

e-Government - A portal for everything which the state offers

When the Internet first began to appear we were promised all sorts of things. It sounded like a fairy tale and a lot of things remained on that level. But we are slowly entering a new era, when stores will become mere showrooms, middlemen a quickly forgotten relic, and annoying officials a humorous scene from the past. There is no guarantee that we will live better, but we will certainly be more comfortable. We can sample a small amount of this bounty today, on the E-administration portal.

Information

Although perhaps it seems that you could already renew all your documents from your armchair in 2007, we are actually still a long way from that (for now). Therefore, let's first take a look at how we can use the Internet to find out what our public administration does. The portal is divided into three parts. Let's begin by looking at the section for citizens, which currently has the highest amount of content, and is at the same time functionally practically the same as the subportal for legal entities and public administration. Since last year, e-administration for municipal residents has featured a revamped support section, which the majority of users were probably not even aware of. The principle for browsing the portal remains the same: everything happens through the perspective of life events, since this is the most user-friendly for residents.

The portal will gradually include information from every area of the public sector; currently government offices and the activities associated with them are predominant. We are waiting for a more active response from the individual municipalities (perhaps some form of competition could develop among them for which ones would offer the most), and someday it will be possible to make doctor's appointments on the E-administration portal, since public health is a part of the public sector. And then there are schools, courts ... In short, the first step has been taken, and now all we have to do is follow the path that has been

established.

The big star of the public administration's information system is ISPO, in which all of the wealth of data produced by the government is stored. You can find the main economic indices there, check the levels of monthly and annual inflation, the employment rate, how our foreign trade is doing etc. The data are collected monthly, and you can also browse by category and, for example, make your own consumer price index. The administrative data will include useful information about the public administration, and the various figures relating to state costs will be even more appealing. You will be able to find out how many cars the state owns, the salaries of public administration employees, how much they spend on communications, whether the number of

employees is actually falling etc. And we shouldn't forget to mention the results of public opinion polls. All of this can form an exceptional basis for a wide variety of analyses. Such a huge amount of data could also be difficult to manage if you can't find what you need quickly and easily. The user interface is designed to be flexible and offers the user the possibility to view different pieces of data in a single window. The information is continually updated, and you can also order email notification of changes.

Just for me

All of this together is a part of the subportal Moja e-uprava (My e-administration), where information and data are collected which are interesting only for a specifically defined user.

Picture 1. E-Government portal screenshot



That user can log on in the usual manner – with a user name and password, or with an authorised digital certificate. Of course the portal recognises all authorised certificates in Slovenia, and this kind of logon makes it possible to personalise the appearance of the portal even further. All e-documents or applications which we submit non-anonymously are collected on these pages, and you have access to invoices for services performed (in PDF and signed XML), while selectors and short cuts are adapted to the user's work style and preferences. Also available is the possibility of changing your data, and anyone who has secure email (currently

only available at Pošta Slovenije) can opt for electronic handover of decisions, which would otherwise come to your home address by regular post in a registered letter. There are currently over thirty thousand registered users on the My e-administration subportal. Of course there could be more; theoretically the contents should be of interest to all Slovenes (as well as foreign residents, for whom this English translation is provided).

What else?

If statistics and figures connected with public administration hold no interest for you, perhaps

E-administration has something else to offer. We should mention the subportal e-zaposlitev (e-employment), the goal of which is to connect all employers and people seeking work, whether they are graduating students or long-term unemployed. If you are looking for work, click on e-employment, and you can post an anonymous ad or even your CV. The abovementioned division according to life events will lead you to one of 18 different categories, and some links of course overlap. You will find a tree structure which is methodologically standardised, and therefore may sometimes appear excessively bureaucratic. But on the other hand such organisation makes it much more transparent, since it is obvious where you

have to look for certain information regardless of the life event.

You will also be able to find out about the legislation which lies behind various life events, review the applications connected with it and even submit applications electronically. The list of applications available is long, but there are still some areas where applications have to be submitted in written form. But you will at least be informed about any fees which have to be paid, and any documents which have to be enclosed with the applications. Admit it: there will be at least one less phone call, and without a doubt browsing these pages will save you a lot of time. We should add that citizens should address their questions directly to the authority which authored the content.

E-services

When you decide to fill out or even just print out an application, you will be entering a new territory

E-administration is an application which was developed by SRC exclusively for the public administration. The entire system is already capable of operating as an electronic alternative or support for the entire public sector, and the content is adjusted to the possibilities offered by legislation and infrastructure to individual parts of the public sector. Much more content will be added over the next few months and years, but it's already worth having a look at the portal any time you need any kind of information relating to public administration. Occasionally in addition to complete information you also be pleasantly surprised at the opportunity to submit applications, pay the fees for them or even renew various documents. E-services is a subportal of E-administration, so a new window will open. Annoying? It could be, but the next time you will know that you can access this content directly. One of the great advantages of this subportal is its search engine. You can select a classical alphabetic search, search by application addressees, and most conveniently by key words, since this is sometimes the only way to find the information you need (which may be case-marked in the name of a law or other regulation). After you select the application you need, a new page will give you information on the addressees and the properties of the application, the life event it relates to, and you can also find out

Picture 2.



whether it is possible to submit the application electronically. This option does not depend on the applications themselves but on the (in) ability of the individual authorities to receive applications in electronic form or to demand electronic payment for it (if necessary). (We might hint that you can submit the application to other administrative units, since they will ensure that it gets to the proper address.) After you have selected the application, the portal offers you the opportunity to register. Anyone who prefers to submit their application anonymously can select that option, while registering with a digital certificate offers further benefits: certain fields will be pre-filled on the basis of data from the certificate and you will be able to track your application (the applications' statuses in the authorities' support systems are also visible to registered users of e-administration). After that, everything continues in steps, and for certain applications some steps are skipped. At the end you should review the application, and the system reminds you to do so by requiring you to click a button when the application is complete. If it can be submitted electronically, you then have to make the payment. You can use the most popular payment cards, vouchers or directly via Abanet. There are quite a few more than 5 payment methods!

True e-administration

The majority of applications you will find on the E-administration portal are still static. This means that you can fill them out and print them, but they still have to be sent manually. In a few years (it would be nice to put this more in the short term) the share of such applications will be reduced, which will not cause any major problems for the system, since the entire procedure for submitting applications is already completely adapted to the electronic method. Currently the most interesting e-application is the possibility of renewing your car registration. The sequence of steps is practically the same as described above, and in this example you can get the chance to see how dealing with public administration will be in the (near?) future. The basis is your car registration number (the registration renewal procedure is carried out anonymously and does not require registration – this makes it easier for the user in the

following year, i.e. you have the possibility of reviewing your status).

This is already partially true, since if you have a car insurance policy, you simply have to enter the policy number and state the number of months you want to extend your car registration (it is set for 12 months if all of the preconditions are satisfied). Before making your payment you have the option of Saturday delivery of your car registration (if you are not at home during the week and do not want to go to the post office). All that remains is simply checking the data. Registering when you fill out applications is therefore also important from the point of view of easier use of the portal and the functions which are available now or will be available in future. And there is another advantage to doing e-business with the public administration: the system has a built-in reminder which ensures that applications are processed on time.

What do you know? E-Vem

The beginnings of a completely revamped system, which represents the future of e-business, are currently available to the greatest possible extent to sole proprietors, and they will soon be available to other legal entities. E-Vem (the Slovene acronym for vse-na-enem-mestu, or all in one place) is an application which allows you to register a company in a few minutes, or later change the data and add or change the lines of business which you would like to perform.

The main advantage of E-Vem is its automation and the connectedness of all involved.

The administrative and user applications are practically identical (they differ only in authorisations), which allows future entrepreneurs to begin filling out the form, which is then saved automatically and can be filled out and submitted later or left for a civil servant to complete.

The system also allows the quick solution of any misunderstandings, and the data on the current status of the applications is updated continuously. The fact that all of the necessary applications can be submitted before the adopting of the actual decision, after which the system automatically combines all of the documents and sends them for further processing, shows that it all is truly simple. The user does not have to worry and wait for the

issuing of various data (e.g. for health insurance or the tax administration). It automatically harmonises all data which could possibly be changed at a later date.

E-Vem is already being used by hundreds of users daily, and there will be many more when it will be possible for all other companies, and not just sole proprietors, to initiate and monitor all of the necessary procedures in a modern manner. As such the system gives us an insight into a different paradigm for doing business with the public administration, which requires little more of the user than digitally signing his digital certificate and submitting the application.

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