



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

ENSURING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS: A BASIS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND APPROPRIATE EU INVESTMENTS

May 26, 2023. Spikeri Concert Hall, Riga.
Address: Ģenerāļa Radziņa krastmala 3, Riga.



ABOUT THE CONFERENCE:

Latvia will hold the Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe for the second time from mid-May to mid-November 2023. One of the thematic priorities of the Latvian Presidency is good governance in local government and will be a central theme of the upcoming conference. It will include discussions on various aspects of good governance - the rule of law, good financial management, public participation. The conference will also discuss responsible municipal development planning, capacity building of municipal staff and innovative solutions. Finally, seven Latvian municipalities will share their findings on the 2022 assessment of their compliance with the 12 principles of good governance defined by the Council of Europe, developing a methodology to this end. At the end of the conference, the municipalities that have demonstrated compliance with the principles of good democratic governance will be awarded the European Label of Governance Excellence (ELoGE).

The aim of the conference: to discuss the various aspects of good governance in local government (public participation, rule of law, sound financial management, operational efficiency, responsible development planning, etc.), to discuss the challenges and improvements needed, as well as successful solutions and good practices that local authorities can share with each other. The availability of funds from the European Union and other institutions plays an important role in the development of municipalities, and one of the discussions will be devoted to responsible municipal development planning, including attracting investment. During the conference, municipalities that have carried out an assessment of their performance against the 12 principles of good governance in 2022 will be invited to share their conclusions on the results of this assessment, lessons learned from the assessment process and related ideas for strengthening their governance.

Audience: representatives of Latvian municipalities, representatives of state institutions, experts from the Council of Europe, members of the CDDG (European Committee on Democracy and Governance) and representatives of other ELoGE accredited institutions, representatives of non-governmental organisations, representatives of international institutions, approximately 100 participants in total. Speakers will include the Ombudsman, experts invited by the Council of Europe, representatives of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, representatives of the State Audit Office, local government leaders and civil society representatives.

Conference language: Latvian, with English-Latvian-English translation.

Registration form for the conference is available [here](#).

The conference is organized with a funding from the Council of Europe for implementation of Good Governance and the European Label of Governance Excellence in Latvia & the conference is co-funded by the European Social Fund technical assistance project No. 10.1.2.0/18/TP/004 The European Social Fund assistance to the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Protection for publicity measures concerning activities of the Cohesion policy funds.

CONFERENCE'S SCHEDULE:

9:30 - 10:00	Registration & Coffee Break
OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE	
10:00 - 10:30	Māris Sprindžuks, Minister for Environmental Protection and Regional Development Alina Tatarenko, Head of the Democratic Governance Division, Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity of the Council of Europe (CoE) Iveta Kažoka, Director of Centre for Public Policy PROVIDUS
10:00 - 10:30	Juris Jansons, Ombudsman Presentation – "The scope and role of good governance in local government".
I PANEL DISCUSSION: BEST PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES IN ENSURING THE RULE OF LAW, SOUND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS	
10:45 - 12:30	<p>Panelists:</p> <p>Siobhan Smyth, UK Government, Deputy Head of Governance Reform and Democracy Unit, Department for Communities and Local Government. Presentation – "Ensuring the rule of law in local government - Good practice and the role of public participation".</p> <p>Ilze Oša, Deputy State Secretary on Regional Development at Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia. Presentation – "The new Local Government Law - New tools and opportunities, and digitally-driven changes in governance and society's everyday habits".</p> <p>Oskars Erdmanis, Head of the Third Sector for the Fifth Audit Department at the State Audit Office of the Republic of Latvia. Presentation – "The role of financial and performance audits by the State Audit Office and challenges for local governments in ensuring sound financial management".</p> <p>Līga Stafecka, Senior policy analyst in good governance at the Centre for Public Policy PROVIDUS. Presentation – "What is the role of the public in local government: voter, customer, partner, public watchdog?".</p> <p>Gunārs Anšiņš, Chairman of the City Council of Liepāja. Presentation – "Key features of a well-governed municipality and how to achieve them in a municipality : Experience of Liepāja Municipality".</p>
12:30 - 13:30	LUNCH

II PANEL DISCUSSION: CAPACITY BUILDING OF MUNICIPALITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE, DATA-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND ATTRACTING EU INVESTMENTS

13:30 - 15:00	<p>Panelists:</p> <p>Cezary Trutkowski, Council of Europe expert & Chairman at Foundation in Support of Local Democracy, Warsaw, Poland. Presentation – "How to balance the development needs of local authorities with available financial resources? How to successfully use the various funds to achieve municipal development?".</p> <p>Raivis Bremšmits, Director of State Development Planning Department at Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia. Presentation – "Data-driven and community-based municipal development and investment planning: Where do we stand today and what should we achieve in the future?".</p> <p>Jānis Baiks, Mayor of Valmiera City Council. Presentation - "Municipal experience with data-based and sustainable development planning".</p> <p>Rūdolfs Cimdiņš, Head of Spatial Planning Unit at Riga Planning Region. Presentation "Riga planning region's experience in development planning".</p> <p>Āris Adlers, President at Alliance for Cross-sectoral Sustainable Development (NGO). Presentation – "How to stay focused on the needs of local people when defining the objectives of local development planning and attracting funding?"</p>
15:00 - 15:15	COFFEE BREAK

III PANEL DISCUSSION: BENEFITS FROM SELF-EVALUATION OF GOVERNANCE PRACTICES. KEY FINDINGS FROM THE ELOGE IN LATVIA

15:15 - 16:30	<p>Jon Barber, Council of Europe expert on the European Label of Governance Excellence methodology. Presentation – "What is ELoGE and what does it do for local authorities?".</p> <p>Agnese Frīdenberga, Senior policy analyst in good governance & social entrepreneurship. Centre for Public Policy PROVIDUS. Presentation – "Presentation of the results of Latvian municipalities in compliance with the 12 principles of good governance".</p> <p>Panel discussion with representatives from seven Latvian municipalities.</p>
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AWARD CEREMONY

17:00 - 19:00	<p>In 2022, seven Latvian municipalities assessed their compliance with the 12 principles of good governance according to the Council of Europe methodology. The municipalities that scored the highest will be awarded the European Label of Governance Excellence award.</p> <p>Speeches by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Māris Sprindžuks, Minister for Environmental Protection and Regional Development • Boris Lazov, Program Manager at the Council of Europe; • Agnese Frīdenberga, Līga Stafacka, Senior policy analyst at PROVIDUS.
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