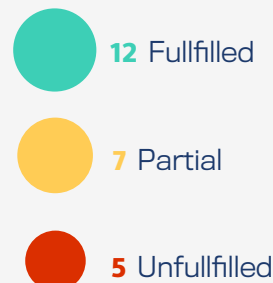
Economic Criteria

- Municipality should facilitate business opening and development
- Does "One Stop Shop" exist and is it operational
- Are budget development procedures transparent and clear
- Reducing of informal economy in areas under municipal competence
- Planning of municipal property in order to enable economic development
- Construction of complete infrastructure for businesses



European Standards

- Municipalities should have agriculture and rural development plan
- Does municipality have a master plan for agricultural land
- Does municipality have information on the irrigated agricultural land
- Does municipality have a specific centre to train farmers
- Does municipality have information on use of municipal property
- Does municipality have any plans to implement auditor's recommendations
- Are there any plans on when and where to offer municipal land for use
- Does municipality have any energy efficiency plans
- Did municipality hold trainings for energy efficiency officers
- Does municipality have any statistics (trend) related to energy efficiency
- Did municipality appoint Anti-Discrimination Officer
- Does municipality have Free Legal Aid Office
- Is personal data protection officer appointed
- Is there Municipal Communities Office and is it in operation
- Did municipality establish Repatriation cases committee
- Does municipality have minority protection and integration plan
- Are there education opportunities in municipalities for children with disabilities
- Does municipality have information on number of school dropout levels
- Did the municipality implement any campaigns to promote professional schools
- Does municipality have a waste management plan
- Does municipality have an air quality action plan
- Did municipality undertake any measures to eliminate illegal landfills
- Does municipality have any agriculture inspectors
- Does municipality have any rural land management plan



Gjakova/Đakovica Municipality

Gjakova/Đakovica Municipality has a designated European Integration Office within the Mayor's Office. There is one officer employed within this office serving as its head at the same time³⁸.

Unlike other municipalities from this paper, Gjakova/Đakovica Integration Officer attends all Board of Directors meetings.

Major achievements of this municipality in implementing commitments deriving from the SAA include work transparency, inclusive budget development together with citizens, development of One Stop Shop capacities, opening of Ombudsperson Institution office in municipal premises, gender responsive budgeting, implementation of property rights, implementation of the Law on Use of official languages, building of professional capacities related to personal data protection, recording of school drop-out cases and undertaking of repatriation and reintegration measures for persons denied asylum to EU countries. Gjakova/Đakovica has an operational Municipal Communities Office and also a designated personal data protection officer.

Meanwhile, some of the major challenges include lack of implementation of cultural heritage and public administration reform legislation, reduction of informal economy in areas under municipal competence, lack of action plan on implementation of auditor's recommendations, construction of complete physical infrastructure ready for business activity and lack of municipal strategy or action plan on agricultural land protection. Moreover, Gjakova/Đakovica has still work to do in order to fulfil commitments deriving from the SAA in terms of training relevant staff on implementation of Municipal Energy Efficiency Plan. Lack of consultative committee for persons with disabilities, lack of a municipal office for free legal aid, lack of projects related to inter-municipal cooperation and obstacles related to protection of public health, specifically in terms of law on smoking prohibition in enclosed spaces, are just some of the remaining challenges ahead of Gjakova/Đakovica Municipality.

Level of implementation of commitments deriving from the SAA related to Municipality of Gjakova/Đakovica, based on 2018 MLGA Matrix



³⁸ Interview with head of European Integration Office in Gjakova/Đakovica Municipality Arbër Gola.

Table nr.4







Level of implementation of commitments deriving from the SAA related to **Municipality of Gjakova/Dakovica**, based on 2018 MLGA Matrix

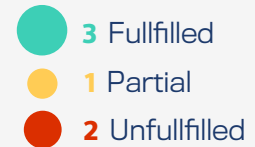
Political Criteria

-  Strengthening of local level administration capacities
-  Implementation of national legislation on public administration reform
-  Increase of transparency of work of all local level bodies
-  Recruitment of staff based on legal criteria and professional merits
-  Create conditions to Ombudsperson Institution operation within municipal premises
-  Implementation of Ombudsperson recommendations
-  Ensure public financing for civil society
-  Increase cooperation between civil society and municipalities
-  Ensure anti-terrorism measures
-  Initiate campaigns to raise civic awareness against radicalism
-  Create mechanisms for mandatory reporting of conflict of interest
-  Municipality should have anti-corruption strategy
-  Implementation of human rights law packages
-  Gender equality measures
-  Adoption of children's rights regulation
-  Implementation of property rights, especially for women
-  Recording of human trafficking cases
-  Budget allocation for minority protection
-  Full implementation of the law on use of languages
-  Development of specific heritage protection plans
-  Ensure measures for protected zones



























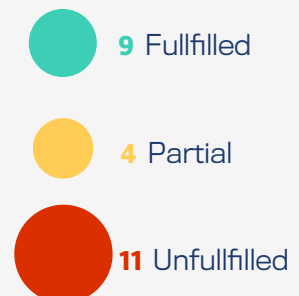
Economic Criteria

-  Municipality should facilitate business opening and development
-  Does "One Stop Shop" exist and is it operational
-  Are budget development procedures transparent and clear
-  Reducing of informal economy in areas under municipal competence
-  Planning of municipal property in order to enable economic development
-  Construction of complete infrastructure for businesses



European Standards

-  Municipalities should have agriculture and rural development plan
-  Does municipality have a master plan for agricultural land
-  Does municipality have information on the irrigated agricultural land
-  Does municipality have a specific centre to train farmers
-  Does municipality have information on use of municipal property
-  Does municipality have any plans to implement auditor's recommendations
-  Are there any plans on when and where to offer municipal land for use
-  Does municipality have any energy efficiency plans
-  Did municipality hold trainings for energy efficiency officers
-  Does municipality have any statistics (trend) related to energy efficiency
-  Did municipality appoint Anti-Discrimination Officer
-  Does municipality have Free Legal Aid Office
-  Is personal data protection officer appointed
-  Is there Municipal Communities Office and is it in operation
-  Did municipality establish Repatriation cases committee
-  Does municipality have minority protection and integration plan
-  Are there education opportunities in municipalities for children with disabilities
-  Does municipality have information on number of school dropout levels
-  Did the municipality implement any campaigns to promote professional schools
-  Does municipality have a waste management plan
-  Does municipality have an air quality action plan
-  Did municipality undertake any measures to eliminate illegal landfills
-  Does municipality have any agriculture inspectors
-  Does municipality have any rural land management plan



Municipality of Ferizaj/ Uroševac

Ferizaj/Uroševac Municipality has a designated European Integration Office, within the Mayor's Office. Two officers are employed in this office, one of whom serves as its head. He reports on his work to the Mayor and the reports sent to MLGA are signed by the Mayor³⁹.

In Ferizaj/Uroševac, Integration Officer attends all Board of Directors meetings. This office does not have a designated budget code, which impacts negatively fulfilment of some SAA criteria.

Major achievements of this municipality in terms of commitments deriving from the SAA include inclusive budget development together with citizens, One Stop Shops capacity development, Ombudsperson Institution office opening in municipal premises, gender responsive budgeting, realisation of property rights, implementation of Law on use of official languages, personal data protection capacity development, recording of school dropout levels and undertaking of measures related to repatriation and reintegration of persons denied asylum to EU countries. In addition to these, Ferizaj/Uroševac has an operational Municipal Communities Office and a designated personal data protection officer.

On the other hand, major challenges include lack of implementation of cultural heritage and public administration reform legislation, reducing of informal economy in areas under municipal competence, lack of an action plan for implementation of auditor's recommendations, construction of complete physical infrastructure ready for business activity and lack of municipal strategy or action plan on agricultural land protection. Besides these, Ferizaj/Uroševac has still a lot to do in order to fulfil commitments deriving from the SAA related to training of relevant staff in municipal energy efficiency plan implementation, lack of consultative committee for persons with disabilities, lack of municipal office on free legal aid, lack of projects on inter-municipal co-operation and obstacles related to public health protection.

Level of implementation of commitments deriving from the SAA related to Municipality of Ferizaj/Uroševac, based on 2018 MLGA Matrix



³⁹ Interview with the head of European Integration Office in Ferizaj/Uroševac Municipality Hilmi Mustafa.

Table nr.5







Level of implementation of commitments deriving from the SAA related to **Municipality of Ferizaj/Uroševac**, based on 2018 MLGA Matrix

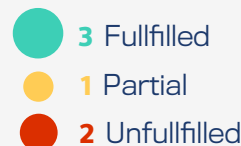
Political Criteria

-  Strengthening of local level administration capacities
-  Implementation of national legislation on public administration reform
-  Increase of transparency of work of all local level bodies
-  Recruitment of staff based on legal criteria and professional merits
-  Create conditions to Ombudsperson Institution operation within municipal premises
-  Implementation of Ombudsperson recommendations
-  Ensure public financing for civil society
-  Increase cooperation between civil society and municipalities
-  Ensure anti-terrorism measures
-  Initiate campaigns to raise civic awareness against radicalism
-  Create mechanisms for mandatory reporting of conflict of interest
-  Municipality should have anti-corruption strategy
-  Implementation of human rights law packages
-  Gender equality measures
-  Adoption of children's rights regulation
-  Implementation of property rights, especially for women
-  Recording of human trafficking cases
-  Budget allocation for minority protection
-  Full implementation of the law on use of languages
-  Development of specific heritage protection plans
-  Ensure measures for protected zones
























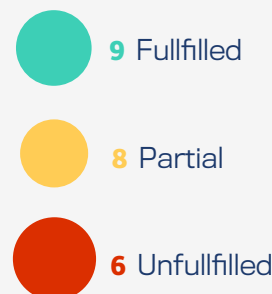
Economic Criteria

-  Municipality should facilitate business opening and development
-  Does "One Stop Shop" exist and is it operational
-  Are budget development procedures transparent and clear
-  Reducing of informal economy in areas under municipal competence
-  Planning of municipal property in order to enable economic development
-  Construction of complete infrastructure for businesses



European Standards

-  Municipalities should have agriculture and rural development plan
-  Does municipality have a master plan for agricultural land
-  Does municipality have information on the irrigated agricultural land
-  Does municipality have a specific centre to train farmers
-  Does municipality have information on use of municipal property
-  Does municipality have any plans to implement auditor's recommendations
-  Are there any plans on when and where to offer municipal land for use
-  Does municipality have any energy efficiency plans
-  Did municipality hold trainings for energy efficiency officers
-  Does municipality have any statistics (trend) related to energy efficiency
-  Did municipality appoint Anti-Discrimination Officer
-  Does municipality have Free Legal Aid Office
-  Is personal data protection officer appointed
-  Is there Municipal Communities Office and is it in operation
-  Did municipality establish Repatriation cases committee
-  Does municipality have minority protection and integration plan
-  Are there education opportunities in municipalities for children with disabilities
-  Does municipality have information on number of school dropout levels
-  Did the municipality implement any campaigns to promote professional schools
-  Does municipality have a waste management plan
-  Does municipality have an air quality action plan
- Did municipality undertake any measures to eliminate illegal landfills
- Does municipality have any agriculture inspectors
- Does municipality have any rural land management plan



Municipality of Mitrovica

South

Mitrovica South Municipality, together with Peja/Peć Municipality, are the only two municipalities that have regulated the structure of European integration processes by establishing designated directorates for this purpose. Unlike Peja/Peć where European Integration Directorate is also responsible for diaspora issues, in Mitrovica South, this directorate deals with social welfare issues in addition to integration ones⁴⁰.

Major achievements of this municipality in fulfilment of commitments deriving from the SAA include facilitation of physical access to public facilities for persons with disabilities, provision of support to NGOs and other interest groups from the grants' budget, undertaking of measures for personal data protection, recording of school dropout levels, opening of Ombudsperson Institution office within municipal premises and gender responsive budgeting.

In addition to the listed ones, other achievements related to criteria requested by the SAA include digitalization and facilitation of property tax payment procedures, inclusive budget development with citizens, One Stop Shop capacity development, existence and operation of Municipal Communities Office and designation of a specific personal data protection officer.

On the other hand, it seems that the major challenges include lack of implementation of cultural heritage protection legislation, lack of children's rights regulation and lack of an Integrity Officer.

Besides that, municipality has no plan on agricultural and rural land management. A high level of informal economy is still prevalent in sectors under municipal competence and there is still no plan in written to promote gender equality. Also, lack of an action plan on implementation of auditor's recommendations, and construction of complete physical infrastructure ready for business activity are some of the remaining challenges of Mitrovica South Municipality in terms of fulfilling criteria deriving from the SAA.

Level of implementation of commitments deriving from the SAA related to Municipality of Mitrovica South, based on 2018 MLGA Matrix



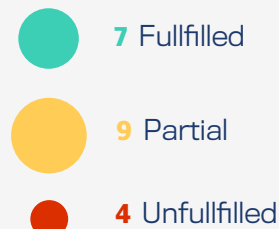
⁴⁰ Interview with the head of European Integration and Social Welfare Directorate in Mitrovica South Sadije Jashari

Table nr.6







Level of implementation of commitments deriving from the SAA related to **Municipality of Mitrovica South**, based on 2018 MLGA Matrix

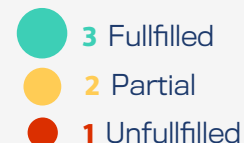
Political Criteria

-  Strengthening of local level administration capacities
-  Implementation of national legislation on public administration reform
-  Increase of transparency of work of all local level bodies
-  Recruitment of staff based on legal criteria and professional merits
-  Create conditions to Ombudsperson Institution operation within municipal premises
-  Implementation of Ombudsperson recommendations
-  Ensure public financing for civil society
-  Increase cooperation between civil society and municipalities
-  Ensure anti-terrorism measures
-  Initiate campaigns to raise civic awareness against radicalism
-  Create mechanisms for mandatory reporting of conflict of interest
-  Municipality should have anti-corruption strategy
-  Implementation of human rights law packages
-  Gender equality measures
-  Adoption of children's rights regulation
-  Implementation of property rights, especially for women
-  Recording of human trafficking cases
-  Budget allocation for minority protection
-  Full implementation of the law on use of languages
-  Development of specific heritage protection plans
-  Ensure measures for protected zones
























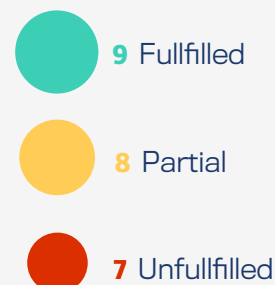
Economic Criteria

-  Municipality should facilitate business opening and development
-  Does "One Stop Shop" exist and is it operational
-  Are budget development procedures transparent and clear
-  Reducing of informal economy in areas under municipal competence
-  Planning of municipal property in order to enable economic development
-  Construction of complete infrastructure for businesses



European Standards

-  Municipalities should have agriculture and rural development plan
-  Does municipality have a master plan for agricultural land
-  Does municipality have information on the irrigated agricultural land
-  Does municipality have a specific centre to train farmers
-  Does municipality have information on use of municipal property
-  Does municipality have any plans to implement auditor's recommendations
-  Are there any plans on when and where to offer municipal land for use
-  Does municipality have any energy efficiency plans
-  Did municipality hold trainings for energy efficiency officers
-  Does municipality have any statistics (trend) related to energy efficiency
-  Did municipality appoint Anti-Discrimination Officer
-  Does municipality have Free Legal Aid Office
-  Is personal data protection officer appointed
-  Is there Municipal Communities Office and is it in operation
-  Did municipality establish Repatriation cases committee
-  Does municipality have minority protection and integration plan
-  Are there education opportunities in municipalities for children with disabilities
-  Does municipality have information on number of school dropout levels
-  Did the municipality implement any campaigns to promote professional schools
-  Does municipality have a waste management plan
-  Does municipality have an air quality action plan
- Did municipality undertake any measures to eliminate illegal landfills
- Does municipality have any agriculture inspectors
- Does municipality have any rural land management plan



Gjilan/Gnjilane Municipality

Gjilan/Gnjilane Municipality has a designated European Integration Office within the Mayor's Office. There is only one officer employed within this office, who is the head of this office at the same time. He reports to the Mayor on his work and the reports sent to MLGA are signed by the Mayor⁴¹.

In Gjilan/Gnjilane, Integration Officer attends all Board of Directors meetings. Office has no budget to cover any activities from its work plan.

Major achievements of this municipality in terms of implementation of commitments deriving from the SAA include inclusive budget development including citizens, One Stop Shop capacity development, opening of Ombudsperson Institution office in municipal premises, gender responsive budgeting, realisation of property rights, implementation of the Law on use of official languages, development of professional capacities related to personal data protection, recording of school dropout levels and undertaking of measures related to repatriation and reintegration of persons denied asylum to EU countries. Apart from these, Gjilan/Gnjilane has Municipal Communities Office in operation and there is also a designated personal data protection official.

However, major challenges include lack of implementation of cultural heritage protection and public administration reform legislation, reducing of informal economy in areas under municipal competence, lack of an action plan to implement auditor's recommendations, construction of complete infrastructure ready for business activity and lack of municipal strategy or action plan on protection of agricultural land. In addition, Gjilan/Gnjilane Municipality has still a lot to do in order to fulfil commitments deriving from the SAA related to training of relevant staff to implement municipal energy efficiency plan. Lack of consultative committee for persons with disabilities, lack of municipal free legal aid office, lack of projects related to inter-municipal co-operation and obstacles in terms of public health protection, specifically related to the law on smoking prohibition in enclosed areas, are just some of the challenges ahead of Gjilan/Gnjilane Municipality in terms of fulfilment of criteria deriving from the SAA.

Level of implementation of commitments deriving from the SAA related to Municipality of Gjilan/Gnjilane, based on 2018 MLGA Matrix



⁴¹ Interview with the head of European Integration Office in Gjilan/Gnjilane Municipality Burim Elezi.

Table nr.7







Level of implementation of commitments deriving from the SAA related to **Municipality of Gjilan/Gnjilane**, based on 2018 MLGA Matrix

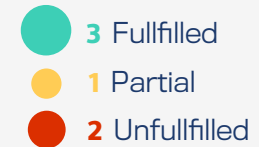
Political Criteria

-  Strengthening of local level administration capacities
-  Implementation of national legislation on public administration reform
-  Increase of transparency of work of all local level bodies
-  Recruitment of staff based on legal criteria and professional merits
-  Create conditions to Ombudsperson Institution operation within municipal premises
-  Implementation of Ombudsperson recommendations
-  Ensure public financing for civil society
-  Increase cooperation between civil society and municipalities
-  Ensure anti-terrorism measures
-  Initiate campaigns to raise civic awareness against radicalism
-  Create mechanisms for mandatory reporting of conflict of interest
-  Municipality should have anti-corruption strategy
-  Implementation of human rights law packages
-  Gender equality measures
-  Adoption of children's rights regulation
-  Implementation of property rights, especially for women
-  Recording of human trafficking cases
-  Budget allocation for minority protection
-  Full implementation of the law on use of languages
-  Development of specific heritage protection plans
-  Ensure measures for protected zones



























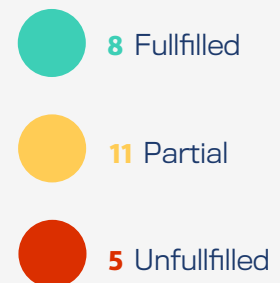
Economic Criteria

-  Municipality should facilitate business opening and development
-  Does "One Stop Shop" exist and is it operational
-  Are budget development procedures transparent and clear
-  Reducing of informal economy in areas under municipal competence
-  Planning of municipal property in order to enable economic development
-  Construction of complete infrastructure for businesses



European Standards

-  Municipalities should have agriculture and rural development plan
-  Does municipality have a master plan for agricultural land
-  Does municipality have information on the irrigated agricultural land
-  Does municipality have a specific centre to train farmers
-  Does municipality have information on use of municipal property
-  Does municipality have any plans to implement auditor's recommendations
-  Are there any plans on when and where to offer municipal land for use
-  Does municipality have any energy efficiency plans
-  Did municipality hold trainings for energy efficiency officers
-  Does municipality have any statistics (trend) related to energy efficiency
-  Did municipality appoint Anti-Discrimination Officer
-  Does municipality have Free Legal Aid Office
-  Is personal data protection officer appointed
-  Is there Municipal Communities Office and is it in operation
-  Did municipality establish Repatriation cases committee
-  Does municipality have minority protection and integration plan
-  Are there education opportunities in municipalities for children with disabilities
-  Does municipality have information on number of school dropout levels
-  Did the municipality implement any campaigns to promote professional schools
-  Does municipality have a waste management plan
-  Does municipality have an air quality action plan
-  Did municipality undertake any measures to eliminate illegal landfills
-  Does municipality have any agriculture inspectors
-  Does municipality have any rural land management plan



Conclusions and recommendations

Municipalities have an important role in the integration agenda of the country. At this point, there are 146 specific objectives municipalities need to achieve in order to fulfil commitments that Kosovo undertook based on SAA at the local level. This process includes all municipal bodies. European integration staff in municipalities predominantly feels neglected by the local decision-makers. In the majority of cases, they do not attend meetings of Board of Directors of municipalities and consequently lack information related to the municipal plans nor can have an impact on these plans, even though such a thing is stipulated by the Prime Minister's Office Regulation on these offices that strives to regulate the European integration process at the local level. Ministry of Local Government Administration that coordinates the integration process at the local level in accordance with the Country European Agenda assesses negatively the approach and content followed by municipal European integration officers while reporting to this ministry. In this paper, GAP Institute presented main achievements of the seven major municipalities in this process noting also the main deficiencies and issues faced by municipalities in implementing commitments deriving from the SAA. In order to produce the best possible results, GAP Institute recommends the following:

MLGA should go out on the field in order to verify whether municipal reports are complete and accurate in terms of SAA implementation.

MLGA should initiate training of European integration staff in municipalities, in order to increase the quality of their reporting related to fulfilment of SAA and also increase the potential of applying for EU funds dedicated to Kosovo.

MLGA political staff should start a tour around municipalities in order to meet with their heads and raise awareness on the need to make the SAA fulfilment process as inclusive as possible on their end.

European Integration Assembly Committee should call the leadership of Ministry of European Integration for a hearing, in order to assess the level of SAA fulfilment by the local level.

At least twice a year MEI should organize meetings with heads of all European integration offices in municipalities, together with MLGA representatives, in order to discuss challenges and achievements of the local government related to SAA implementation.

Municipalities should implement Kosovo Government, Office of Prime Minister Regulation Nr. 08/2011 by including European Integration officers in discussions on municipal regulations, in all budget development and work plan development stages.

Mayors should invite European Integration Officers to all Board of Directors meetings, and ensure they have the right to take the floor during these meetings.

European integration offices need to develop a list of non-governmental organizations in operation in their municipalities, in order to ensure their close cooperation.

Mayors should ensure that all reports developed by European Integration Office are published on the official web site. At the same time, activities implemented by these offices should be reflected in bi-annual and annual reports of the municipality.

Municipal European integration officers should have a more proactive approach in collection of data and should be more comprehensive in the reports submitted to the Ministry of Local Government Administration.

Annex 1

Municipal objectives related to SAA implementation

All criteria that Kosovo needs to fulfil, and subsequently the local level, deriving from the SAA, can be divided into economic, political and European standards' criteria.

In terms of economy, municipalities are responsible to reduce the level of informal economy and fiscal evasion; prevent, fight and report suspected cases of money laundering, terrorism funding and financial crimes; improve business environment; upgrade revenue collection, specifically related to property tax and public assets and public space fees; transparency and better coordination of budget planning procedures; matching of budget expenditures and long-term planning; and development of "One-Stop Shop capacities."

In terms of political criteria, municipalities are responsible to strengthen administration staff professional capacities; ensure full implementation of legislation and policies on public administration reform; increase work transparency; continue decentralization process and consolidation of Mitrovica North, Zubin Potok, Zvecan and Leposavic Municipalities; improve conditions for operation of Ombudsperson Institution office in municipal premises; implement Ombudsperson Institution recommendations; ensure public funding for civil society; establish mechanisms for mandatory reporting of conflict of interest and increase sanctions related to non-declaration of property and conflict of interest; monitor implementation of Anti-corruption strategy and action plan; implement human rights laws package; develop specific policies and allocate budget to promote gender equality; develop specific policies and allocate funds for protection and promotion of children's rights; enable exercise of property rights; fight against human trafficking; improve implementation of the Law on Use of Languages; implement legislation related to cultural heritage protection; undertake activities in order to improve coordination between MESP, MCYS and MLGA; implement the Law on Hoça e Madhe; and undertake actions in order to address the issue of illegal construction within the Special Protective Zones.

In terms of European standards, municipalities are obliged to fulfil commitments such as improvement of public health and animal health protection; provision of free legal aid to all citizens; increase of institutional capacities related to personal data protection; provision of opportunities for return of displaced persons; implementation of strategy and action plan for RAE communities; specific results in terms of fight against drugs; recording of school dropout levels and addressing its cause, in order to prevent it; increase of children attendance of pre-school facilities and of children with disabilities; improvement of waste management system in Kosovo; implementation of water area protection measures; removal of illegal landfills from populated areas and protected zones; municipalities should cooperate with other municipalities while cross-border cooperation with municipalities from other countries should be encouraged; protection and promotion of mother and child health; building of municipal capacities and development of specific and long-term plans related to energy efficiency; undertaking of measurable actions to protect agricultural land and development of rural land plans



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Cooperation Office Kosovo

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK
DANIDA | INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

This publication is supported by the Democratic Society Promotion (DSP) Project - funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DANIDA) and managed by the Kosovo Civil Society Foundation (KCSF).

GAP Institute is a local think-tank founded in October 2007 in Kosovo. GAP's main purpose is to attract professionals by creating a professional research and development environment commonly found in similar institutions in Western countries. This will include providing Kosovars with an opportunity to research, develop, and implement projects that would strengthen Kosovo society. A priority of the Institute is to mobilize professionals to address the country's pressing economic, political and social challenges. GAP's main objectives are to bridge the gap between government and people, and to bridge the gap between problems and solutions.

GAP Institute is supported by:

