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Strengthening the Oversight Function and Transparency of the Parliament Governance

Project duration: 2012 – 2015
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Project partners: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, The Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM), independent oversight bodies, municipal assemblies and line ministries

Links: www.parlament.gov.rs/народна-скупштина.1.html

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Project Description

The National Parliament is the supreme representative body and the holder of constitutional and legislative power in the Republic of Serbia. It also has an important oversight and control function over the Government, as it provides a public arena in which the policies and actions are debated, scrutinised and subjected to public opinion. In this way, the Parliament ensures transparency, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness and upholding of good governance of the executive power.

Serbian Parliament is unicameral with 250 members all representing a single constituency - Serbia as a whole. Given this broad constituency the Project aims to strengthen the link between the electorate (citizens of Serbia) and the Parliament.

The robust monitoring of the executive by the Parliament is an indicator of good governance. It is through this oversight that the Parliament can ensure a balance of power, assert its role in presenting people's interests and engage citizens to deliberate on matters of public policy. In turn, this creates a tool for fight against corruption.

Activities

- Establish and capacitate Parliament scrutiny teams to analyse draft legislation and to oversee implementation of adopted laws and finances.
- Develop guidelines for undertaking public scrutiny hearings and train the Members of Parliament (MPs) and Parliament staff to implement them.
- Organise public scrutiny hearings, both at the national and local level.
- Upgrade the National Parliament website to allow two-way communication with citizens and develop web portals, with the same aim, for the pilot local assemblies.
- Develop a system for real-time tracking of the State budget expenditure in the Parliament to enable more effective oversight of public finances.

Expected Results

- Strengthened oversight function of parliamentary, independent and regulatory bodies
- Improved transparency and efficiency of the National Parliament of the Republic of Serbia
- Enhanced accountability of the executive power
- Strengthened rule of law, compliant with international commitments and human rights instruments