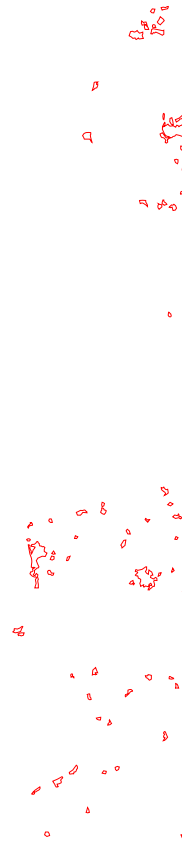
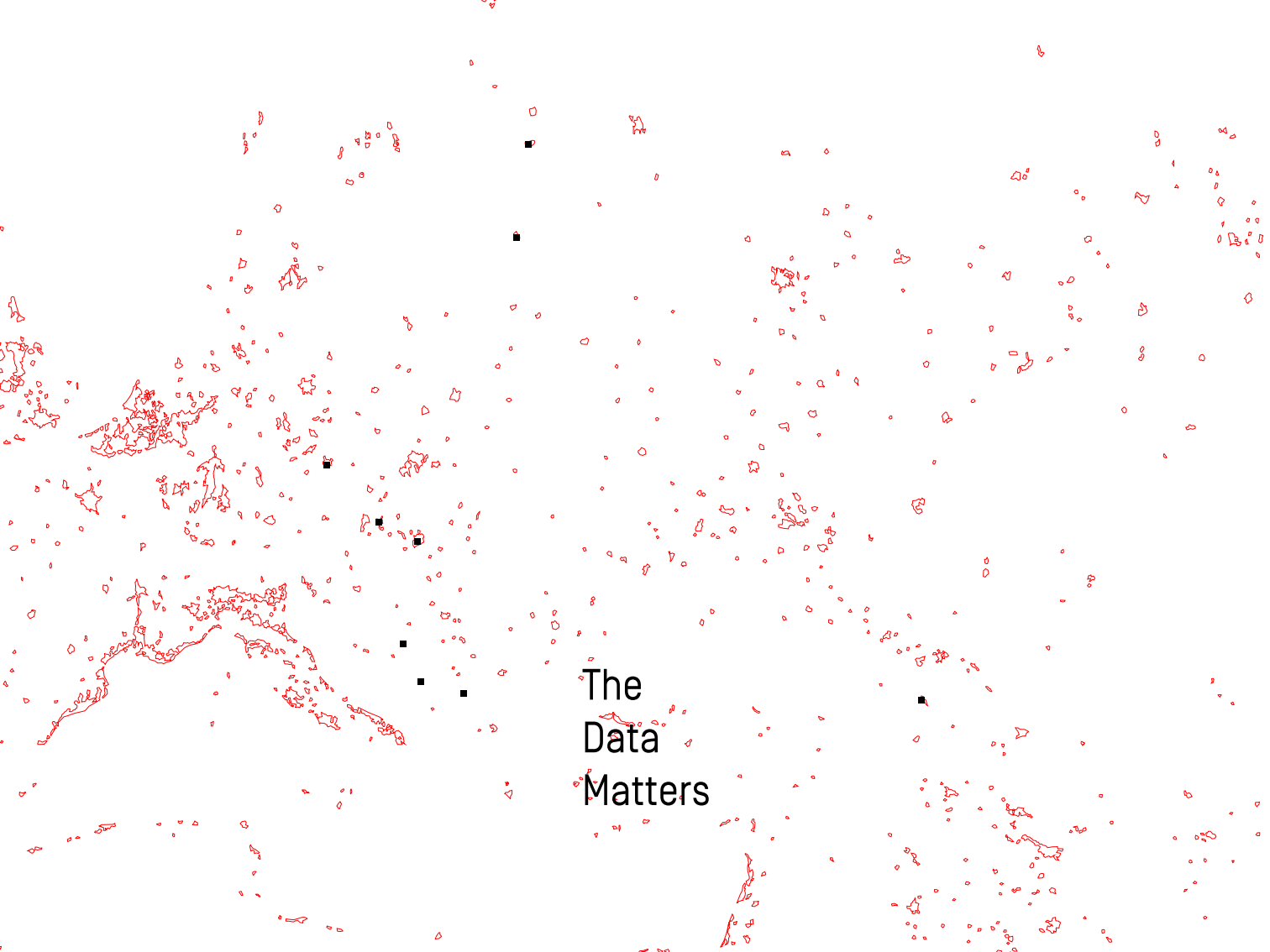


→ The Data-driven Policy Research projects from Central and Eastern Europe. Using numbers and context to make the difference.





The
Data
Matters

A map of Europe with several countries highlighted in light gray with diagonal hatching. These countries are Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia, and Latvia. The rest of the map is white.

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About the project

Think tanks are increasingly competing with news outlets and other research providers as sources of analysis and information pertinent to understanding publicly discussed policy alternatives. In an era of interactive and à la carte information provision, think tanks need to improve their ability to access important constituencies and communicate their analysis in attractive, up-to-date formats. Even if think tank's content is much more valuable and informative than that of the competition, they lose out to those able to grab the attention of audiences by customizing the information to users' preferences or providing more interaction.

One of the most valuable resources for

policymakers and citizens concerned with a public issue is a high-quality data source. In transitional and emerging democracies such data sources are often scarce. Efforts to use evidence-based policy arguments to support advocacy and policymaking projects have often necessitated the creation and maintenance of information in databases, files, and collections of information buried in narrative text.

Since 2010, the Think Tank Fund supported projects that seek to propose new uses of data for advocacy and target non-traditional stakeholders; develop challenging and complementary information sets for broader application in the policy sphere; and use data sets

to challenge commonly accepted facts in a given policy field. TTF assisted think tanks to bring these data sources to light, and to enhance their usefulness by expansion, maintenance, and use of this information, integrating such enhancements into their daily routines, and promoting a new culture of presenting policy research findings and thus reaching untapped audiences.

Following portfolio presents highlight and successes of projects supported between 2010 and 2013, illustrating how data matter in the every-day lives of citizens of many countries. This portfolio is offered as inspiration for members of NGOs, think tanks and advocacy organization who are focusing on using

data for informing discussion on policy change. In case you are looking for further inspiration in any of the fields showcased, please feel free to contact featured think tanks directly or get in touch with the Think Tank Fund. The Data Matters is here to spread the word about the importance of the data to improve policy research and make the world a better place one policy at the time. We hope that this inspiration will contribute to ideas cross-fertilizing and similar projects will seed also outside the CEE region.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Federal democratic republic

Population: **3,791,622**

GDP (PPP): **\$9,597**

Crime

Municipalities

Parliament/Legislation

A light gray outline map of Bosnia and Herzegovina, showing its irregular borders and internal administrative divisions. The map is positioned on the right side of the page, partially overlapping the text area.

Armed Violence and Injury Monitoring System

Issue Over the last few years security has been an important issue to the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially hate crimes. Since there is no specific data from the Ministries of Interiors, it is difficult to find any transparent and relevant information about crime to solve the problem.

Solution The website collects data about juvenile delinquency, small arms and light weapons incidents, traffic accidents and hate crime incidents. It analyses and monitors the danger in order to raise awareness about the problem and find solutions to prevent these crimes.

Message The goal of the project is to establish an innovative mechanism for

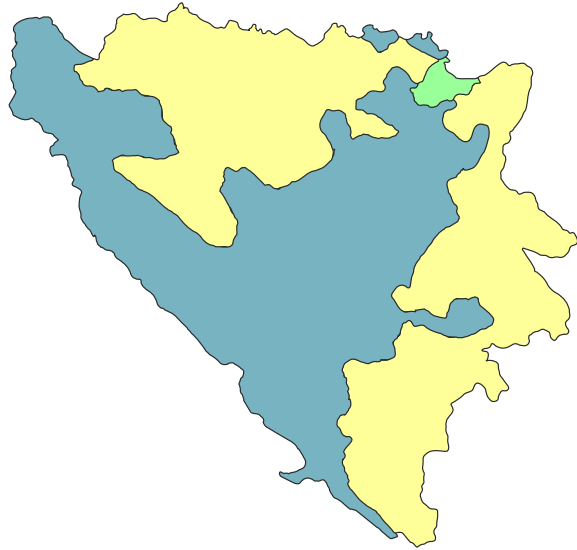
monitoring the criminal incidents in Bosnia and Herzegovina and stimulate the relevant decision-making bodies to eliminate the crime. The database examines trends and analyzes the crimes and threats. It also includes an interactive map, which enables clear visualization and shows the frequency and geographical location of the incidents. The project initiates collaboration of all segments of society to participate in designing policies to combat the causes and consequences of criminal occurrences.

Center for Security Studies

bit.ly/1gpBVeS

Crime

→ By collecting the specific data in the clear format the project raises awareness and motivate society to take part and actively prevent crimes.



My Place

Issue There is a need for local governance reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina and an increase in the transparency of local self-governance units. The relevant data about municipalities should be publicly and easily accessible.

Solution The project My Place has created a comprehensive, easy-to-use database of all municipalities. The analytical tools enable comparison across municipalities, according to different variables, indicators and characteristics. All the relevant data is available through the simple web interface.

Message The general, long-term goal of the My Place project is to help local governance reform efforts in Bosnia and

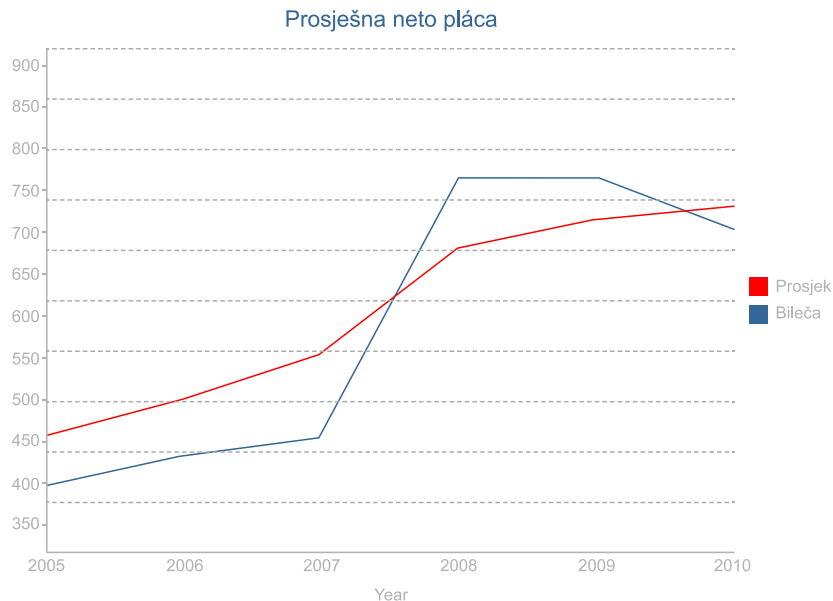
Herzegovina. The data portal helps a wide array of stakeholders to access the municipality-related data. The database increases the transparency of local self-governance reform process, as well as supports the advancement of policy making processes and efforts at local government level. The My Place project collects relevant information and creates a data profile for each municipality. This means that different municipal acts, as well as other relevant documents are available for each governance unit. The analytical tools enable comparison of different characteristics among 78 municipalities.

Analitika

bit.ly/1grjhT0

Municipalities

→ From its official launch in October 2011, portal “My place” has become a relevant source of municipality-related data in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A great amount of general geographic, economic and developmental data and statistics has been gathered covering the period from 2005 to 2010. From 2010 the portal included more data on population, employment, gross domestic product and general elections.



The Parliament Searchlight

Issue Citizens are not always familiar with the legislative process at State level. It is usually difficult and time-consuming to find all the relevant data about adopted legislation, parliamentary activities and voting.

Solution The website provides a structured, fully indexed, and easily readable database of the Bosnia and Herzegovina State-level legal acts and legislative processes of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The portal uses clear visualization and provides a full insight into the legislative processes at the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliament.

Message The website is designed to provide a full access to the entire body

of Bosnia and Herzegovina state-level legislation and to enhance transparency of the legislative processes taking place within the two houses of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliament. The legislative timelines enable the users to visualize the processes that yielded current legislation. The website contains a search engine in order to quickly look up legislation and parliamentary information. It also provides a fully indexed and searchable database of the European Union policy areas.

PoPuLaRi

Parliament/Legislation

→ The project has completed the originally set policy goals as well as the following additional goals:

- Development of legislative timelines enabling the user to visualize the processes that yielded the current legislation;
- Aggregated statistics and visualized information about the adopted legislation, parliamentary activities and voting;
- Fully indexed database of the European Union Policy Areas, the EU negotiation chapters and the Acquis (EUR-lex);
- Full-text search engine to maximize data accessibility



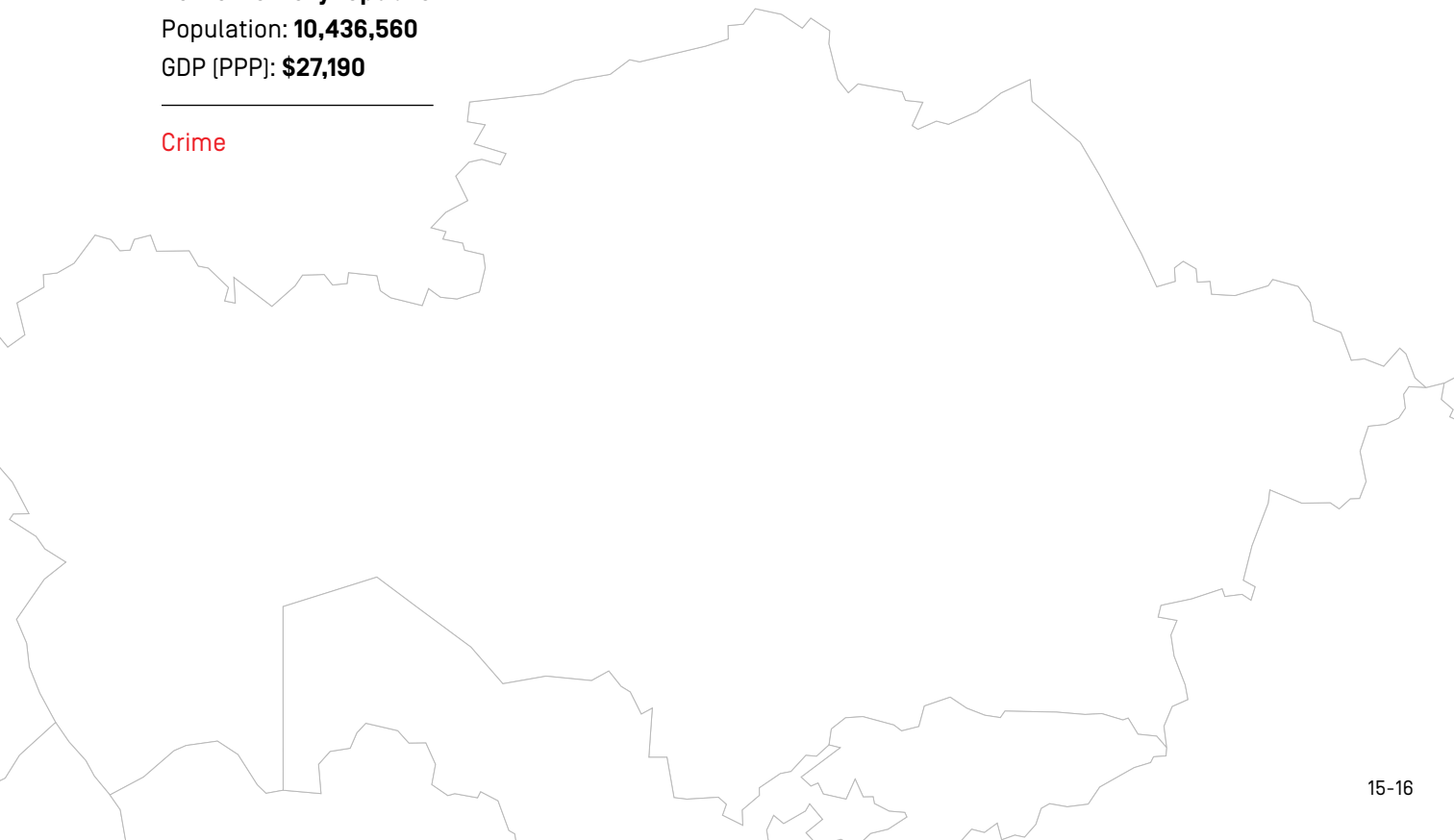
Czech Republic

Parliamentary republic

Population: **10,436,560**

GDP (PPP): **\$27,190**

Crime



Increasing police accountability through smart display of crime data

Issue The crime statistics on the Czech police websites are sometimes difficult to understand and don't give a good overview about the problems.

Solution The map-based website displays crime statistics in an understandable and accessible way. It is a source of information for anybody searching for relevant crime data and further research. The website informs also about crime prevention strategies that have been used to deal with local crime.

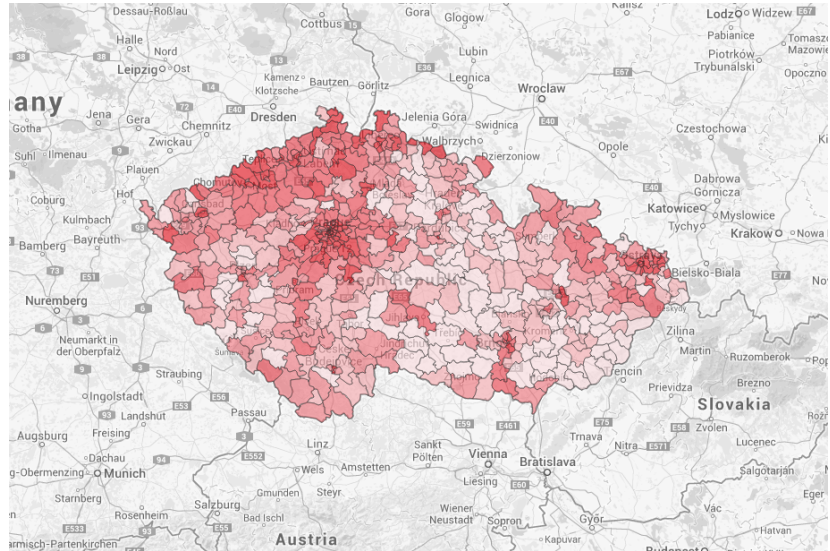
Message The project facilitates orientation in crime statistics for the public. The website map shows the number of policemen and crime rates by regions and gives an overall overview on the

crime situation in the country. There is possibility to compare the crime rates in different regions according to the type of crime. The goal of the project is to raise a public discussion about crime prevention strategies. The website allows the public to inform police about places or areas of special importance in terms of crime and feeling of personal safety.

Otevřená společnost
bit.ly/1j5EJx0

Crime

→ After quite an enthusiastic reception of the website the initiative agreed with Czech police on the provision of more detailed data that haven't been provided to the public in any way before. The data published has been used repeatedly by citizens, media, and college students who were interested, as well as by municipalities and the police itself.





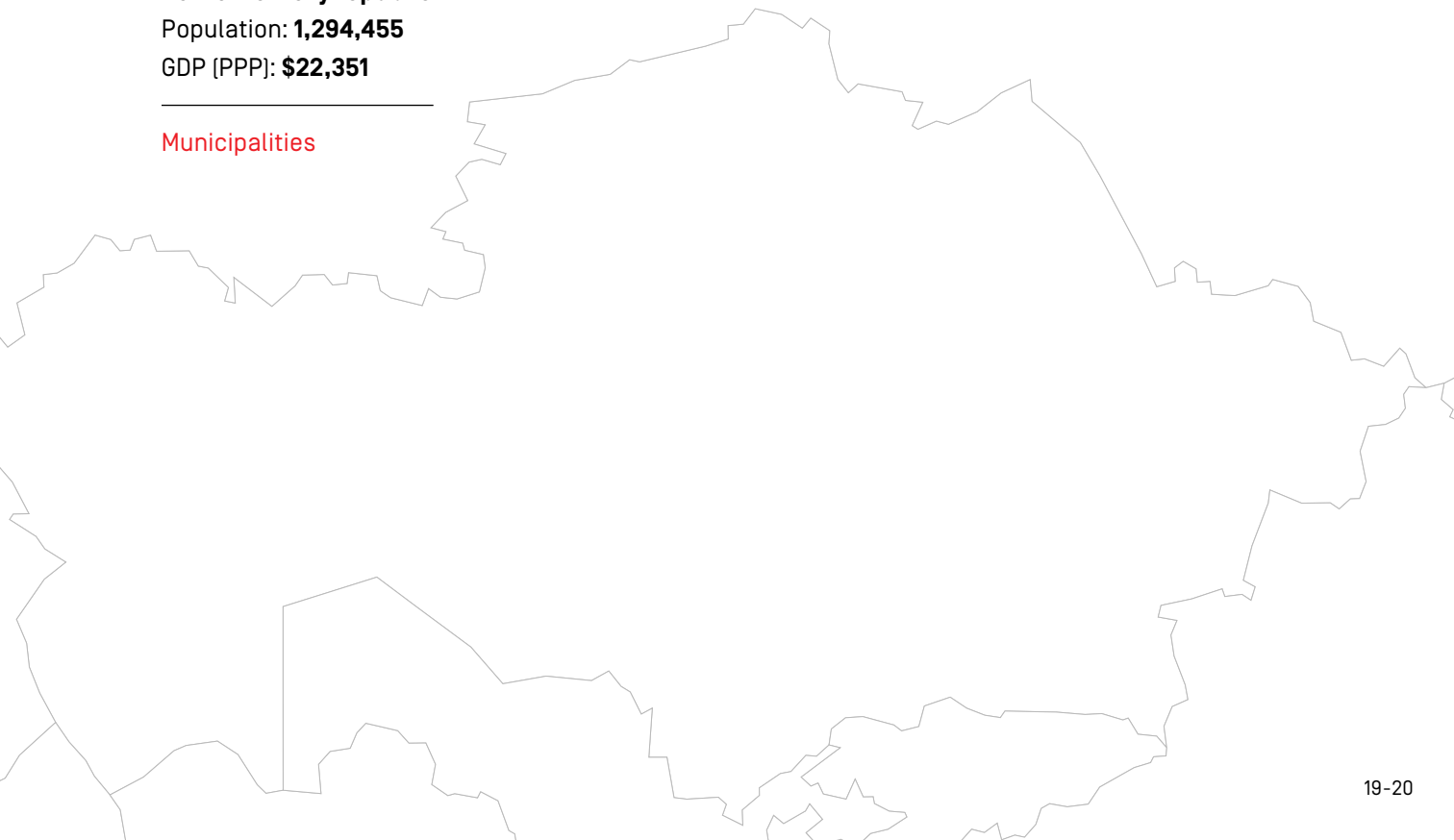
Estonia

Parliamentary republic

Population: **1,294,455**

GDP (PPP): **\$22,351**

Municipalities



Visualizing local government indicators

Issue How many schools, students and teachers are in each region? Where are the biggest hospitals? How much is the waste management? To increasing the quality of information and making comparative analyzes between schools and regions, it is crucial to have sufficient data in one place.

Solution The website provides information of local government indicators and demonstrates them in a very clear and simple way. An interactive map of Estonia illustrates the differences between Estonian regions and their efficiency. In a few clicks you really get the bigger picture about Estonian regions more easily.

Message By clicking on a selected region,

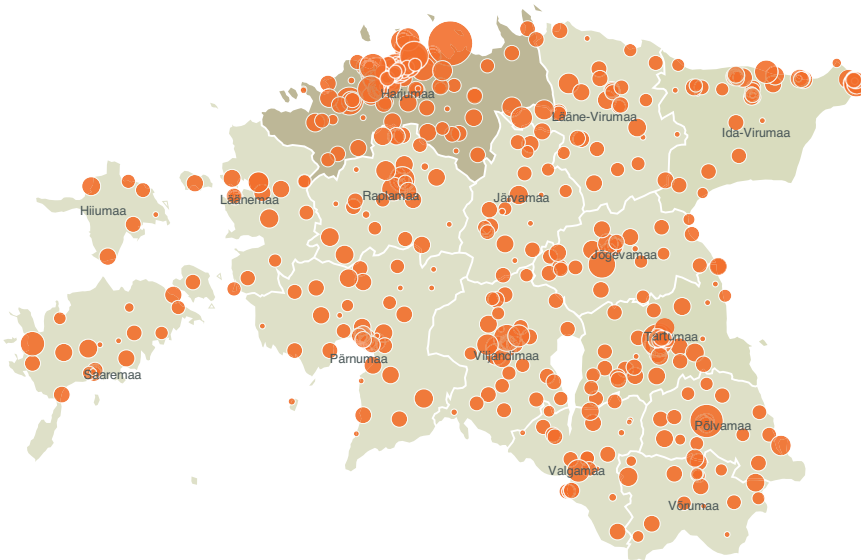
it is possible to get information about the amount of schools, hospitals and pharmacies in the region, as well as information about waste spending, investments per capita and tax revenues per capita. The clear visualization enables quick comparison of the data between the regions and governing units. The indicators demonstrate the capacity and sustainability of local governments and are the starting point to measure the performance of different policy options at municipal level. The website gives a comprehensive overview about possibilities in the regions. The goal of the project is to present information about self-governing regions in a very natural way and raise a public discussion about the efficiency of different municipalities.

PRAXIS

bit.ly/NDnIWP

Municipalities

→ The easy-to-understand data collected and presented in this visualization were especially valuable before the local government elections, which took place on October 20th. Also various newspapers has used the site for reflecting the services situation in their municipality.





Georgia

Unitary Parliamentary Republic

Population: **4,555,911**

GDP (PPP): **\$5,929**

Water Accessibility

Open Taps

Issue The accessibility and quality of water is still a big issue in many Georgian regions. While the data about water quality is officially published, it is neither accessible to everyone, nor understandable to common households.

Solution The Open Taps projects efforts to improve water quality and accessibility in Georgia by putting relevant, understandable and useful data into the public domain, while allowing all stakeholders to discuss the issues and share relevant concerns and information.

Message With the support of several NGOs and partnership organizations research has been made on water accessibility and its quality. The

interactive web-platform manifests projects and programs regarding the water issues in Georgia and illustrates the changing reality in Georgia. The majority of the projects includes improvement of the water supply timetable, water accessibility in certain areas, improvement of water supply network and an increase in drinking water resources.

Open Maps Caucasus

bit.ly/1cXhJwg

Water Accessibility

→ Many lessons were learned about design and data possibilities while bringing this project to the world. These lessons were then reflected in follow-on efforts on different topics in Georgia.



Hungary

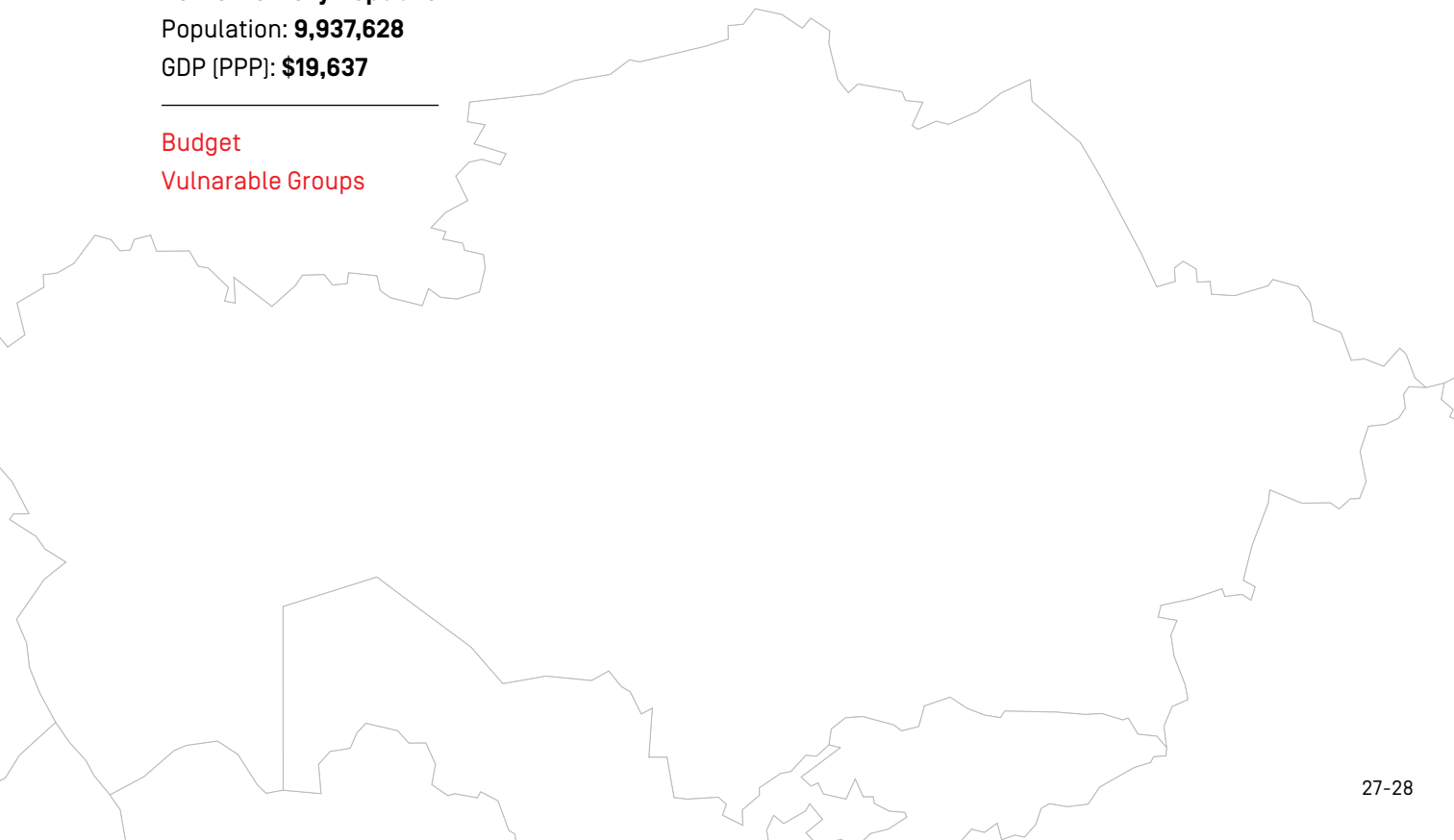
Parliamentary Republic

Population: **9,937,628**

GDP (PPP): **\$19,637**

Budget

Vulnerable Groups



Visualization of Hungarian Budget Data

Issue It is extremely difficult to find sufficient information about public spending and revenues in Hungary. If there is any relevant data, it is often used out of the context. Citizens cannot see connections between related categories and cannot attain a comprehensive overview.

Solution The website provides detailed visualization of the Hungarian state public spending and revenues. Moreover the online presentation enables data comparison across different years and with a number of different countries. With their innovative tools, the citizens receive a context of revenues and expenditures to get a better picture.

Message project is focused on the visualization of the public finance data in order to help journalists, teachers, students and all citizens understand the state budget. The Budapest Institute collects data from official sources according to functions and policy areas and makes “dry numbers” illustrative by visualizing the Hungarian budget. The goal of the project is to increase transparency in public finance management and dispel misbeliefs and popular fallacies on spending priorities of Hungarian governments.

Budapest Institute
bit.ly/1omhNgR

Budget



Visualization of Hungarian Budget Data

100 Poorest Database

Issue Even though poverty and exclusion are widespread in society, these issues are still far away from ordinary citizens. There are many stereotypes and prejudices towards vulnerable social groups because of the lack of information and understanding. Those excluded people don't have access to information about how they can improve their situation because they usually don't have access to online media.

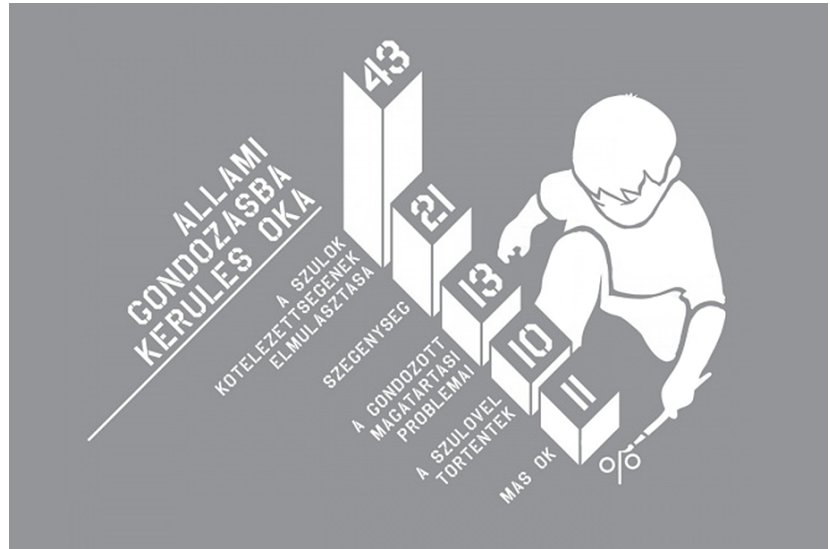
Solution The project disseminates available data on vulnerable social groups with the help of personal stories, objective information, and suggestive pictures about members of the groups. Not only the online but also offline tools have been used to reach also the excluded members of society and bring the information they cannot get online.

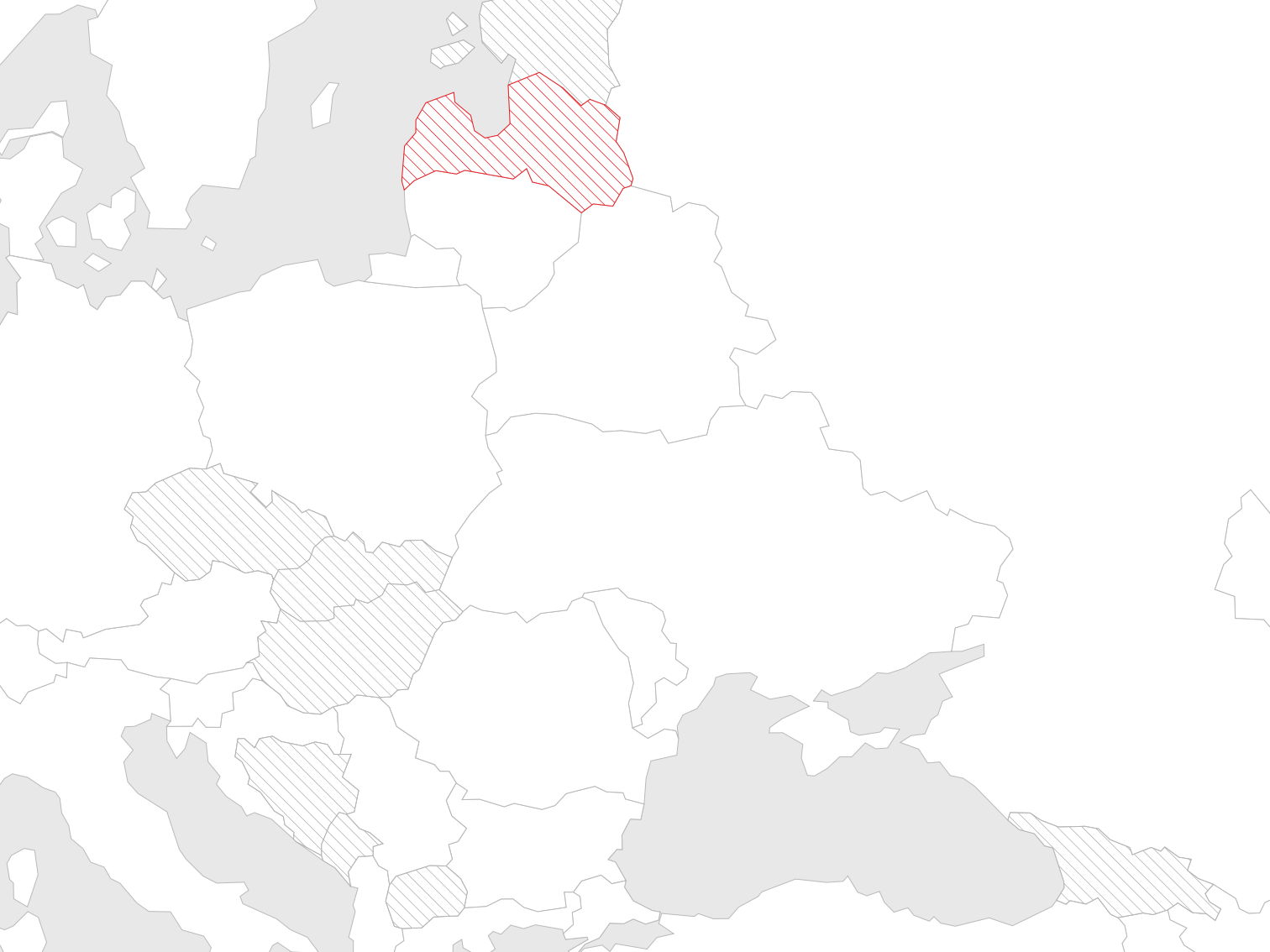
Message The website is the main source of information, however the important message to the people was sent by street art, brochures, eBooks and posters. Delivering such a message through street art was something completely new for Hungarian people. Through the street art the city has been turned into an info-graphic environment and should have channeled visitors to the project website. The website compares different vulnerable social groups to the Hungarian average (e.g. income, family status, etc.). The information is also available on the groups' individual wiki like pages. The goal of the project is to fight the prejudices against vulnerable social groups, raise awareness and find solutions to the social exclusion of these people.

Kurt Lewin Foundation
bit.ly/1cxbkre

Vulnerable Groups

→ The project hasn't seen significant growth after its debut, but it turned out to be a great learning experience for involved organizers. Lessons learned in how to combine street and online messaging were transferred to the next set of efforts undertaken by the organization.





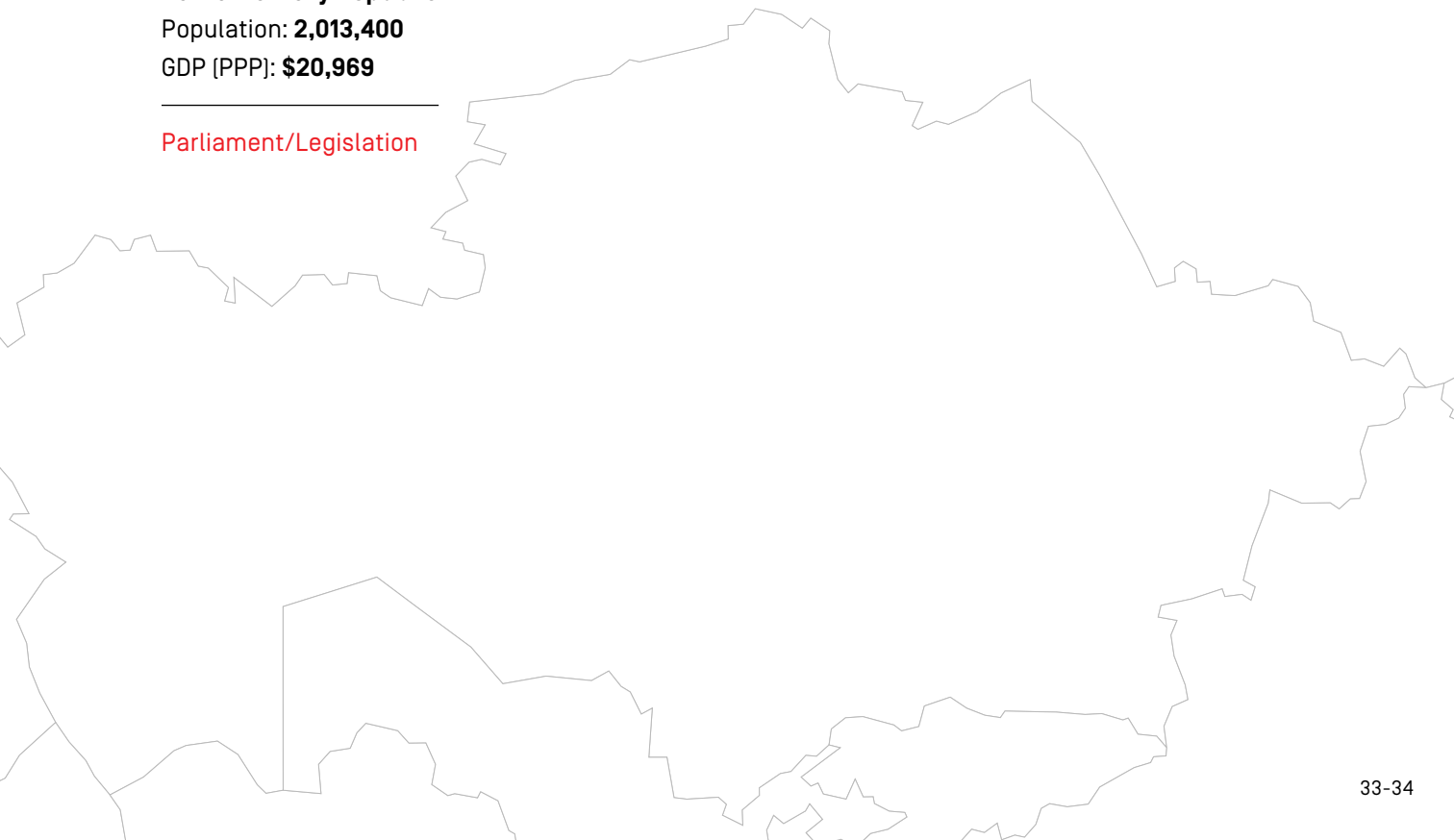
Latvia

Parliamentary Republic

Population: **2,013,400**

GDP (PPP): **\$20,969**

Parliament/Legislation



Mapping the court overload

Issue The problem of courts overloading and incapability to ensure the right of fair trial within a reasonable amount of time has remained an unsolved problem in Latvia. Although the data is available, the politicians, the public and the media don't use it because of its opacity.

Solution The web-based visualization mashes together all relevant information about court processing to pursuing a solution to court overload. The webpage visualizes the data in a very clear way and enables a comparison of different regions, courts and judges.

Message The data on all courts are presented on a map of Latvia that provides users with information about

the average number of cases for every judge, the case backlog in courts, average trial processing time, ratio of received, adjudicated and unfinished cases, etc. The database allows users to forecast trial dates and lengths by a particular court and judge. It may be beneficial also for the civil society organizations. They can use the data outputs for their own advocacy of their activities. The objective of the project is to draw the attention of the society and pressure the politicians to take decisions regarding a long term solution to the problem.

Providus

bit.ly/1jyvWqM

Judiciary

→ The project has discovered several causes of court overload in Latvia and has elaborated a list of suggestions as a reaction. It also impacted the work of subjects which are connected with the court's decisions, because they now have better tools for predicting the duration of process time.



Mapping the court overload



Macedonia

Parliamentary Republic

Population: **2,022,547**

GDP (PPP): **\$10,718**

Budget

Urban Planning

Budget of the Republic of Macedonia

Issue The information about revenues and expenditures for public administration are usually hidden in various opaque government documents and across ministry websites. People don't really know how much the national debt is, how much they pay for state-provided public services and how much the state takes in taxes.

Solution The website of CEA gives a clear picture about Macedonian national budget and presents all the relevant data at one place. It covers budget spending within Government and Municipalities, its Ministries, Public Funds and Agencies. All in One from the year 1996.

Message The portal collects detailed information about public expenditures,

public revenues, national debt, municipalities spending and Macedonia's basic economic data. To ensure accountability and transparency, the website includes option for easy and simple testing of different budgetary policies and their expected impact on the budget. The goal of the project is to increase accountability of the budget policy makers, increase transparency in managing public finance, and raise budget advocacy activism in the Republic of Macedonia. No good advocacy can be done without the strong tool which is easy to understand. Very useful is also the Comparison of Items tool where you can make graphs comparing revenues or expenditures of different entries to get a clear picture across the years.

**Center for Economic
Analyses**

bit.ly/1hdbQ58

Budget



Public Spaces in Skopje

Issue Urban planning does not always incorporate the best interests, preferences and needs of the residents. There are limited opportunities for citizens to be involved in government issues such as urban planning. One of the reasons is low transparency and limited access to the transparent plans of the city.

Solution The website provides a visualization of relevant urban development data in the city of Skopje. The website displays changes in housing structure, parking and greenery in recent but also in coming years if the current urban plan will be fulfilled.

Message The web platform contains searchable sets of relevant data that can

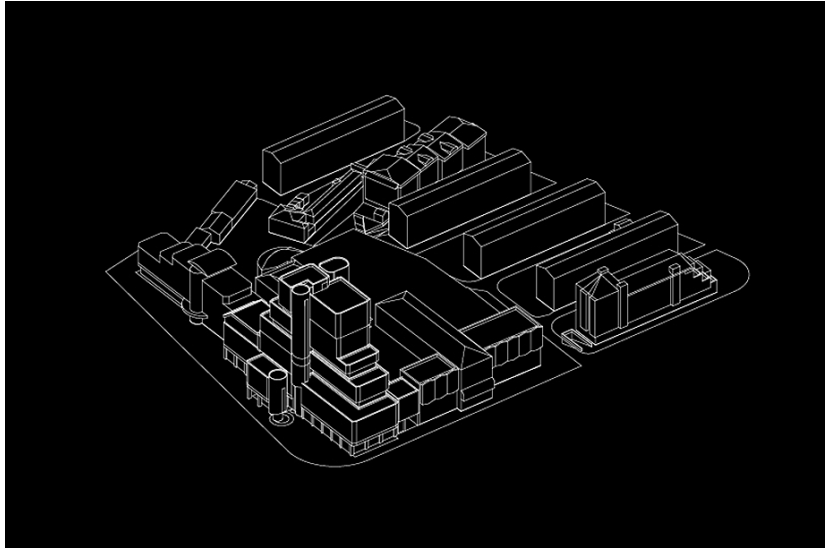
be used by both expert and non-expert users. By visualizing the rapid reduction of public spaces that happened parallel to a rapid increase in the population, the project wants to increase pressure for legislative change. The goal of the project is to improve knowledge on urban development as well as stimulate civic activism and participation in urban planning processes in Skopje. The debate on the vision of the city should involve the interests and needs of all its residents.

Reactor

bit.ly/1aJolTl

Urban Planning

→ The platform was launched in early 2013 and was well received by its intended users: the citizens of Skopje and the administration of the Municipality of Centar. Authors have been presenting the platform at various local and international events, advocating for its adoption by the municipal administration. Nowadays the Authors try to increase the area covered in the platform to include more municipalities.





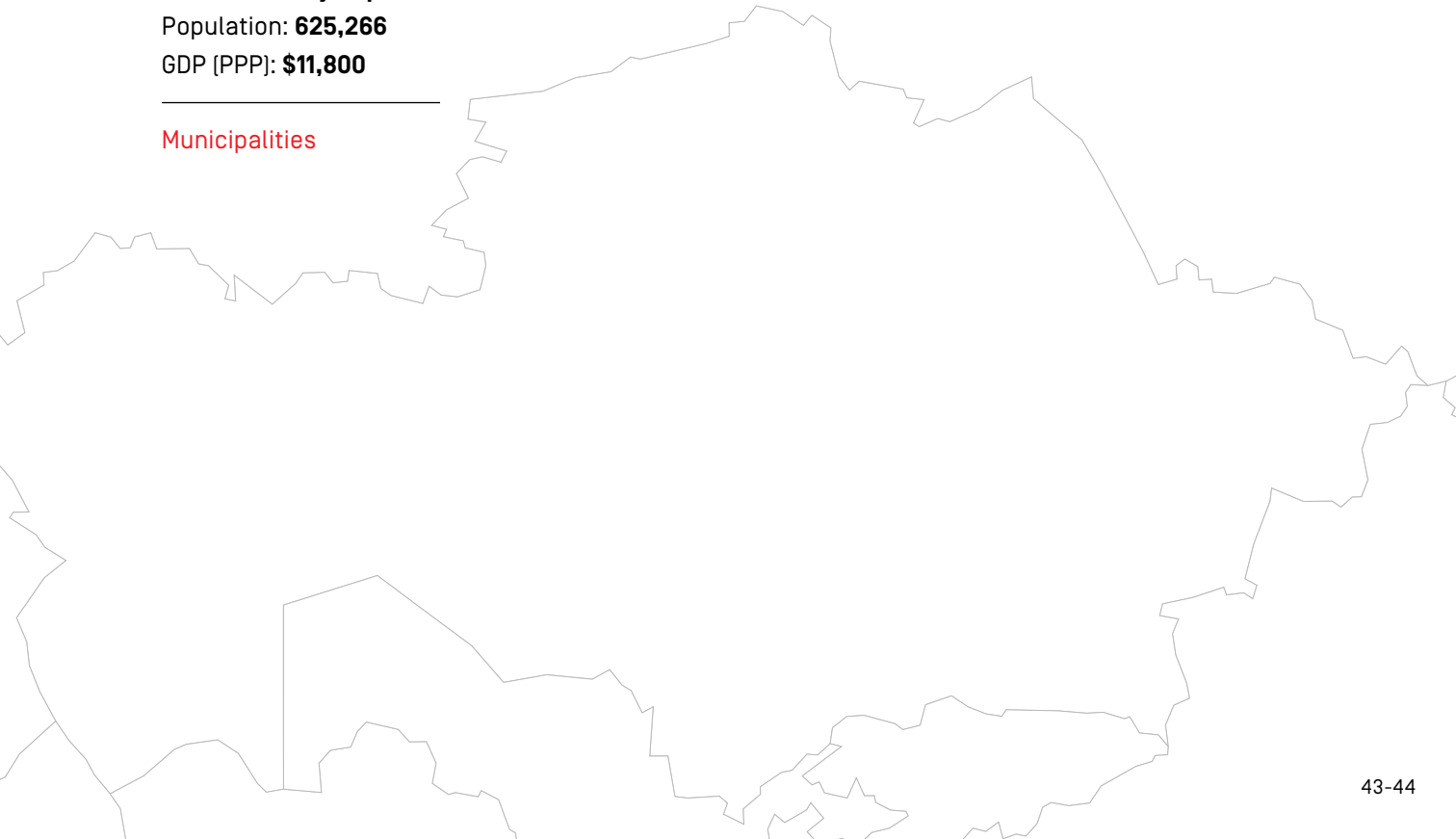
Montenegro

Parliamentary Republic

Population: **625,266**

GDP (PPP): **\$11,800**

Municipalities



Municipal Budget Monitoring

Issue There is no easy way to browse the municipal budgets, since the data is dispersed through a variety of different formats in different sections and various types on municipal websites. This increases inefficiencies in local self-governments and the lack of citizen's participation.

Solution The database collects data from all municipalities in Montenegro. The visualization tool facilitates the understanding and monitoring of the municipal budgets. It includes information about contracted concessions, public-private partnerships, public procurements and also unemployment.

Message The users of the visualization can see a timeline view of how a certain municipality fared during the years in terms of overall or specific revenues and expenditures. The database allows an insight into regional differences and comparison of the data. The website also includes media articles on local budgeting issues, announcements of public debates and uploaded versions of all key budgetary documents. The project aims to stimulate the interest of the public in municipal budgets, make the municipalities more open and transparent, and in turn make the municipal budgets more understandable to citizens.

Institute Alternative
bit.ly/1esAhUs

Municipalities

→ The portal has become a valuable resource of information for parties interested in local municipalities and their economy. Partnering with several media outlets in the country helped to get the word out and the public responded positively. As expected, glitches in existing budgetary systems were found, which prevent full transparency.





Slovakia

Parliamentary Republic

Population: **5,397,036**

GDP (PPP): **\$24,284**

Accountability

Budget

Municipalities

GREED – Open Public Procurements Database

Issue The accessible information about public procurement in Slovakia does not provide a comprehensive overview on the situation. The data on the official websites is published solely on an individual basis and absolutely out of context.

Solution The Open Public Procurement Database provides a website displaying aggregate procurement data and a comprehensive overview of the procurement processes allowing users to compare data and follow the trends. The goal of the project is to increase the transparency of public procurement in Slovakia.

Message The website provides a platform which compiles the public procurement

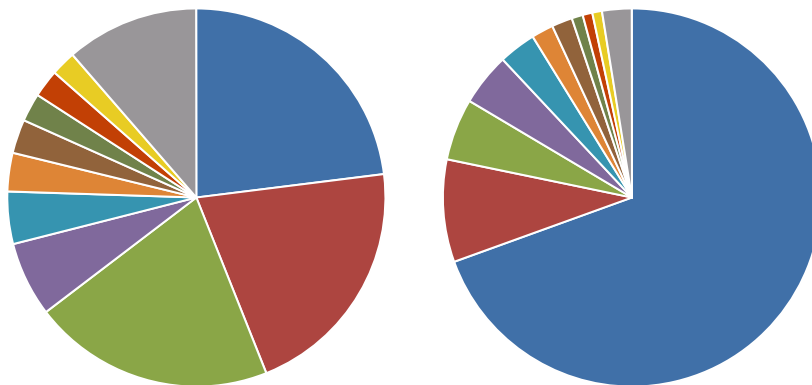
contracts into one place. The available procurement data is cleaned, aggregated and processed in order to increase the transparency of public procurement. The platform enables scanning and automated notifications of users on suspicious contracts. The website also permits community evaluation of the contracts and checking of manipulation with contracts that have already been published. There is also a shadow-copy of all published procurement contracts.

Fair Play Alliance

bit.ly/1eUU4At

Accountability

→ Thanks to all the data collected by the project it's authors were able to put together numerous analysis and publications on the procurements topic. These documents deal with procurements for hospitals, and the impact of electronic auctions on Slovak procurements or cartel preventions.



State Culture and Sports Grants Database Visualization

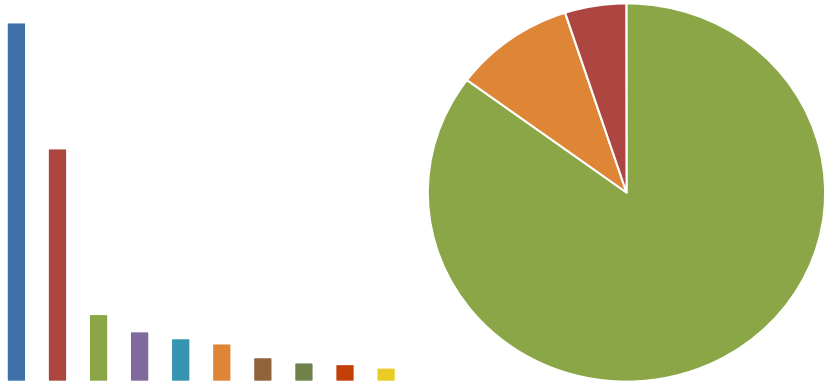
Issue Although there are thousands of contracts on the thousands of governmental portals (more than 7 000 individual websites), there is lack of an adequate infrastructure to bring all the contracts together into one place. The visitors are not able to find elementary information such as how much individual ministries spent or how much individual vendors made.

Solution The project aims to increase transparency in public grants in Slovakia for sports and culture by concentrating already available information in one place. The website provides a detailed report on major donors, grantees and supported projects in sports and culture, mostly from 2004 to 2010.

Message The goal of the project is to increase a discussion about the efficiency of public grants and desired goals that want to be achieved by grants. The website not only concentrates the data, but also interprets and visualizes them. It also brings information about the main supported areas, amount of projects and grantees. The portal focuses on the central government's grant schemes such as ministries, Slovak Government Office and Slovak Audiovisual Fund. By creating a web application and providing training to find problematic contracts it has had significantly simplified the work of journalists and watchdogs.

Transparency
International
bit.ly/1dkW7gW
Accountability

→ The portal now contains comprehensive and categorized data on grants from the period running from 2004 to 2010. The initiative continues to create pressure on the government to increase the transparency of cultural and sport grants. One of their results is also a list of improvements and guidelines for improving the current situation in this area of public finance.



The Price of the State

Issue How much do we really pay for public services? How much do we work for ourselves, and how much for the state? How big is the national debt? Without spending hours on the internet, it is nearly impossible to find essential information about public finance. Or if you find them, they are fragmented and chaotic with no general information.

Solution The INESS has designed Price of the State, a portal with a comprehensive overview of how much the state takes in and spends. The portal contains three independent parts: website, the Bill of Government Services and the poster Universe of Public Expenditures. The portal converts individual items into per-capita or per-working person costs, which makes it

easy to understand. to understand. The Price of the State also provides a very clear form of cash receipt to communicate the numbers and statistics. It is easy to understand how much each of us pays in taxes or how much of total budget is divided among different ministries' expenditures.

Message The Price of the State concentrates all the relevant data regarding the national budget and organizes them into a logical and coherent structure. It explains to people where his/her taxes end up and in what amount he/she contributes for public services. At the same time the cash receipt provides information on deficit spending per capita as well as growing public debt. The goal of the project is to inform the general public about the dimensions of Slovak public finance.

INESS

bit.ly/LVm005

Budget

→ The portal The price of the State does not only serve Slovak citizens. Other countries such as Iceland, Georgia and Poland have adopted it and the portal is open to implementation in other countries.



Monitoring the financial health of Slovak municipalities

Issue The municipalities in Slovakia do not always work as efficiently as they could. Because of a lack of transparent information and public control, the municipalities sometimes spend more than they should on the items with low priority. The websites of municipalities are often not well designed and it is hard to find the relevant data about municipality budgets, tax collections and municipality expenditures.

Solution The website collects information on the financial health of all 2930 municipalities plus 8 self-governing regions in Slovakia. The portal enables comparison among the municipal units, their ranking and sorting.

Message The website brings detailed demographic as well as financial

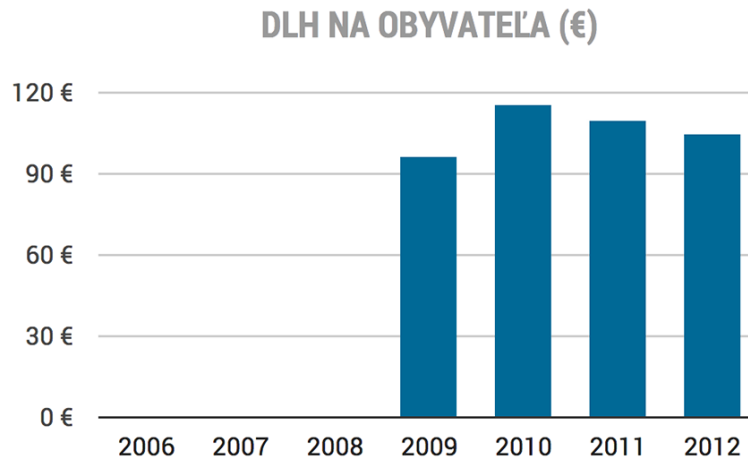
information of the municipalities. The group of financial indicators informs about current and long term liabilities, the municipality asset, credits, budget expenditures and revenues of each municipality. As a result of the per capita calculation it is easy to make a comparison of the municipal units and self-governing regions. The website also emphasizes the importance of financial health and effective municipality management. The project not only brings the actual financial data, but also forms a recommendation for economic and social reforms in the Slovak Republic. The goal of the project is to force the municipalities to manage their public sources in a more effective way and increase their financial health.

INEKO

bit.ly/1dkW7gW

Municipalities

→ The initiative helped to identify flaws in the current system used within municipalities and came up with recommendations for changes in Slovak law and the ways municipalities are managed today. The authors sent their proposal to the Slovak Ministry of Finance which confirmed their findings and started fixing existing issues.



Index by field

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Cover

The outlines of the urban areas of Europe, 1:50 000 000

2014