# Tailored support call Bulgaria

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**Contact details**

**Name:** Reny Antonova

**Country:** Republic of Bulgaria

**Name of the organisation:** MTITC (Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications)
**Tasks:** Open Data Initiative and Bulgarian Open Data Portal

There are many institutions working together on Open Data Policy. Open Data initiative is included in several Bulgarian Strategic Documents: Strategy for Public Administration Development 2015 - 2020, National Reform Program 2020, Open Government Partnership Initiative, the National Program Digital Bulgaria etc. It is also stipulated by the The Access to Public Information Act. It is an initiative of the Political Cabinet of Deputy Prime Minister for Coalition Policy and Public Administration and Minister of Interior, Council of Ministers Administration, Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications (MTITC), Society.bg Foundation, others.

**Results country fiche**

1. **What do you think of the country fiche results?**

In the Survey on Open Data Maturity in Europe for 2015, Bulgaria is ranked among the top 10 countries in the EU. In Bulgaria, the Open Data Policy led to improving accountability and transparency of the administration, and also created new mechanisms for providing public information for the re-use of data in an open format. Open Data Initiative increased the use of public data by citizens and business. The results for Bulgaria could be found on the „Open Data“ Banner on the MTITC website

<https://www.mtitc.government.bg/page.php?category=709&id=8686>.

1. **Is the revised PSI Directive transposed?**

The PSI Directive was transposed in December 2015 with the adoption of the amendments to the Access to Public Information Act (effective from January 2016). Currently, the secondary legislation is under development to facilitate opening data process. The Ordinance on standard terms and conditions for the use of public information and its publication in an open format is published for public consultation (<http://www.strategy.bg/PublicConsultations/View.aspx?lang=bg-BG&Id=2100>). The data offered so far is free of charge. Until now, 175 public-sector organizations (especially government administrations) have published 186 datasets in an open format on the Bulgarian Open Data Portal (http://opendata.government.bg/dataset). Some data visualization tools have been created as well. A list of 304 datasets, which have to be published in an open format by the end of 2016, was adopted by the Council of Ministers. The Public sector information will be provided for reuse free of charge or for a fee that cannot exceed the cost of its reproduction or provision. (Article 41g, Access to Public Information Act, <https://www.mtitc.government.bg/page.php?category=712&id=8790> )

**Looking back**

1. **What are the main developments in the field of Open Data this year?**

In 2015 there were several important achievements:

1) Amendments of The Access to Public Information Act were adopted in order the PSI Directive to be transposed;

2) Over 150 datasets have been published on the Bulgarian Open Data Portal;

3) Technical Improvements on the Portal;

4) Many events and trainings are organized in the field of Open Data;

5) A Strategy for Transparency and Partnership with Civil Society is under elaboration;

6) Technical Guidelines have been prepared for the publication of public information in an open format on the Open Data Portal.

The new amendments to the Access to Public Information Act, transposing the EU Directive, have introduced a mandatory prioritization of the information to be published in an open format. The prioritization is done both by public sector organizations and annually by the Council of Ministers. Decisions № 103 of Council of Ministers of 2015 and № 214 of 2016 approved list comprising a total of 423 datasets in priority areas to be published in an open format on the Open Data Portal during 2015 and 2016. Up to the end of this year, citizens and business will have access to more than 450 datasets. A mechanism for automatic conversion of excel and txt files to CSV format have been created and sent to all administrations.

 A lot of events were organised last year. Two major events were organized by the Political Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister, responsible for Coalition Policy and Public Administration and Minister of Interior, where the participants ranged from the government to citizens and businesses.

During the events all stakeholders were informed about:

* Open Data and Transparent Governance Conference, 2nd June 2015 - survey of good practices, analysis of the Initiative in Bulgaria, the process of the provision of open data and monitoring mechanism.
* Open Data – Presence and Perspectives Round table, 17th June 2016 - Open Data Policy, Open Data Framework, Open Data Initiative and the survey of Open Data and Transparent Governance. There were guest lectors - Martin Alvarez-Espinar (coordinator, EPSI Platform) who spoke on Promotion of Open Data and reuse of public sector information in Europe and EPSI Platform and Amélie Banzet who spoke for Scaling France Open Data Policy.
* Data Invite Conference, 2nd July 2015 - information for Interactive Data for Better Policies was presented, followed by Open Dialogue for Transparent Governance. It was organized by the cabinet of the Prime Minister, which is responsible for Coalition Policy and Public Administration.
* Open Data and Smart Governance Conference, 14th July 2015 - Bulgarian Institutions and Local Authorities presented “Where we are?”, National Policy and Practices in data opening: challenges and opportunities in front of Bulgarian Open Data Portal, Open Science as a prerequisite for quality research and entrepreneurship.
* “Time for Data” Conference, 3rd December 2015 Оpen data event , in Sofia Tech Park with UK Best Practices in the area of open data from Antonio Acuna, Open Data in Bulgaria: achievements and uses, Open Data for the society, business and NGO sector, and there was a discussion for Open Data as a mechanism for economic growth and transparency. Here the Lanscaping 2015 results were present :Bulgaria in Top 10!

There were several trainings organized by the Institute of Public Administration:

* Smart Regulation on 15-16th June 2015;
* Partnership for Open Governance on 22-23 June 2015;
* Open Data – Common Framework and publishing the information on the Open Data Portal on 8th October 2015- technical guidelines for creating and maintaining the information of open data format, creating and maintaining the profile of public sector organization and requirements for publishing;
* Introduction of Open Data & Sharing the Best Practices in the Open Data field on 9th October 2015.
1. **Which problems did you identify?**

The main problems encountered are the lack of ability to automatically update the information, which is published on the Open Data Portal and the insufficient awareness of civil servants who are publishing public information.

In terms of better understanding of the matter, the representative of MTITC asked several questions about the landscaping, which was discussed during the PSI meeting in Luxembourg in the beginning of April and about the harvesting scenarios, as presented at the same PSI meeting. The EDP team will send the presentation of the harvesting scenarios and if there are more questions about the harvesting scenarios will be asked via e-mail. The EDP team will share the link to the twitter of the EDP. In addition to the previous question, more information is needed on how the quality of data could be controlled in the different countries that provide data, in order to be ensured the same quality. The EDP team explains that there is a Metadata Quality Assessment (MQA) on the portal, which helps to stimulate the countries to increase the quality of data. The EDP team will share a link to the MQA.

**Looking forward**

1. **What is the most important thing for you now to develop?**
	* **Awareness within the government? Technical specifications of the portal / development of a portal? Stimulating re-use?**

The Bulgarian team plans to double the amount of published datasets. Now there are 186 datasets. This year will be increased to 450 and more by the end of December. The technical capabilities of the Open Data Portal will be upgraded with the financial support of Operational Programme "Good governance" 2014-2020.

1. **Are you in contact with other countries to exchange information or receive examples?**

Bulgarian team is interested in investigating good practices related to different OD portals, tools, results and datasets. The EDP team explained that a lot of information on this could be found on the EDP. The EDP team will share links to the Goldbook and to the use cases on the portal. The EDP team will share the link to the source code of the EDP. The Bulgarian Government will share the re-use survey on the Bulgarian portal and in the network.

1. **What events are you planning? National? Are there cross-country events too?**

The Bulgarian team organized an event on the 10th of May, supported by the cabinet of deputy Prime Minister. The progress of the event will be shared with the EDP team. Any further information will be sent accordingly.

The NGO sector plans to organize several initiatives/events on national level:

1) establishing a Coalition of interested NGOs in the country to work with open data and promote this data model among a wide range of stakeholders (NGOs, journalists);

2) organizing different events/hackathons to promote open data among various communities such as universities, journalists and other providers and users of data;

3) developing an instrument at local level (Sofia Municipality) to disseminate the initiative locally;

4) developing the instruments for business based on open data.

1. **Do you have plans for developing an API?**

Bulgaria already has an API, as it was announced in the frames of the landscaping in 2015.

1. **When should we be in contact again?**

During the various next steps as discussed below.

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* Not discussed during the call. More information is provided via email.

**Next steps**

* The EDP team will share a [link](http://www.europeandataportal.eu/mqa-service/en/dashboard.html) to the MQA.
* The Bulgarian team will provide a link to the PSI Directive law in English.
* The EDP team will see if there are best practices available on updating the national portal with a feature that automatically uploads data.
* The Bulgarian team will provide more information on the consultation services that will be included on the upgraded Open Data Portal. The EDP team will send the presentation of the harvesting scenarios to Bulgarian team.
* The Bulgarian team will share more information on the plans for this year, when finalised.
* The EDP team will share links to the [Goldbook](http://www.europeandataportal.eu/en/content/providing-data/open-data-goldbook) and to the [use cases](http://www.europeandataportal.eu/en/content/training-library/library/use-cases) on the portal.
* The EDP team will share the [link](https://github.com/governmentbg) to the source code of the EDP.
* Bulgarian team will share the re-use survey on the Bulgarian portal and trough the network, to which a link could be found.
* The EDP team will share the [link](https://twitter.com/EU_DataPortal) to the Twitter of the EDP.