

Transparency and Open Public Data on Greek Local Authorities

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Transparency and Open Public Data on Greek Local Authorities - why we are going to fail in the implementation of European Funds processes and reengineering

Open Data Policies in Greece

Open public administration data is data of any kind that can be used for any purpose without restriction and produced by public bodies. The use of open public administration data is directly related to the activation of citizens. Enabling citizens' observatories aimed at transparency and accountability of public entities. In modern information society in which we live it is easy to understand that the availability of data produced by governments, results in the achievement of good governance because of transparent decision-making.

Transparency in the public sector means unrestricted and free disposal of administrative operations and procedures in order to ensure legality and legitimacy. Transparency remains a constitutional requirement in Greece.

Open availability of public administration data can lead to cooperation between the civil society, professional groups, NGOs and universities. Such data could include everything from geo-spatial data, administrative operations, infrastructure, environment, culture, civil service, transport data, election results, crime, licenses, business directories, etc.

Interoperability through public bodies can be readily achieved by the use of open public administration data. The Greek Republic has made some efforts in recent years concerning the development of open data policies

Public open data are being produced and published in many cities of our country but there are not easily read and processed, they are not machine readable, they are not produced by open licenses [e.g. CC]. A recent study on this issue has been drawn the Greek part of the Open Knowledge Foundation which has demonstrated (by the ratio of open data) that most cities : do not have data available in the category transport data in real time, they have no data budgets that are machine-readable as it is in the form of PDF, public geospatial data are available to the public in a special place reserved for GIS apps, public procurement contracts soar in PDF format in the Central Electronic Registry public Contracts and are recorded simultaneously on the website of Diavgeia^[1] (with open license CC), public data for building licenses are available at the website of Diavgeia in PDF format, citizens' demands for public services are being allowed only at the municipalities of Athens where it seems that exists a serious electronic platform.

In Greece, after the memorandum with Troika, the need for adaptation of public institutions to the requirements of transparency and the fight against corruption has led municipalities to develop policies concerning open data.

The participation of citizens in decision-making and good governance in Greek municipalities.

The availability of open data in the official sites of Greek Municipalities is strongly related with the trust between Greek local government and the Greek people. This confidence is translated to ways of using this data. The use of data is not necessarily related to material - economic exploitation but it can be related to participation in public political life through public consultation.

The concept of the public consultation is attached to the concept of open government [Open Governance]. The open government allows the participation of citizens in shaping the legislation. The open public sector, particularly the open local government embodies a transparent decision-making center of power, through which the municipalities are closer to the citizen.

The available open data therefore leads to both democratic legitimacy of local government and the participatory concept of e-democracy.

The ideal shape of the citizens to access towards public consultation inside the Greek municipalities is constructed as follows:

- A) Passive Information
- B) Active Information
- C) Consultation
- D) Dialogue and Negotiation
- E) Enable & Participation
- F) Configuring policies

A synthesis of access to public documents and public control of power can implement the above scheme. In an attempt to highlight the great contribution of open government [open public governance] to e-democracy, a common interconnection between transparency and low level of corruption could possibly prevent officials from government abuse of power.

The Greek reality is disappointing regarding the issue of transparency and open data. There is a lack of mayors who are pursuing policies based on a public consultation (which is based on open data). The program Diavgeia saves the situation somehow. But we

Greeks as a country are walking a long way behind the global progress in open data policies. The infamous introversion that always characterized the Greek local authorities regarding the administrative structures and practices is an important feature.

While the implementation and the success of the European Funds processes in Greek Municipalities will pass through public consultation in the new programming period 2014-2020 it is revealing what Lucy Chambers, spokesman OKFN, writes after a visit to Greece in the summer of 2012: "Only Diavgeia application operates as a platform for open data in the municipalities of Greece. Lucy Chambers connects the level of transparency in Greek local authorities with the overall need for real transparency in public finances of our country."[\[2\]](#)

An experiment with data taken from OGP (see <http://governamos.com/2014/08/19/an-experiment-with-data-from-the-open-g...>) led to an article where Greece along with Romania and Estonia were called "pretenders". This means that the administration let alone local government in our country are insufficient in open data. We are good at design but we fail in the implementation.

Open – spending applications are being used in Greece on the basis of Diavgeia application. A new scientist Vangelis Banos has developed such an application called "HyperDiavgeia". The fact is that we can extract some results related to the operational cost of each Ministry but there cannot be extracted a lot of categorized data. This happens due to the lack of categorized data. Only a few municipalities like Athens, Thessaloniki, Gortynia and Heraklion Crete can offer us such data.

Examples of Open Public Data in Greece

DIAVGEIA

It is an application introduced for the first time in Greece based on the legal obligation to display the decisions of governmental bodies and administration on the Internet. Every citizen can access the set of laws and decisions adopted by the governing bodies, the local government and Independent Authorities. All decisions cannot be executed if not posted on the website et.diavgeia.gov.gr. Each decision acquires a unique number who certifies the public document.

CENTRAL ELECTRONIC RECORDS OF CONTRACTS (e-procurement)

All public entities are required to be registered in the Central Electronic Registry Public Procurement Platform. On this app documents that are related to public contracts for works, goods and services during all the execution stages, regardless of process and source of funding (except those which by law are published in the Government Gazette), with a budget exceeding 1.000,00 € are being published. A unique number is being given too.

The Law for Open Data in Greece 2014

Institutional Framework for the public open data - How we got to Law 4305/2014

The Law 4305/2014 "Open disposal and re-use of documents, information and data in the public sector" has been a legal obligation upon the Greek Ministries. Next time, it is estimated to be implemented upon the Municipalities.

Provided that, within three months each public body will finalize the list of data that is available to publish, we expect to see public open data on air on the summer of 2015.

Actually the current Law is a modification of N.3448 / 2006 concerning the «re-use of public sector information". That law, following the Directive 2003/98 / EC obliged public bodies to make their documents available for re-use.[\[3\]](#)

The battle between the OKFN Greece and EELLAK

While Open data policies are being developed in Greece, a battle is on the air; that between two concepts[\[4\]](#) of open data policy. There is the EELLAK which has a long tradition on open data policies inside the Greek public sector and the OKFN GR department. EELLAK is consisted of many persons who have been working a lot on the basis of the open data implementation inside the Greek public sector. Diavgeia application is a product of the team that now governs EELLAK. On the other side, OKFN GR has dramatically implemented a lot of open data policies in a systematic way that conforms to the OKFN movement.

A compromise is needed in order to achieve better results. It is a fact that when a policy has revealed aspects of exploitation a lot of serious scientific branches are emerging.

Why we are going to fail in the implementation regarding the European Funds in Greek Local Government (lack of institutional cooperation, applications' interoperability and managerial synergy)

Yes, there is a problem here. If a Greek municipality would like to be funded by the European Funds to create, build or reengineer

a structure, this cannot be succeeded unless it has allowed a public consultation regarding the results, the consequences of the project to be funded.

In Greece, where democracy has been born, there is a lack of Public Consultation, regarding the Electronic Governance Tools. While Greek municipalities are not prepared to achieve public consultation due to the lack of open public data sets that can allow that kind of public consultation.

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[1] www.diavgeia.gov.gr

[2] <http://community.openspending.org/2012/07/osi/>

[3] <http://www.linkedopendata.gr/stats>

[4] What is the difference between EELLAK and OKFN GR? Sometimes I wonder what the differences are.