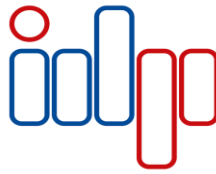




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## NATIONAL CONVENTION FOR EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

### Addressing Challenges in the Implementation of the Right to Information: Capacity Gaps, Unsupported Refusals, and Key Obstacles

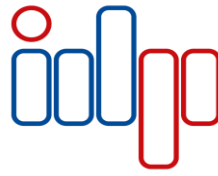
13 November 2025

#### Institutional Capacities & Implementation Challenges

- According to the 2024 Annual Report of the Commissioner for the Right to Information and Protection of Personal Data, there were 12,000 information requests and around 1,000 complaints submitted to the Commissioner. Based on the Commissioner's assessment, in 60–70% of cases where no response was provided, the cause was negligence or workload; in cases where responses were explicitly denied, the main reasons were confidentiality concerns or unclear requests. In this context, the following is needed:
- *Development of training for public administration on how to classify information, clarifying which information can be provided and which cannot; and increasing transparency (wider publication of information reduces the number of requests).*
- *Clarification of responsibility for failure to provide information — under the new law, responsibility no longer falls solely on coordinators but on all representatives of the administration responsible for the information.*
- *Clear distinction between ignoring a request and formally refusing it.*
- The Commissioner's Office consists of a staff of 15 people but faces serious difficulties in monitoring and supervising the implementation of the law due to limited human resources and insufficient budgeting, leading to growing workload pressures.
- The interpretation of internal acts by institutions often results in unjustified refusal to provide information by categorizing it as an internal document. In many cases, information is disclosed only after the Commissioner's intervention, creating obstacles for CSOs, experts, and public monitoring; this results in additional time and resource costs.



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## The Role of the Public Information Coordinator

- The role of the coordinator should be twofold:
  1. to coordinate information requests and provide the requested information;
  2. to serve as a guiding point for citizens, helping them understand the right to information and how to formulate their request.Positive practices from developed countries show that these offices should be welcoming, empathetic, and offer real support to citizens.
- It is recommended that communication between the Commissioner and the institutions subject to complaints be **formal and conducted via email**, to ensure traceability, transparency, and easier access for third parties.

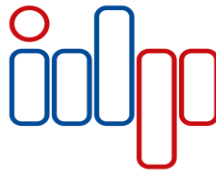
## **Public Information, Awareness-Raising & Communication Channels**

- Information and awareness-raising campaigns, as well as training/workshops (in cooperation with CSOs and universities) on: the right to public information; types of information that can be requested; how to prepare a request; procedural steps.
- Diversifying the ways public information is provided: beyond email, post, and phone, the Slovak model allows provision of information through mobile phone and text messaging.
- Transparency is not achieved merely by publishing information — it must be: clear, organized, easy to identify.

The current practice of uploading documents in unstructured ways (e.g., unnamed documents, scan documents just as picture page by page and not as a single document) makes public access difficult.
- Digitalizing the list of questions and answers (FAQ) to reduce repeated requests and administrative burden: 1) creation of a chatbot or interactive section, 2) use of artificial intelligence for automated responses.



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- The need to build a wider culture of transparency and accountability — not only within public administration but also among citizens, to understand their rights and the limits related to public information.

### **Positive Practices from Abroad (Slovakia)**

- Mandatory publication of signed contracts by public institutions on both their official websites and the National Online Register (functional since 2020). A contract that is not published **is not valid**, a highly effective anti-corruption practice.
- Expansion of the scope of authorities required to provide public information, including:
  - *public entities established by law or funded by the state (universities, hospitals, museums);*
  - *health insurance companies;*
  - *companies where the state holds majority ownership or controls the board;*
  - *and as of 2025, NGOs receiving public funds.*

**Suggestion from participants:** political parties, private universities, and private hospitals should also be included, as they provide services of public interest.

- Introduction of sanctions for *Harassing Requests* — requests that do not aim to obtain information but to burden/harass institutions. The law defines their characteristics, and once a request is classified as such, the institution is not obliged to respond and is not penalized. A clear methodology and training are needed for correct identification.

### **Legislation & Clarification of Legal Obligations**

- Clarification of responsibilities under the new law for providing information across all administrative institutions.
- Expanding the entities legally obliged to provide public information (following the Slovak model).
- Clear regulation of the *Harassing Requests* category and its classification methodology.
- Need for formal and documented communication between the Commissioner and institutions.