

DIGITALIZATION
AND QUALITY OF
PUBLIC E-SERVICES IN
NORTH MACEDONIA



This project is financed
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This edition of policy papers is developed to assist the civil society and citizens, in general, engage in an informed debate and have access to expert knowledge, views and opinions on topics of importance for EU integrations. Areas in which the Republic of North Macedonia will lead its EU accession negotiations are both complex and diverse, while reforms that need to be implemented will open many dilemmas that necessitate an expert debate. For more contents produced under the project “CSO Dialogue – Platform for Structural Participation in EU Integrations” , visit the website: **www.dijalogkoneu.mk**

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- This edition is available only in electronic format

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Introduction

In continuity, North Macedonia implements activities and projects that should provide a solid basis for ongoing digitalization of public services intended for businesses and citizens. Examples of such activities include: adoption of relevant legislation (e.g., Law on Electronic Documents, Electronic Identification and Trust Services), national portal for e-service (uslugi.gov.mk), platform for interoperability, open data., platform for electronic public procurements, healthcare platform “My Term” and other projects planned and managed at the highest government level. A number of public institutions have also implemented successful projects for digitalization of services, including the Public Revenue Office, the Agency for Real Estate Cadastre, the Central Register, the Administration for General Records, etc.

Improving the quality and increasing the number of digitalized services for citizens and businesses would not only modernize the public administration, but will also serve as driver for further professional development among administration employees and for raising digital literacy among citizens through informal forms of learning, i.e. education. Hence, setting the digitalization of public services high on the political agenda will have a long-term positive effect in the broader societal context, while better quality of digital public services will significantly improve the quality of life for citizens in North Macedonia.

Scope of the research

All government activities from the last period provide a solid basis for conducting quality analyses how to identify well defined policy proposals that will improve the quality of public services through digitalization and how to implement measures to enhance awareness of citizens about the benefits from use of digital public services.

There are several key aspects of justification and they concern development of modern and efficient public administration that is based on digitalization and provides quality and fast services for citizens and businesses. The first aspect concerns the impact of information and communication technologies in terms of advancing efficiency of the public administration and improving quality of public services. The second aspect is the need for e-services under conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to reduce risks from further unwarranted consequences. And finally, the need for implementation of well-designed e-services that will promote digital literacy among citizens and will improve competitiveness of businesses. The key argument is that North Macedonia has already secured the main technology conditions, such as implementation of the platform for interoperability and superior internet connectivity (broadband internet and mobile networks). Launch of the national portal (uslugi.gov.mk) marked the first steps in digitalization of public services, which provides an excellent basis for analyses how public institutions should adjust to the digitalization and improve the quality of e-services.

Methodology

The research is implemented by means of qualitative and quantitative analysis conducted on two types of secondary data, i.e. data collected and published by other relevant sources, which could be re-examined as part of analysing the topic of interest.

First type of secondary data are of qualitative nature and arise from the legislative framework and strategic programmes adopted in North Macedonia that cover the issue of digitalization and quality of public services, as well as the European Union's strategic objectives for e-government having in mind that North Macedonia's strategic goal is to join the European Union. This section puts the emphasis on the Strategy for Public Administration Reform and Action Plan 2018-2022 and reviews the milestones achieved in respect to digitalization of public services.

Second type of secondary data are of quantitative nature and concern the quality of e-government services, as collected and processed by the European Union in the e-Government Benchmark Report, which also measures the quality of e-government services in North Macedonia. These data allow further processing and analysis aimed at identifying the starting points for bridging the gap in respect to quality of e-services in the country. Hence, data taken into account under this research are credible and valid, published by relevant sources, and there is no risk for contamination of findings.

Process for digitalization of public services in North Macedonia

One of the five principles that underline continuous efforts for attainment of goals and priorities from the Strategy for Public Administration Reform 2018-2022 is provision of quality, fast, and easily accessible services by using modern technologies and by continuous technical upgrades. This principle is the basis for all priority goals enlisted in the strategy, but it mainly concerns the third and the fourth goal, i.e. responsible, accountable and transparent operation of institutions and provision of fast, simple and easily accessible services. In this regard, especially important is the strategy's fourth goal concerning provision of fast, simple and easily accessible services.

Analysis of implemented measures under this goal from the Strategy for Public Administration Reform 2018-2022 allows the following conclusion. Under the fourth goal, objective 4.1. concerns cost-effective investments and improved services for citizens, adoption of strategy documents and defining the approach to finding solutions at policy level. By means of this objective, North Macedonia aims to improve the quality of services for citizens through cost-effective investments in technology and activities that should make delivery of such services at institutions more efficient. It resulted in formation of the National Council on ICTs in 2018, whose task is to draft and monitor implementation of the National Strategy on ICTs and to provide opinion on annual public procurement plans and technical specifications for tender documents of public sector institutions whose procurement subject concerns equipment and/or software in value that exceeds 20,000 euros in MKD counter-value. By 2020, the National Council has still not developed the National Strategy on ICTs, i.e. this document is still a draft version, which prevents timely implementation of activities from the Strategy for Public Administration Reform. Despite the fact that the Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA) reported that, in 2019, 32% of ICT procurement projects were coordinated at national level, it failed to enlist data on possible savings from this approach. The share of centrally coordinated ICT projects has increased to 50% in 2020, but the revision to the Action Plan resulted in a decision to abandon the activity for development of the plan on cost-effective investments. This was a result of the absence of National Strategy on ICTs, which hinders alignment of national and local institutions that have already initiated the digitalized process, and puts under question the process for centralization of decisions related to ICT projects.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that several draft documents were developed in 2020, including the analysis of the actual state-of-play and the draft ICT strategy and action plan. The draft document for national strategy on ICTs, posted on ENER, is far from being final and its current form does not provide solid basis for acceleration of processes for digitalization of public services. On the other hand, positive is the fact that the Draft National Strategy on ICTs anticipates measures aimed to raise digital literacy among the population as crucial precondition for successful digitalization of public services in the country.

In order to facilitate work in the digital space, the legal framework on electronic services and digital work was adopted in 2019 and implied validation of electronic documents as being of equal effect as their hardcopy.[1] As a result of these laws, relevant bylaws (rulebooks) arising from the Law on Electronic Documents, Electronic Identification and Trust Services were adopted in 2020. While adoption of these laws and rulebooks was one of the objectives defined under SPAR 2018-2022, their implementation is not easy and poses a major challenge for further digitalization of public services. From these reasons, in spite of already adopted legal solutions, most activities under this section of the strategy are still not completed.

Objective 4.2, which concerns improving quality and availability of public services, is of great importance for the quality of electronic services in North Macedonia. Implementation of activities defined under this measure from the strategy is late. The-portal for information and monitoring activities in the field of public administration quality management was launched in 2020. This portal hosts the new version of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF 2020), which is “adaptation of the existing CAF 2013, but focuses on digitalization, agility, innovation and sustainability”. The purpose of this portal is to provide support to institutions in the field of quality management.[2] It is unknown how many institutions have implemented this model, except for the two institutions enlisted as good practice on the portal.

Despite the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the process for continuous enlistment and verification of additional services in the Catalogue of Public Services continued in 2020. By the end of the year, the catalogue included 810 verified and approved services with adequate information hosted on the national portal. Nevertheless, only 150 of these were electronic services in 2020. 2021 was marked by accelerated digitalization of services on the national portal, which now includes services intended for legal entities.

Although measuring satisfaction of users with public services is an important indicator defined under the strategy’s fourth goal, such measurement was not conducted neither in 2019 nor in 2020 due to the lack of adequate methodology. The draft methodology for assessing the index of quality at institutions was developed in 2020, but was adopted in 2021.[3] However, the methodology does not include indicators to measure satisfaction of citizens with electronic services. Hence, an opportunity was lost to assess satisfaction of citizens with the quality of e-services in the course of 2021 and onwards, unless the methodology is amended in the forthcoming period. In such case, it remains unclear how can CAF 2020 model on quality of public services be applied.

[1] Law on the Central Register of the Population, “Official Gazette of RNM” no. 98/19, available at:

https://mioa.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl_files/documents/legislation/zakon_za_centralen_registar_na_naselenie.pdf;

Law on Electronic Management and Electronic Services, “Official Gazette of RNM” no. 98/19, available at:

https://mioa.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl_files/documents/legislation/zakon_za_elektronsko_upravuvanje_i_elektronski_uslugi_0.pdf;

Law on Electronic Documents, Electronic Identification and Trust Services, “Official Gazette of RNM” no. 01/19, available at:

https://mioa.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl_files/documents/legislation/zakon_za_elektronski_dokumenti_eid_i_doverlivi_uslugi.pdf

[2] <http://kvalitet.mioa.gov.mk/>

[3] Methodology for assessing the index of quality at institutions, available at: <http://kvalitet.mioa.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/metodologija%20za-ocenka-na-indeks-na-kvalitet-na-institucijite.pdf>

As regards digitalization of business processes at institutions, except for significantly improved digitalization of entry and exit processes at 15 institutions, there are no satisfactory improvements in terms of adjusting business processes and work from home that were imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This has significantly impacted the performance of state and public administration and the quality of services for citizens.

In 2020, under this objective, efforts continued for transformation of “single point of service” centres in different towns. Such centres were established in Skopje and Tetovo, with an indication that citizens can be informed about services available on the portal uslugi.gov.mk. Also, construction and craftsmen works have started for establishment of „single point of service“ centres in Bitola, Kumanovo and Ohrid. On one hand, having in mind the low level of activity by the government and other actors in the society related to increasing digital literacy among the population, combined with the aging population and late adoption of strategic and centralized approach to introduction of e-government and electronic services, it could be said that the need to improve desk-based services is the best medium-term objective. On the other hand, major investments for that purpose cannot be justified and there should be a practice for rational use of resources with clear vision and realistic timeframe for facilitation of the digitalization process. In doing that, development of the information society will stimulate digitalization of administrative services. Unfortunately, it becomes evident that implementation of SPAR 2018-2022 does not give equal priority to measures related to digitalization, they are not implemented in time and there are major delays in this regard.

In 2020, certain progress was made under objective 4.3, i.e. digital environment that allows access to and possibility for use of e-services. As indicated above, by the end of 2020 the national portal hosted a total of 160 e-services for citizens and the portal has registered more than 30,000 users. Although the number of users might appear high, it is still low compared to the total population in the country and reiterates the need for measures aimed at increasing digital literacy of citizens. It was reported that the project for digitalization of 40 registries has started in 2020, allowing for 135 new electronic services for citizens, which is more than necessary for citizens.

Quality of digital public services in North Macedonia

Having in mind that the focus of the current SPAR 2018-2022 in respect to digitalization is put on increasing the number of electronic services, little is known about the actual quality of these services. Late development of the methodology for monitoring the quality of services, combined with the lack of indicators under the methodology for measuring satisfaction of citizens with electronic services, has not contributed to availability of more data on the quality of e-services.

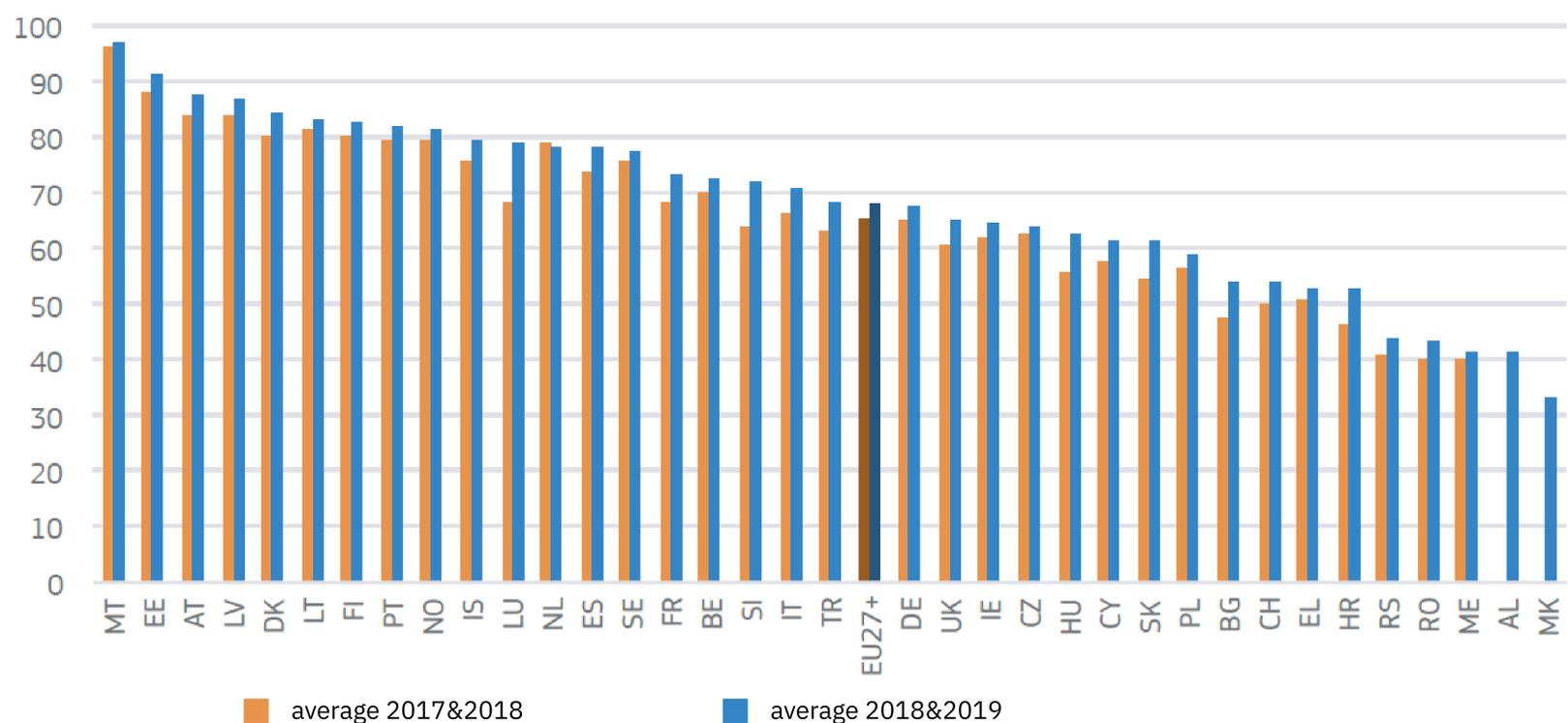
European Union's e-Government Benchmark

Given the lack of national research and relevant data, it would be good to review data from the biennial quality assessment of e-government conducted by the European Commission that covers 33 countries in Europe. This research called e-Government Benchmark is linked to EU priority policies, EU action plan on e-government 2016-2020 and the Tallin Declaration. The Tallin Declaration was signed by all EU member-states, and later by all EFTA countries in October 2017. It represents a new commitment at EU level for provision of high-quality digital services with citizen-centered approach, as well as flawless cross-border public services for legal entities. This goes hand-in-hand with the EU Action Plan on e-Government 2016-2020, aimed at accelerating digital transformation and modernizing public administration by creating efficient electronic services available to all. Republic of North Macedonia is also part of this biennial assessment, which is organized into four main indices:

1. **User Centricity** –aimed at assessing the extent to which services are available online, how mobile friendly they are and whether institutions provide online support and feedback;
2. **Transparency** – aimed at assessing whether the public administration provides and publishes clear information about their services and whether it is transparent about responsibilities of public organizations and how they process personal data;
3. **Key Enablers** –aimed at assessing the technology factors that support and facilitate delivery of digital public services;
4. **Cross-Border Mobility** –aimed at assessing how easily citizens from abroad are able to access and use online services.

Data by 2019, processed under e-Government Benchmark 2020 show that North Macedonia is the lowest ranked country according to the average score calculated for each of above enlisted indices (Figure 1).

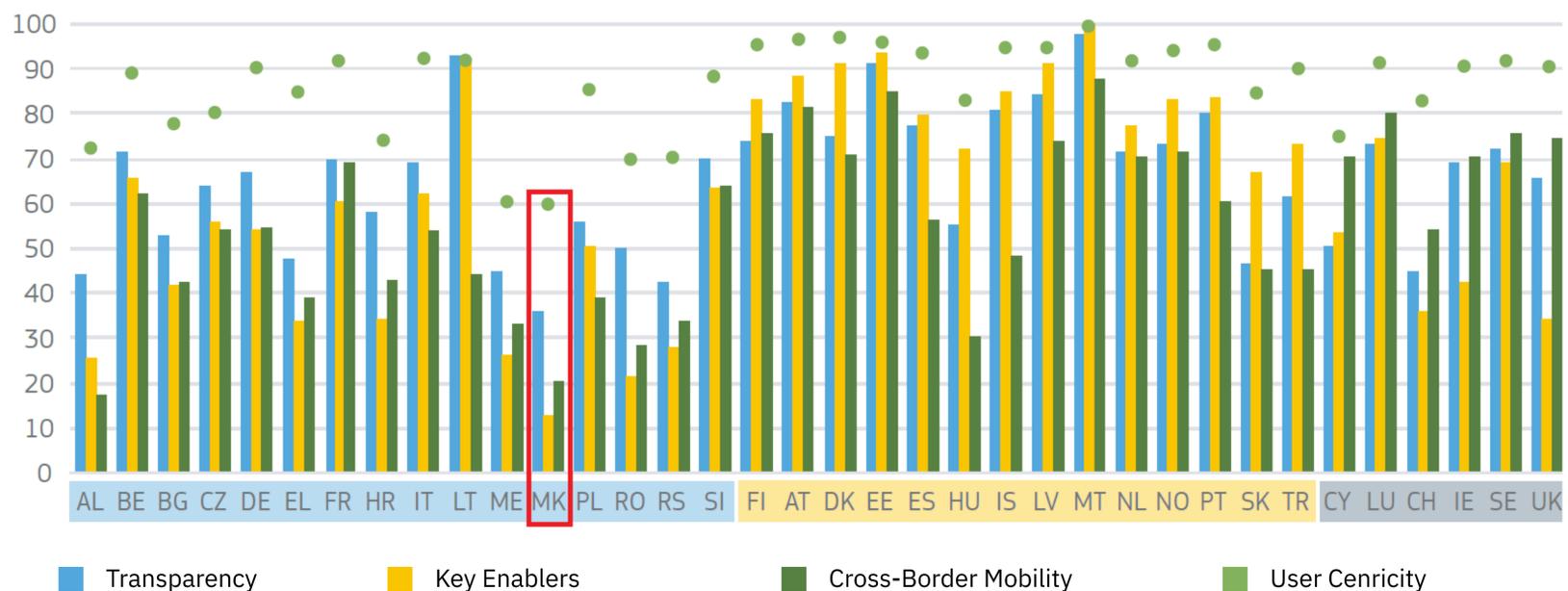
Figure 1: Biennial average score per country



source: E-Governemnt Benchmark 2020

Individual scores for all indices are given on Figure 2, where it could be seen that North Macedonia is best ranked under **User Centricity**. This is mainly due to the start of operation by the national portal for e-services. Under this index, North Macedonia is way below the average of EU member-states in respect to the indicator for online availability. The score for this indicator refers to the fact that, in North Macedonia, online information is available about e-services, but there is no sufficient offer of actual electronic service for citizens and legal entities. A more detailed analysis of data reveals that the lowest number of electronic services are available in the transport sector. Similar situation is observed under the indicator on utilization of e-services, with particular delays in respect to transport and moving services (internal or external migration). Not a single website hosted by the institutions covered by this study provides an opportunity for electronic support and assistance to users or even possibility for user feedback that would enable measurement of their experience with this process.

Figure 2: 2020 Indicator Score



source: E-Government Benchmark 2020

Based on data presented in Figure 2, it could be seen that North Macedonia belongs to the group of countries with smallest difference between scores for **User Centricity** and **Transparency**. However, as was the case with other indices, the score for **transparency** is way below the EU average. The country is poorly ranked also in respect to transparency for service delivery, especially under the indicator for procedure notification and monitoring, but also under the indicator for provision of information about expected time for service completion. The indicator for transparency of personal data shows particular weaknesses in respect to the possibility for digital correction of personal data and for monitoring institutions/entities that have used personal data. In this regard, it should be noted that the portal uslugi.gov.mk allows citizens to obtain “overview of access logs to their personal data contained in the Central Register of the Population by different users”, but the same provides information only about time of access to personal data and not about institutions that have accessed personal data and for which purpose. Nevertheless, even if such information had been provided, they would not have been sufficient because no information is available on access to personal data by many institutions that still do not provide services through this portal. The third indicator under the index on transparency concerns transparency of the institutions. In this regard, North Macedonia has the poorest score for measuring satisfaction of citizens with digital services, which is non-existent at the moment, as well as for data openness about the number of visits and views, which is also not enabled on the institutions’ websites.

Among all four indices, North Macedonia has the poorest score in respect to **Key Enablers**, i.e. technology factors that support and facilitate delivery of digital public services. This low score is due to poor possibility for use of electronic identification. “Only citizens who have registered on the National Portal of e-Services or with the Public Revenue Office have electronic identification, but use of some services requires electronic signature.” This benefit from the national portal is mainly due to adoption of the set of laws on electronic governance and electronic services, electronic documents and trust services in 2019, and relevant rulebooks in 2020.

Equally low score is assigned to the fourth index, i.e. **Cross-Border Mobility**. As regards availability of digital services for foreigners, language is the biggest barrier to obtaining online information because there is no information in English language. The next barrier concerns the need for national electronic identification card. This index is important for the country’s path towards EU accession, as it aims to enable alignment of services for the country’s entry in the common market. On this account, in the future, greater attention should be paid to improving conditions in this regard.

In order to obtain complete and comprehensive overview related to performance of digital services in the countries, the four indices are measured against eight life events (user experiences). They cover a sum of digital services needed by ordinary citizens or businesses in everyday life. Selected life events include: regular business operations; moving; owning and driving a car; business start-up; starting a small claim procedure; family life; losing and finding a job; and studying.

Figure 3 provides an overview of scores for digital services related to each life event in North Macedonia compared to the EU average for 2020.

Figure 3: Scores for digital services against characteristic life events: North Macedonia vs EU27 average

e-government services	User Centricity	Transparency	Cross-Border Mobility	Key Enablers
regular business operations	76	53	13	49
	95	74	64	75
moving	43	15	21	0
	89	60	54	69
owning and driving a car	47	25	0	0
	88	56	48	54
starting a small claim procedure	71	55	7	28
	83	71	40	48
business start-up	73	44	56	23
	89	59	70	73
family life	66	45		0
	80	68		50
losing and finding a job	56	45		0
	83	68		62
studying	50	27	26	0
	85	65	61	60

source: E-Government Benchmark 2020

Poorest ranked against all criteria are life events in the field of mobility, i.e. moving, and owning and driving a car, where there are no key enablers or, more specifically, there are no possibilities for use of electronic identification. Similar, although slightly better scored are life events related to losing and finding a job and studying, where despite the slightly greater focus on the user, there are no key enablers, which restricts any further digitalization of these services and they are sustained at the level of information in the digital sphere. Best scored are regular business operations and business start-up. However, the score under the index on user centricity is again the highest (76), meaning that information is readily available on the internet for large number of services intended for the business community, but only small portion of them are digitalized services. Data show that most digitalized services are those provided by the Public Revenue Office and the Central Register. Highest transparency is noted with information and services for users wishing to initiate a small complaint procedure, while concerns are raised with low transparency scores assigned to moving and studying as life events common among young people.

Digital Economy and Society Index

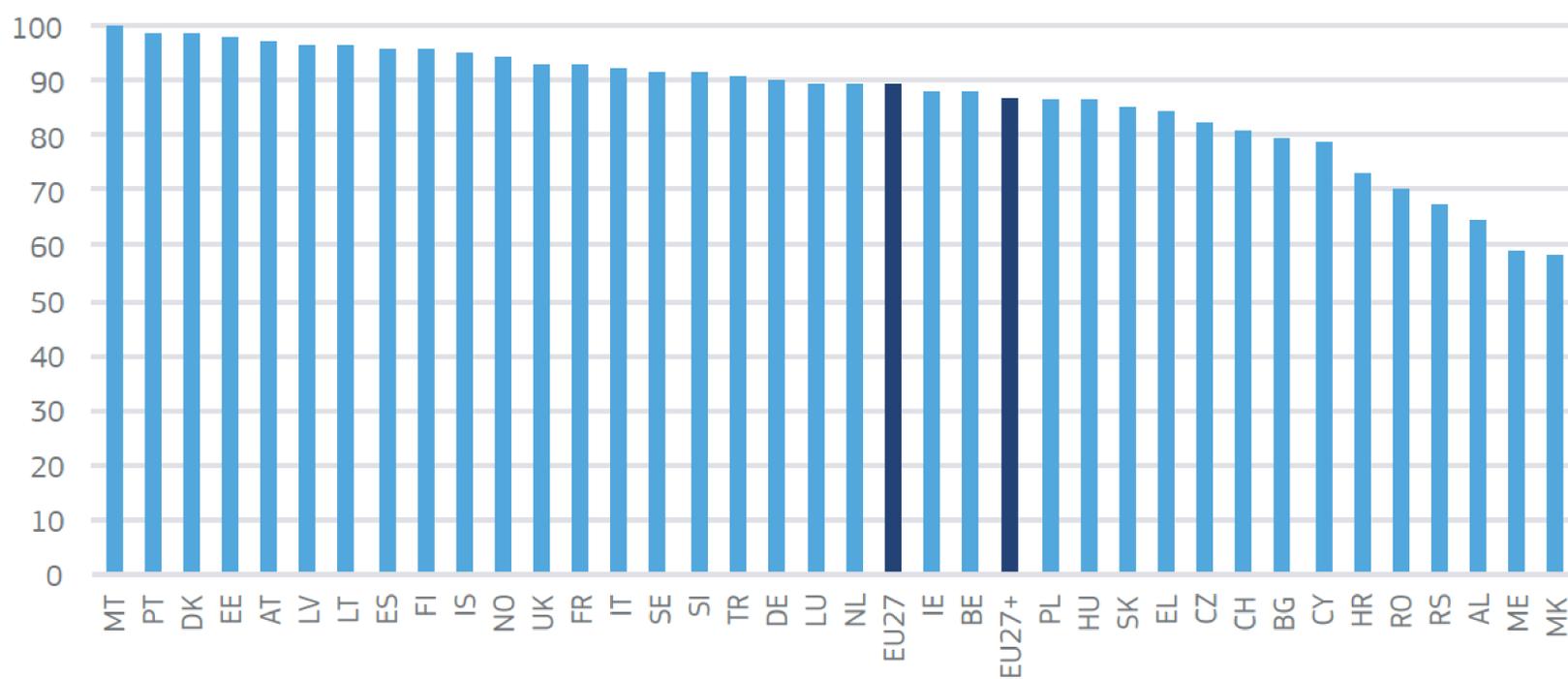
Services analysed under the e-Government Benchmark affect everyday life of citizens and businesses and the manner in which they communicate with their governments. The four basic indices under the e-Government Benchmark are comprised of many indicators. However, some of them are more visible and used for creation of the European Commission's Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI). This index is also important for North Macedonia because it aims at monitoring progress made by the countries and

their efforts for digital transformation. It is comprised of 44 indicators across five important dimensions of digital transformation: connectivity, human capital, internet use, integration of digital technology, and digital public services. Data collected for the e-Government Benchmark are also used for the fifth dimension, i.e. digital public services. DESI indicators that use data from the e-Government Benchmark are:

- » **pre-filled forms:** indicator that measures the extent to which e-forms are already filled by public service providers;
- » **complete online service:** indicator that measures the extent to which services can be fully completed online;
- » **digital public services for businesses:** indicator that measures whether governments provide digital services for businesses on the single digital market. It is calculated as the average of national and cross-border online availability of basic services for regular business operations and business start-up.

2020 scores for these indicators under DESI show that North Macedonia is last ranked in terms of possibilities for complete online service (Figure 4a). In particular, the index score refers to the fact that online information for services are available in North Macedonia, but there is no satisfactory offer of digital services for citizens and businesses.

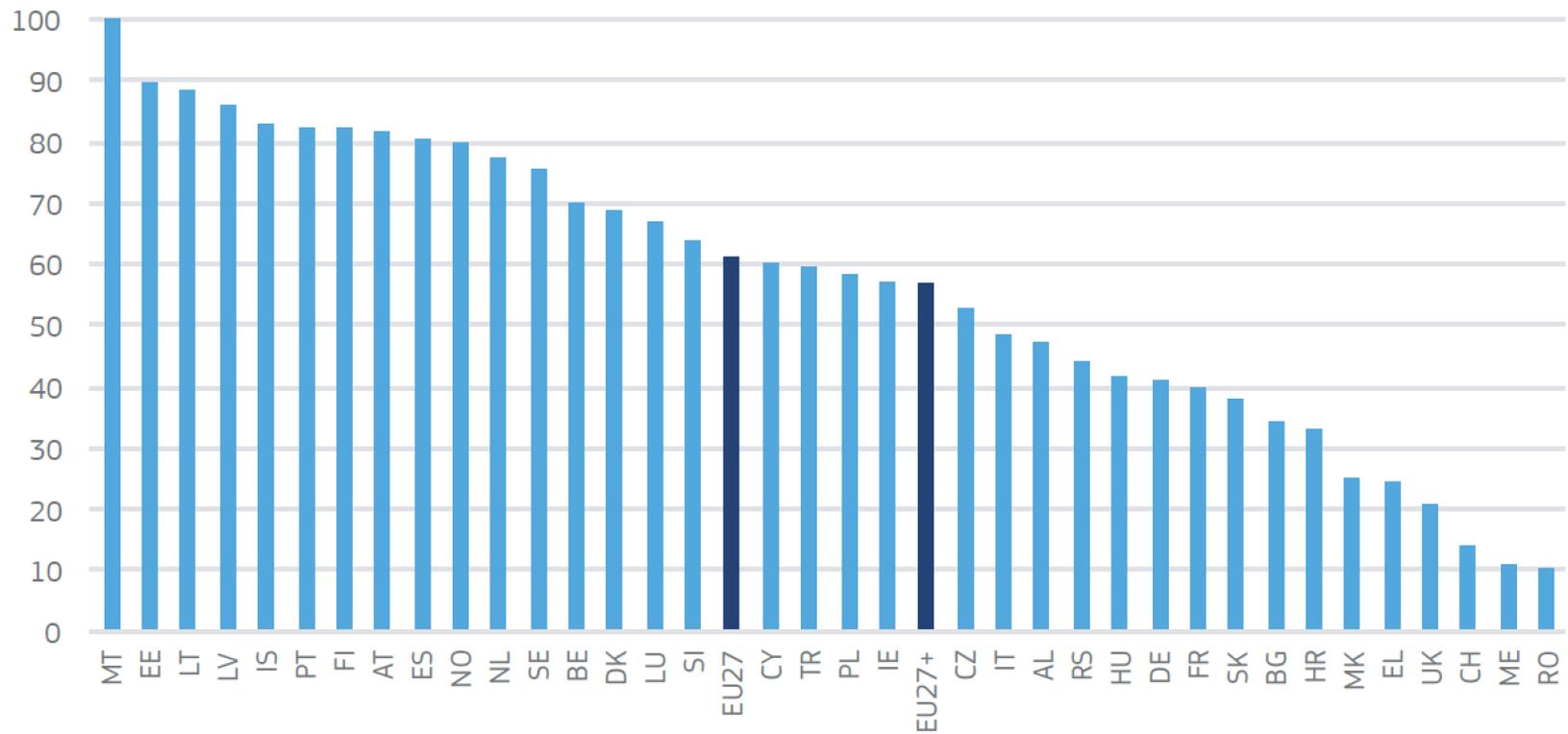
Figure 4a. Scores for the indicator “complete online service”



source: E-Government Benchmark 2020

North Macedonia is among the last countries in the region in respect to pre-filled forms (Figure 4b). Existence and use of interlinked registries is of key importance for ensuring that citizens are not forced to submit the same set of data to different state administration bodies.

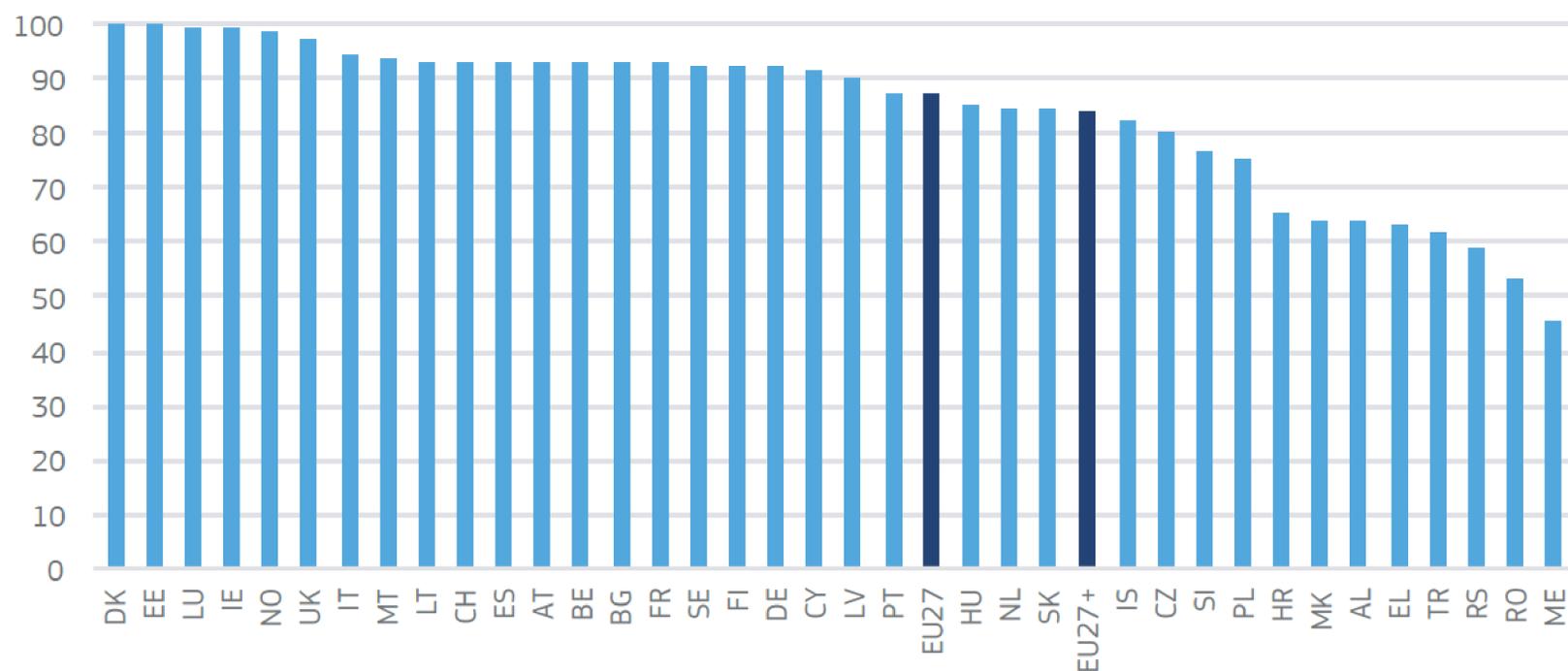
Figure 4b. Scores for the indicator “pre-filled forms”



source: E-Governemnt Benchmark 2020

As regards digitalization of public services for businesses, in spite of the relatively low score compared to the EU average, North Macedonia is the first among the countries in the region (Figure 4c). This shows that national services for businesses are relatively well digitalized, but the indicator score is low because there is no digitalization of these services in respect to cross-border mobility, i.e. harmonization with the single market. Nevertheless, North Macedonia is still not a member of the EU.

Figure 4c. Scores for the indicator “digital public services for businesses”



source: E-Governemnt Benchmark 2020

Conclusions

The analysis shows two specific moments of interest in respect to the quality of public service digitalization in North Macedonia. The first concerns progress in digitalization of services, and the second concerns the quality of services in terms of meeting regular needs of citizens and businesses.

01 As regards progress under digitalization of public services in North Macedonia, having in mind strategic documents of the government and legal solutions adopted in the last three years, it could be undoubtedly said that digitalization in general, and digitalization of public services in particular, is the country's priority goal. One of the five principles that underline continuous efforts for attainment of goals and priorities from the Strategy for Public Administration Reform 2018-2022 is provision of quality, fast and easily accessible services by using modern technologies and ensuring continuous technical upgrades. This principle is especially important for provision of services in fast, simple and accessible manner.

The strategy's priority goals are translated into a series of activities at national level. Examples thereof include: adoption of relevant legislation, such as the Law on Electronic Documents and Digital Signature, the Law on Electronic Documents, Electronic Identification and Trust Services, the national portal for e-services (uslugi.gov.mk), the platform for interoperability, open data, the platform for electronic public procurements, the healthcare platform "My Term", the Central Register of the Population and other projects planned and managed at the highest government level. A number of public institutions have also implemented successful projects for digitalization of services, including the Public Revenue Office, the Agency for Real Estate Cadastre, the Central Register, the Administration for General Records, etc.

Unfortunately, implementation of the Strategy for Public Administration Reform 2018-2022 does not assign equal priority to measures that concern digitalization, they are not implemented in time and there are mayor delays in this regard. There is still no central management in place for state-wide ICT projects or the form in which ICT investments in public administration are managed at central level is unsatisfactory. The National Council on ICTs is established, but there is no solid national strategy on ICTs, which prevents implementation of the Strategy on Public Administration Reform, because in the absence of such strategy document there could be no plan for cost-effective spending of funds allocated for ICT investments and there could be no alignment among national and local institutions that have already started the digitalization process. This brings under question the process for further digitalization of services. At the same time, investments in physical infrastructure and opening of "single point of service" centres (Skopje, Tetovo, Bitola, Kumanovo and Ohrid) continue. It could be said that improving desk-based services is a good medium-term goal, having in mind the low activity on the part of the government and other actors in the society in respect to increasing digital literacy among the population, combined with the aging population and late adoption of strategic and centralized approach to introduction of digital services. However, major investments for that purpose cannot be justified and there should be a practice of cost-effective use of resources, with clear vision and actual timeframe that would facilitate the digitalization process.

As regards digitalization of administration services, evident progress was made in 2020, including development of the Draft National Strategy on ICTs, which is posted in ENER. This document is far from final and does not provide solid basis for accelerating digitalization of public services. Nevertheless, positive development is seen in the fact that the draft strategy anticipates measures targeting digital literacy of the population, as crucial precondition for successful digitalization of public services in the country.

Also, 2021 was marked by accelerated digitalization of services in the national portal, which now includes services intended for businesses. Even with this progress, North Macedonia is still behind the EU average. The EU's e-Government Benchmark and the European Commission's Digital Economy and Society Index for 2020 rank North Macedonia at the bottom of the list comprised of 44 countries covered by the study in respect to the possibility for complete online service. More specially, digital information about public services is available in North Macedonia, but citizens and businesses are not afforded satisfactory offer of digital services. On the other hand, success in respect to fast digitalization of public services for businesses needs to be underlined, as it has been assigned highest scores under the EU's e-Government Benchmark and the EC's Digital Economy and Society Index for 2020, which is mainly due to the increased number of digitalized services provided by the Public Revenue Office and the Central Register.

02 The situation is more critical in respect to the quality of digital services. Despite the launch of the portal with information on public administration quality management based on the new version of CAF 2020 which, among other things, focuses on digitalization, the number of institutions that have implemented this model remains unknown. Major role in service quality management is played by measurement of user satisfaction with public services. Unfortunately, such measurements were not conducted neither in 2019 nor in 2020 due to the lack of relevant methodology. The methodology for assessing the index on quality at institutions was adopted in 2021, but does not include indicators for measuring citizens' satisfaction with digital services. In that, another opportunity was lost in 2021 to measure satisfaction of citizens with digital services.

The same situation is noted under the EU's e-Government Benchmark. Not a single website hosted by the institutions covered by that study allows the possibility for electronic support and assistance to citizens/users or options for user feedback, which could be used for measuring their experience with the process. For the purpose of enabling complete and comprehensive overview of the performance of digital services provided by the countries, the e-Government Benchmark assesses them against eight priority life events (user experiences). North Macedonia is poorly ranked in respect to all life events compared to the EU average. Reason thereof are poor scores assigned to key enablers or lack of possibility for use of electronic identification, which limits users and restricts further digitalization of these services, sustaining them at the level of information in the digital sphere. User experiences are further exacerbated by poor interconnectivity between state registries, which does not allow pre-filled forms. This is of key importance for improving user experiences and for ensuring that citizens are not forced to submit the same set of data to different state administration bodies.

Recommended measures and policies

Having in mind both conclusions from the analysis, it is evident that North Macedonia is on the right path when it comes to digitalization of public services and has achieved significant progress in this regard over short period of time and under conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The measures proposed for further advancement of digitalization and quality of digital public services include:

- » Finalizing and adopting the National Strategy on ICTs. It is more than necessary for the country to finalize and adopt a quality national strategy on ICTs. This process should not be rushed. It requires a broad consensus and quality proposals from different stakeholders from the public, civil society and business sector, aimed to improve the text, scope and measures from the current draft strategy that is already posted in ENER.
- » Increasing availability of e-services in all sectors, especially those marked by low availability of digital services, such as transport. Accelerated efforts are needed to increase the number of public sector services that could be obtained online. In that, priority should be given to sectors in which these services are non-existent or low in number, but are identified as services of great impact on life events, such as transport and mobility. This means that smart selection of services to be digitalized opens a possibility for major improvements in respect to user experiences with different life events over short period of time.
- » Improving the key enablers, i.e. use of electronic identification by the institutions. Large portion of already digitalized public sector services are available to citizens through the national portal. However, that does not decrease the importance of efforts to improve use of electronic identification by the institutions, which is very low at the moment.
- » Implementing informative and educative campaigns for citizens and businesses about possibilities offered by digital services. Digitalization of public services will not be successful if citizens and businesses lack digital literacy and do not know how to use e-services. The COVID-19 pandemic and related lockdown measures have accelerated the learning process among citizens in respect to digital possibilities, but that is only the beginning. This wave should be used to increase the learning curve in respect to use of digital tools by implementing broad and wide informative and educational campaigns. The “single point of service” centres established in different towns could make a great contribution to that end, by informing citizens about possibilities to obtain services online and providing advice how that could be done.
- » Complementing the methodology for assessing the index on quality at institutions with indicators that measure user experiences with services obtained online. It is evident that the methodology does not include quality coverage of indicators in respect to services provided in electronic form. This shortcoming should be addressed by amending the methodology for the same to reflect the requirements from the new version of CAF 2020. Moreover, these indicators will measure user satisfaction with digital services available on the institutions’ websites and the national portal.

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