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# European Label of Governance Excellence

## Final Report

Delivering Good Governance  
in Slovakia

2022



CENTRE OF EXPERTISE  
FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE



## Acknowledgements

Dobrý úradník - Good Civil Servant - is one of the partner institutions of the Council of Europe for implementing the CoE-EU joint project “Delivering Good Governance in Slovakia”, aimed at supporting Slovak municipalities in improving their performance and providing high quality services in an improved system of local self-government. The organisation, having been accredited by the Council of Europe ELoGE accreditation platform to award the Label in Slovakia, had a task to implement the Council of Europe [Center of Expertise for Good Governance](#) tool [European Label of Governance Excellence](#) (ELoGE) and deliver the programme in Slovakia, leading to awarding the Label to local authorities which achieve an overall high score in good governance, based on evaluating their performance against the [12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance](#). The Council of Europe, in cooperation with other accredited institutions, implements the ELoGE programme in multiple countries.

This unique opportunity, and at the same time a challenge, to assess, the performance of local authorities and to identify their strengths and weaknesses, also offers an opportunity to learn and improve with the help of international and national experts. Local self-administrations receive mentoring and know-how available through international experience to improve their performance.

After the difficulties with implementing the pilot year of ELoGE during the global COVID-19 pandemic, the project team had enough experience to expect that not everything will work out according to the plan and consequently make the necessary adjustments in the implementation of the tool. Being realistic strongly helped the successful project completion.

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We would like to thank all participating municipalities, our colleagues, peers and experts and the Council of Europe, as well as everyone not mentioned above, who made the second year of ELoGE in Slovakia possible.

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# 1. Introduction

In late 2021 and early 2022, the European Label of Governance Excellence (ELoGE) was implemented for



the second time in the country and the Label was awarded to Slovak municipalities for having achieved a high level of good governance according to Council of Europe's Twelve Principles of Good Democratic Governance. The assessment process consists of self-evaluations by the participating municipalities, citizen- as well as elected officials' surveys and providing evidence in order to justify the self-assessments. Thereby, local authorities demonstrate that they ensure good governance, in accordance with the European benchmark and, in general terms, in the

best interest of citizens.

## 1.1. The Twelve Principles

The Twelve Principles of Good Democratic Governance were developed as reference points to define and evaluate the level of democratisation and good local governance.

1. Participation, Representation and Fair Conduct of Elections
2. Responsiveness
3. Efficiency and Effectiveness
4. Openness and Transparency
5. Rule of Law
6. Ethical conduct
7. Competency and Capacity
8. Innovation and Openness to Change
9. Sustainability and Long-term Orientation
10. Sound Financial Management
11. Human rights, Cultural Diversity and Social Cohesion
12. Accountability

## 1.2. On Slovakia

Slovakia (officially *the Slovak Republic*) is a landlocked country in Central Europe, bordering Austria, Czech Republic, Poland, Ukraine and Hungary. According to the 2021 census, it has approx. 5.45 million citizens, out of whom 83.9 % identify as Slovaks, 7.7 % as Hungarians and 1.2 % as Romani. Almost 60 % identify themselves as Roman Catholics, 7.6 % as Protestants and some 24 % adhere to no religion. It shall be noted that self-identification does not need to correlate with who their ancestors were, what language they speak at home, or what values they've internalised.

Slovakia is a unitary parliamentary republic, a member of the European Union and NATO. What makes it interesting in the context of ELoGE is its administrative division. With eight counties (self-governing regions) and almost 475 thousand citizens (according to official numbers; unofficial estimates go with between 660 and 670 thousand), the country has some 2 890 municipalities ranging from 475 thousand (officially) to only a few dozen citizens.



map by JRC, European Commission (CC BY 4.0), ([link](#))

## 2. ELoGE in Slovakia

In March 2020, the NGO Dobrý úradník ([website](#)) was accredited by the Council of Europe to implement ELoGE in Slovakia. Council of Europe experts provided support to the project and municipalities applying for the Label. The project's first year was implemented from May 2020 with the first training of local experts, until January 2021, when the Awards ceremony took place.

Implementation of the programme's second year commenced with two rounds of training for local project experts which were carried out in November 2021 by a Council of Europe expert - Mr Jon Barber. Cooperation with the municipalities was officially launched on 30 November 2021 and the schedule was set for municipalities to complete the self-evaluation by the end of February 2022, while a survey of citizens' and elected representatives' opinions on the performance of their respective municipalities was conducted during the year's first quarter.

The data were evaluated during April 2022 and, at the end of May, were, together with the self-evaluation results, consulted with the National Stakeholders Platform, which was formed in the project's first year ([link](#) to the Memorandum on cooperation). The Awards ceremony took place on 28 June 2022 and was the first event of the second project year to take place in-person after the COVID-19 pandemic subdued.

What both the first and the second annuals in Slovakia share is that they took place during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. In the second year, this meant that all activities from trainings up until the Awards ceremony took place online; the ceremony was the only live gathering of the whole project. Although foreseen after the first year of the pandemic, this development influenced the whole mode of cooperation between the project team and local authorities. More on this year's specifics in Chapter [2.4](#).

### 2.1. Dobrý Úradník

The NGO Dobrý úradník (Good Civil Servant) was established in 2018 by a group of Slovak civil servants enthusiastic about supporting and promoting a culture of professional, ethical and innovative civil service

as well as a transparent state and public administration. The association supports networking among civil servants and their peers and encourages education, mainly via live and on-line discussions (dominant since the pandemic began), active participation in social events and, occasionally, producing blogs and other written text formats about relevant topics. In addition, Dobrý úradník also focuses on raising awareness of the general public on the importance of civil service, cooperates with a wide range of stakeholders from NGOs to universities, and promotes its 10 Principles of a Good Civil Servant. Since 2020, the organisation is responsible for implementing the European Label of Governance Excellence in Slovakia, now having finalised its second year.

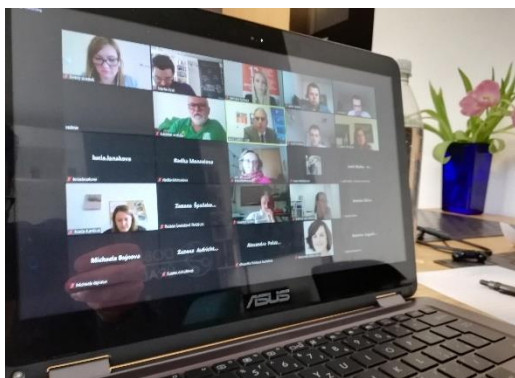
## 2.2. National Stakeholders Platform

The National Stakeholders Platform was established in order to approve the Slovak ELoGE benchmark and supervise the implementation of the programme, thereby ensuring that best performing municipalities receive the ELoGE. It includes public institutions as well as civic associations: it comprises of the representatives from two ministries, one national supervisory body, one university, and three associations connecting municipalities with their citizens. The Platform comprises of

- Mr. Jozef Kubala, Ministry of Finance
- Mrs. Nad'a Kurilová, Ministry of Interior
- Mrs. Lucia Mokrá, Comenius University in Bratislava, Faculty of Social and Economic Studies, Institute of Public Policy
- Mr. Ľubomír Andrassy, Supreme Audit Office of the Slovak Republic
- Mrs. Jana Červenáková, Union of Towns and Cities of Slovakia
- Mr. Radomír Brtňan, Association of Towns and Municipalities of Slovakia
- Mr. Vladimír Špánik, Association of Citizens of Towns and Municipalities of Slovakia

## 2.3. Participating Municipalities

The open call for municipalities' application for ELoGE was published in November 2021, followed by approaching potential participants on an individual basis. Participating in the project is, especially if culminating in achieving the award, a clear benefit for participating municipalities and a great tool for promoting their skills and qualities. Nevertheless, their willingness to participate was negatively influenced by the ongoing pandemic. COVID-19 led to administrative staff being overburdened with workloads far exceeding their standard amounts.



In 2021, twelve very different municipalities, ranging in size from Bellova Ves with less than 330 citizens to Prešov, Slovakia's third largest city with some 85 thousand citizens, applied:

- Bellova Ves
- Bratislava-Staré Mesto (Bratislava-Old Town, a Bratislava district)
- Bratislava-Vrakuňa (Bratislava- Vrakuňa, a Bratislava district)
- Dubnica nad Váhom
- Handlová
- Hlboké nad Váhom
- Košice-Staré Mesto (Košice-Old Town, a Košice district)

- Košice-Sídlisko Ťahanovce (a Košice district)
- Prešov
- Púchov
- Trenčianske Teplice
- Zeleneč

## 2.4. 2021 Specifics

The first year we brought ELoGE to Slovakia, 2020, was indeed very specific due to the new COVID-19 pandemic, which struck the society as well as the ways people are used to cooperating in a way quite unprecedented in recent decades. The pandemic's influence on the project was immense and participating municipalities, as well as the project team (together with the rest of humanity) needed to learn to work remotely very quickly. It should also be mentioned that the results are to be considered a success.

When the second year of ELoGE launched at the end of 2021, replacing physical meetings with digital communication platforms and videocalls became rather usual. Physical meetings were planned to take place during the project's second year which, however, turned out not to be possible due to the ongoing pandemic. Another factor influenced the project negatively: Russia's invasion of Ukraine, generating tens of thousands of refugees, many of whom fled to Slovakia. Initially, only some municipalities had to deal with the situation, mainly due to geographical reasons. Over time however, the load was distributed more evenly throughout all the country's municipalities, which were helping with sheltering and caring for refugees. Thus, after two years of permanent crises caused by the pandemic, already exhausted municipalities had to start dealing with a completely new type of problems.

Communication between all parties considered (the project team, local experts, participating municipalities) took, once again, place online via the Zoom platform, as well as telephonically and via e-mail. Relevant data was shared through cloud storage.

As none of the project team members participated in ELoGE in a non-pandemic year, it's not empirically possible to assess whether the whole project would be of different quality if personal contact with the participants were possible. It can only be assumed that had the experts visited the participating municipalities in person, they would have had a better chance to gain an in-depth insight into that municipality's *modus operandi* and to evaluate how strongly they embody the criteria for receiving the Label. It can also be assumed that in-person contact with the project team and experts could have been more motivating for the municipalities' representatives – as is common with personal meetings, but less common with remote cooperation – and this could have led to a higher percentage of municipalities concluding the project successfully.

## 2.5. ELoGE e-Learning Tool

In order to strengthen the awareness about good democratic governance and its principles, together with the Council of Europe and the Institute of Public Policy at Comenius University's Faculty of Social and Economic Studies, Dobrý úradník has launched an e-learning tool dealing with the Twelve Principles. The tool also raised awareness of and strengthened the values modern European society ([link](#)).

## 3. Methodology

The evaluation tool utilized within the ELoGE project is the Benchmark, enabling to identify municipalities which are best fulfilling the twelve principles of good democratic governance by measuring their performance and policies against it; thus, determining whether they meet the conditions for being awarded



the Label. Results of the surveys conducted among the municipalities' citizens as well as elected representatives, intended at providing information on their attitudes towards their respective municipality's performance, serve as supporting data.

The questions are aimed at examining the respondents' satisfaction with how the local administration manages with regard to fulfilling the twelve principles. Although their results do not influence the overall outcome of municipalities' self-evaluation, a more significant discrepancy between the results of the surveys and of self-assessments would have resulted into the experts conducting a more thorough analysis of the way the municipality operates.

For more on the results of the questionnaire surveys, see Chapter [4.3](#).

### 3.1. Benchmark

Assessment of the participating municipalities against the Benchmark of the twelve principles of good democratic governance allows to identify municipalities that best uphold the principles, rendering them eligible for the ELoGE. Used for self-assessment, the Benchmark's indicators reflect on how a municipality's activity corresponds to the relevant principle and ought to be supported by evidence supplied by the local authority, such as existing regulations, internal documents, audits, but also information shared on web sites, mobile apps or through social media.

In relation to each indicator, a number of points can be awarded from 0 (does not apply) to 4, where 1 equals weak performance in known issues (that have not been dealt with so far) and 4 equals a track record



of best practices. Based on these points, a mark for the whole principle, ranging from 0 to 4, is calculated as the arithmetic mean, and from these marks, again as an arithmetic mean, each municipality's final marks are calculated. Acquiring an average of three or more points per principle indicates that the qualities of that municipality shall qualify it as eligible for the ELoGE. For self-assessment results, see Chapter [5.1](#).

The summary maturity matrix, included in the Benchmark, helps municipalities identify their strengths and weaknesses and therefore enable them to work on improving whether the respective municipality is awarded the Label of Excellence or not.

## 4. Online Data Collection

After considering multiple ways of collecting the citizens' and elected officials' data in the first ELoGE year, it was now clear that online questionnaires via Google Forms are the most efficient tool with no other tools having a comparable cost-result ratio. Thus, most answers were collected this way in 2022, with municipalities having the liberty to choose other ways of collecting data (paper forms) and having them later digitized.

### 4.1. Promotion

The online and social media promotion was the obvious choice in a situation when, due to the pandemic, live events and happenings were rendered scarce. Facebook is still the dominant social media channel among adult population in Slovakia, as well as the main online avenue utilized by the country's public administration for communication with their citizens.

Approximately half of Slovak citizens across all strata have Facebook accounts, with other social media platforms spread rather thinly through specific population groups: Instagram is preferred by younger users, Twitter's position in the country is very marginal and it would make no sense for a public institution to ever communicate via TikTok. Therefore, the choice of both the municipalities and the project team to communicate project-related activities through Facebook was only logical. In addition, ELoGE was also promoted via the Dobrý úradník website and in the partnered printed bi-weekly *Obecné noviny* (Municipal Newspaper), covering municipal issues in the country, as well as via websites and social media profiles of partner organisations.

Thus, it can be safely assumed that a single social medium, via multiple profiles, is responsible for disseminating most information about the whole project, as well as for most visits to the survey form. However, even though Facebook is used by most demographic groups, it cannot be guaranteed that their quantitative representation equals their representation in the population.

#### 4.2. Statistics: The Demographic

The overall number of answers collected from the **general population** was 943. The average age of respondents was 46 years and they had been living in their municipality for 37 years. 57 % of answers came from women, 43 % from men; 42 % of respondents were university educated, 44 % had secondary vocational and 11 % had high school education.

Number of survey answers per municipality

Municipality	Number of citizens	Citizens' questionnaires	Elected reps. questionnaires
Bellova Ves	326	78	3
Bratislava-Staré Mesto	46 080	62	5
Bratislava-Vrakuňa	20 711	131	6
Dubnica nad Váhom	22 595	126	3
Handlová	16 199	253	9
Košice-Sídlisko Ťahanovce	20 863	73	11
Púchov	17 472	119	8
Trenčianske Teplice	3 980	52	5
Zeleneč	2 632	35	5

56 **elected officials** answered the survey. 64 % of those were men and 34 % women; with their average age being 52 and 80 % of them were university educated. 39 % were employed in the public sector, 30 % in private and 14 % were business owners. 55 % served their first term in the office (21 % second term and 23 % third or more) and 43 % were active as volunteers in their municipalities.

#### 4.3. Surveys

Collecting data online was not the only option, although its accessibility and ease of processing rendered it the most optimal one. Some of the participating municipalities, for example Zeleneč with a larger elderly population, also intended to collect data in-person and then digitize them. In the end, the data was aggregated via Google Forms – a tool with virtually zero costs on the part of the project team, but easily

accessible for survey participants via computers or mobile devices and providing outputs in a very user-friendly format, easy to process.

## 5. Self-assessment

In line with the first year, it was decided to assess municipalities based on their self-evaluation and to use the survey answers collected from the citizens (and elected officials as well) as supporting evidence. Of the seven awarded municipalities, three (Bratislava-Vrakuňa, Dubnica nad Váhom, Púchov) posted similar results in self-assessment and in the surveys. Two - Bratislava-Staré Mesto and Handlová, posted largest deviations between high self-assessment and slightly less enthusiastic assessment reached in the citizen survey.

### 5.1. Municipalities' Performance

Self-assessment results (rounded to the nearest whole number) and final marks. More in Chapter 3.1.

Principle	Bellova Ves	Bratislava-Staré Mesto	Bratislava-Vrakuňa	Dubnica nad Váhom	Handlová	Košice-Sídliisko Ťahanovce	Púchov	Avg. mark per principle
1. Participation, Representation, Fair Conduct of Elections	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	3.6
2. Responsiveness	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	3.7
3. Efficiency and Effectiveness	4	3	4	4	3	2	4	3.4
4. Openness and Transparency	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4.0
5. Rule of Law	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4.0
6. Ethical Conduct	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	3.9
7. Competency and Capacity	4	3	4	4	3	3	2	3.3
8. Innovation and Openness to Change	4	4	4	3	4	3	3	3.6
9. Sustainability and Long-term Orientation	4	4	4	3	4	2	3	3.4
10. Sound Financial Management	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	3.9
11. Human Rights, Cultural Diversity and Social Cohesion	4	4	4	3	4	2	4	3.6
12. Accountability	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3.9
<b>Avg. mark per municipality</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3.6</b>	

## 6. Conclusions

Out of twelve participating municipalities, seven managed to finish the project's second year. All of them acquired enough points to qualify for the ELoGE award:

- Bellova Ves
- Bratislava-Staré Mesto
- Bratislava-Vrakuňa
- Dubnica nad Váhom

- Handlová
- Košice-Sídlisko Ťahanovce
- Púchov

All municipalities which managed to complete self-evaluation and provide their respective experts with evidence qualified for the award. Five municipalities left the undertaking at various points during the process, either due to reasons that were not specified, or due to reasons that might be related to lack of personal capacities needed primarily to manage the refugee wave caused by Russian attack on Ukraine. The team believes at least some of these municipalities would be able to qualify for the ELoGE under more *standard* circumstances and ought to be approached were the project to continue.



## 6.1. Findings on Individual Municipalities

With each municipality, we've identified good practices, activities or projects that make them stand out, such as changes that they were among the first to implement or activities that could serve as a showcase to motivate and inspire other municipalities to improve, or modernize, their services and operations.

### Bellova Ves

- Repeatedly awarded the Open Self-Government award for public access to information.
- The municipality has in-depth codes of ethics for both the mayor and members of the municipal council.
- Annual participatory meetings take place on drafting and ex-post evaluation of the municipal budget as well as other regularly drafted plans.

### Bratislava-Staré Mesto

- The municipality offers free (pro bono) legal services one day a month to citizens as well as non-citizens. This pro bono day is scheduled in advance and advertised on-line.
- Recently established the municipal green watch which supervises the cleanliness of public spaces, as well as a dedicated night order inspector.
- Bratislava-Staré Mesto runs its own social dispensary, providing for locals in need, it also established an organisation dedicated to field work with the elderly.

### Bratislava-Vrakuňa

- A detailed ethical code for elected representatives as well as employees.
- The municipality also has an in-depth directive on promoting transparency and curbing corruption. In force since 2016 and envisioning multiple practical measures, most of which have already been put in place.

### Dubnica nad Váhom

- Direct calls to action in order to stimulate citizen participation, for example in selecting the new town logo or in council committees.
- The town underwent several audits and certifications, leading to obtaining a quality management certificate, environmental management certificate and an anti-corruption management certificate.
- The municipality utilizes popular platform *Odkaz pre starostu* (Message for the Mayor), which enables citizens to communicate issues related to public spaces with the municipality, informing it about problems that might otherwise have gone unnoticed.
- The municipal office utilizes digital workflow, executives also approve documents electronically and task progress is being tracked via the system's backlog. Digitalising the bureaucracy is also good for the planet, eliminating *paper* from *paperwork*.

### Handlová

- Public transport tickets can be paid for via smartphones municipal winter road maintenance vehicles are being tracked via GPS.
- Utilizing the eGov platform gives citizens direct access to information on meetings of municipal bodies together with participation and voting.
- The town established a social enterprise, its director was nominated for Ministry of Labour award for most significant social activities of the year.
- The municipality is terminating the use of single-use plastics.

### Košice-Sídlisko Ťahanovce

- Opening new avenues for the citizens to communicate with their municipality via on-line forms or through social media messages.
- Municipal grants are awarded and communicated transparently. Every grant applicant fulfilling the pre-set conditions is awarded funding, although the amount will be decided individually.

### Púchov

- The town participated in the *Enviro mesto 2019* (Enviro-town 2019) contest, winning a special award for environmental education and cooperation with its citizens.
- On-line communication with elected representatives is preferred over more conservative tools thus saving paper.
- The municipality is reconstructing & re-purposing old buildings for uses such as rental apartments (note on local context: compared to most rich countries, Slovakia lacks rental apartments greatly).

## 6.2. Best Practices

- Embracing digital tools in general. Bureaucratic heritage is rich in what is present-day's Slovakia and the trends aimed at achieving client-centered approach, as well as streamlining and optimizing internal processes, are relatively new. There is still a long way to go, but it is clear that at least some municipalities have set out on the road.

- The *Odkaz pre starostu* (Message for the Mayor) platform is being widely utilized. Developed a couple years back by the NGO Slovak Governance Institute, the platform has reached wide popularity as a tool for citizens to report issues to their respective municipalities, which then publicly report on their solutions. The platform has been embraced by several of the municipalities participating in this year of EloGE in Slovakia.
- Digitizing internal processes. This leads to higher speed and efficiency as well as positively affecting the environment through eliminating (or limiting the use of) paper; an issue further connected to shipping and storage of documents.
- Social and welfare projects. The social dispensary operated by Bratislava's Old Town, or Handlova's social enterprise are good examples of a trend which should be here to stay: helping the ones in need and excluded or, in the case of social enterprises, helping them to help themselves.

### 6.3. Recommendations for Participating Municipalities

#### 1. (Participation, Representation and Fair Conduct of Elections)

- Municipalities shall be encouraged to actively call for citizen participation, be it for running for office, or supplying the self-administration with inputs, ideas and feedbacks. Involvement of marginalized communities is of special importance.

#### 2. (Responsiveness)

- Clear guidelines and standardized processes wherever possible, be it citizen participation or seeking remedy against municipal decisions the citizen considers not fully satisfactory.

#### 3. (Efficiency and Effectiveness)

- Benchmarking and evaluating the performance of municipal employees can be utilized as a tool for identifying improvement opportunities.

#### 4. (Openness and Transparency)

- Establish modern front desks where applicable.
- Increase the accessibility of chief controller reports with more user-friendly structuring and eventually searchability of provided information.

#### 5. (Rule of Law)

- Informing the public about lawsuits that the municipality is a party to. These could be published on-line on municipal websites.

#### 6. (Ethical conduct)

- Embracing codes of ethical conduct for employees as well as for elected representatives. Even though the latter might not be legally forced to adhere to any rules other than the (national) law, such code could exert moral, or peer, pressure to adhere to certain norms.

#### 7. (Competency and Capacity)

- More systematic approaches to employee trainings are encouraged: more individual approach and plans designed according to each employees' professional needs, with regular evaluation of progress or training quality. Many municipalities are on the right track but room for improvement can be identified.

#### 8. (Innovation and Openness to Change)

- Motivate municipal employees to actively search and promote innovative solutions and processes that would increase effectiveness and efficiency of the self-administration and the services it provides.

#### 9. (Sustainability and Long-term Orientation)

- Encourage focus on curbing energy consumption and future maintenance costs when implementing innovations.
- Curb the environmental impacts of municipalities' activities, support green solutions wherever possible.
- Support environmentally friendly forms of individual transport.

#### 10. (Sound Financial Management)

- Often identified room for improvement in communicating local taxes and levies, how the fees are calculated and how raised funds are spent.

#### 11. (Human rights, Cultural Diversity and Social Cohesion)

- Identify groups of citizens that tend to be less involved in decision-making on issues which affect them, find ways to improve their involvement: senior citizens, the youth and children, marginalized communities.

#### 12. (Accountability)

- Implement user-friendly structuring and increase searchability of all published materials in order to support public scrutiny.

### 6.4. Comparison with the Previous Year

While in the first year of ELoGE in Slovakia, mainly larger municipalities with larger populations were approached in order to participate, the second year was more open, leading to participation of smaller municipalities as well – three of them had less than four thousand citizens. The success rate was almost the same: 7 out of 12 participating municipalities (58 %) were awarded in 2022 and 5 out of 9 (55 %) a year before. However, the municipalities' self-esteem slightly grew: while in the first year all but one of the five awarded self-administrations scored 3.5 points in self-assessment, deviating literally by two or three hundredths, the 2022 results were more evenly distributed on the scale between 3.5 and 4 points.

What also differed was that both participating municipalities and the project team were now more experienced with remote cooperation and electronic tools, a field which was not that widely utilized before the pandemic. Unfortunately, the pandemic and later Russia's attack on Ukraine also affected the capacities of participating municipalities. Even though enthusiastic, it was often felt that they had been working hard for a very long time now, hitting their limits, and might need a break.

### 6.5. The Awards Ceremony

The Awards Ceremony took place in Bratislava's Hotel Falkensteiner and was predisposed to be a huge success due to being the first event related to the second year of ELoGE in Slovakia that took place in-person between two waves of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participants at the event ranged from representatives of the Council of Europe and associated experts, the European Commission and the project team to the mayors of participating municipalities and the National Stakeholders Platform. The event was also open to the public.



The Awards Ceremony was, among others, joined by Nathalie Berger (with a pre-recorded speech), Director for Support to Member State reforms, DG Reform, European Commission; Boris Lazov, Centre of Expertise for Good Governance, Council of Europe; Jon Barber, Council of Europe expert; Jana Červenáková, Executive VP, Union of Towns and Cities of Slovakia; Vladimír Špánik, Association of Cities of Towns and Municipalities of Slovakia; Naďa Kurilová, Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic and Alexandra Suchalová-Poláková, Comenius University in Bratislava, Faculty of Social and Economic Studies' Institute of Public Policy.

We were also honoured to welcome the mayors and some of their teams from all the successful municipalities. Both main Slovak press agencies, SITA ([link](#)) and TASR ([link](#)), and their associated outlets ([link](#)) informed about the event, as well as the Association of Towns and Municipalities of Slovakia's [website](#) covering news with municipal focus. The ceremony was also mentioned on social media profiles of the Ministry of Interior and some of the municipalities.

A short video from the event, which can be used as a tool for promoting not only EloGE, but the whole concept of the twelve principles of good governance, was also produced ([Facebook link](#)).



## 6.6. Recommendations for Upcoming Years & Other Countries

- i. Always consider target audiences and the language used in outputs. Civil servants too often use complicated language which lacks the potential to raise the interest of the public. Or might even be outright incomprehensible to them.
- ii. If possible, find the ideal ratio between online and in-person meetings. The first ones save great amounts of costs and time, the latter supports involvement and enthusiasm. Also, in-person contact might mitigate the dropout rate.
- iii. Utilize other collaborative tools, such as online platforms for data sharing. These might optimize the workload for both participating municipalities and experts as well. Optimize survey and data-gathering tools for efficient processing of the outcomes.



- iv. Be on look-out for external factors. Pre-determine the ones that could negatively influence participating municipalities and communicate the threat with them – risks, resilience-strengthening measures, challenges to the project and possible solutions.
- v. Analyze the previous year's drop-out rate. Draw preventive measures for the next year upon previous experience (when applicable).
- vi. Examine other tools for disseminating project information among the population. In the last two years, Facebook was the overwhelmingly dominant tool. However, its influence is starting to slowly diminish. It should also be noted that this single channel might not draw equal representation of all social strata to participate in the project.

July 2022