Representation of LGs interests and influence on politicians – holistic approach

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Project overview

- Representation of LGs interests and influence on politicians (holistic/integral approach to building local government association)

- Congress of Local Authorities from Moldova

- Integral unity of three elements - institutional building, dialogue with national government and international advocacy - determines and generates the strength of association

1. Institutional setting

Paramount priority demanded by members – lobbying and advocacy of local autonomy and local democracy in Moldova

Legal framework, by-laws and regulation, national strategies and policies are rather formal, contradictory to each other, non-operational being written within different projects not correlated with and not taking into account the realities in the country

CALM institutional setting – administrative bodies (Council and Executive Board, committees and networks, territorial branches, secretariat and affiliated experts)

2. Starting point

Challenges

1. Lack of consultations culture and listening of national moldovan stakeholders by central authorities

2. Blind following of international partners by central authorities

3. Lack of political will and geopolitical divisions at the central level

4. Lack of a strong, independent, representative and expertise-based voice of local authorities

5. Rudimentary weak local autonomy

3. Approach

Holistic/Integral approach as the key in association building

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Inseparable unity of

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- *Institutional building (administrative bodies, secretariat, networks, territorial branches, committees, etc.)*

- *Dialogue with central government and national presence*

- *International presence and advocacy*

4. Outputs

▪ Members' growth from 250 in 2011 to more than 800 in 2018

▪ Member of the Cabinet of Ministers regular (weekly) sessions

▪ Members of the Parity Commission and working groups for decentralization

▪Members of consultation processes with key parliamentary commissions and Ministries

▪ CALM opinions are obligatory on many issues even if not prescribed by laws and by-laws

▪Access to Constitutional Court

▪ Few key steps in decentralization in recent years (new law on local finance, decentralization of Road Fund, real estates evaluation and land use destination as competences of LGs, growth poles with doubled PIT)

▪ Permanent media presence on national channels – TV and radio

▪ Delegation to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

▪ Member of major EU consultative forums on development

▪ CEMR and Platforma partner in development

▪ Changes in donors and EU approaches to aid and development both in Brussels and in Moldova

5. Lessons

▪To build strong association a holistic/integral approach is essential

▪ Environment is rather hectic and vague and nothing is ever guaranteed even if reflected in laws and by-laws

▪ Formal framework is having its limits, more important is informal presence, pressures and relations

▪ Probably even more time takes an advocacy of not doing something controversial by our counterparts, rather than advocacy for something positive

6. Follow up

Building services for the members aiming at sustainability including financial sustainability

1. *After reaching a certain stage of dialogue with central government and few important reforms in local government another integral unity has emerged – unity of lobbying and advocacy from one side and communication to LGs on the newly introduced legislation, policies and strategies and receiving their feedback from the other*

2. *Amalgamation of existing services under "one roof" of the Center for Expertise and Trainings and Services as such in its own turn represent an integral unity and it is rather difficult to define and separate the Services' fields and sectors*