

TRANSPARENCY AND CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION: A FRAMEWORK FOR A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LOCAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract: *The general objective of the present study consists of a comparative analysis regarding the transparency and the citizens's participation in order to identify good practices at the local level.*

The paper proposes a framework for websites' analysis of the Bucharest and the Paris City Halls based on criteria such as the access to information, consultation, and active participation of citizens. Transparency plays a crucial role in enhancing local democracy. Citizens should be informed by the public administration and stimulated to be engaged in the public decision-making process.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The ideal of involving citizens in the process of public decision-making aligns with the European background of ensuring democracy within our societies, hence allowing the premises of consolidating stability.

Participatory manifestations oftentimes indicate a direct involvement, both individual and collective, in the local decision-making process, leading to either being perceived as part of the political team, or its opponents.

Such participation is characterized by a substantial versatility, understood as information, consultation, or decision. The latest challenging times have imposed an increasing need for digitalization of public administration that could contribute to the local public participation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Starting with the prominent G2G – government to government dimension, several other enhanced dimensions can be identified: C2G – citizen to government, where citizens improve the government's perceptiveness, while the government assumes its responsibility, G2C – government to citizen, where the government provides the requisite digital infrastructure conducive to improvement of the daily productiveness of the citizens, C2C – citizen to citizen, where the traditional responsibility the government possess can be substituted by the citizens' power of self-organizing (Linders, 2012). Thus, these dimensions succeeded to exploit the uncertain power of the Internet unanimously catalogued this way by humanity (Delmas, 2004).

When it comes to influencing the citizens' perception on public institutions, e-participation contentment cannot be ignored henceforward since its correlation with the administration has determined local trustiness (Hosu, Deac & Mosoreanu, 2012), empowering thereby indigenious people to exercise this fundamental right within the decision-making process affecting their lives (Gladun & Chebotarev, 2015).

Providing capital cities with the opportunity of becoming ecosystems of competitiveness (de Vries & Sobis, 2018) implies allowing them to deliver innovative solutions meeting citizens and businesses' expectations in the context of a new digital environment by increasing closeness (Fulga & Profiroiu, 2019). Hereinafter, their engagement could be interpreted as bridging the gap between politics, administration, and civil society, alongside with commitment to decisions discussed together (Radzik & Bátorová, 2015).

As Bannister & Connolly (2011) suggest, *it is necessary to strike a balance between four values: public law, good governance, costs and risks related to the delivery of services and to the right of public servants to privacy'*

so as to determine the public administration's level of transparency. More and more countries are increasingly organizing means for citizens with the objective to intervene directly: referendums, citizen forums, juries with citizens, means of collaborative governance, participatory budgets (Michels, 2011).

Transparency has already exceeded its status of measure, becoming a goal in itself, through which we can manage to prevent corruption and to promote good governance. A dichotomy has been formed between those believing in the transparency's influence on openness increase of public organisations and those underlining the transparency's capacity of producing confusion within the society (Grimmelikhuijsen & al., 2013). An inversely proportional effect distinguishes from here: the higher the level of perception of access to public information, the lower the demand for transparency (Piotrowski, 2010).

It is observed that presence of elected officials on the ground and decentralization of power lead to a democracy of proximity, which protects the participation of every inhabitant (Nez, 2008), but the challenge of creating a participatory democracy involves exceeding this democracy of proximity through a qualitative transformation of the local involvement (Bacqué & Sintomer, 2001), passing from information to consultation and active participation, stages able to predetermine both the decision-making process and its results. Encouraging citizens to engage in public issues signify therefore effective public policy achieved through an investment beyond price (Gramberger, 2001).

Furthermore, on the American continent, the citizen's participation has been transformed into a political culture, still indefensible to some disadvantages: time wasting, extra costs for debates that do not reach the objective, and decision-making burden if citizens are influenced by interest groups (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004).

At the same time, the development of New Public Management has forced bureaucracy to label citizens as customers, developing the role of partnership to such an extent that it reaches a bureaucratic revolution (Vigoda, 2002).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper aims to compare the level of transparency and citizen participation in two capital city halls, Bucharest and Paris, in order to identify the best practices. The comparative analysis is based on the website analysis.

In this respect, we have developed a framework of analysis, based on the stages described by the OECD (2001):

- a. Information stage**, which describes an incipient relation, the administration being able to offer, on the basis of two forms: *ex officio* and on request. From a legal point of view, this stage is based on Law no. 544/2001 on free access to information of public interest.
- b. Consultation stage**, which goes beyond the power of a single actor, expanding the capacity of citizens to express their views. Its regulation is based on the adoption of Law no. 52/2003 on decision-making transparency in the public administration.
- c. Active participation stage**, which is the case involving citizens the most, being governed by numerous laws, simple, and government ordinances. At this level, the involvement of citizens reaches its peak: they are asked for opinions on the budget, on the form of public debate, on the development of recommendations and projects, on the growth of the degree of civic capacity development, on the imposition from the speech to the situations that define the life of the Bucharest society.

The general objective of the present study consists in a comparative analysis between the websites of Bucharest City Hall and Paris City Hall regarding their information, consultation, and active participation in order to identify good practices for improving transparency at the local level, taking into account the following **scoring of the comparison algorithm**:

1. We choose three characteristics for each stage, define them, and give them scores as follows:
 - 1.1. **Information** (Table 4.1.)
 - **Transparent** means the existence of the characteristic, its definition, its explanation made in plain English, being scored with 5 points;
 - **Semi-transparent** means the existence of the characteristic as a consequence of the compliance with the legislation, being scored with 3 points;
 - **Opaque** means the absence of the characteristic, being scored with 1 point.
 - 1.2. **Consultation** (Table 4.2.)
 - **Consulted** means that the City Hall requested the citizen's opinion and took into account their expressed ideas, being scored with 5 points;
 - **Requested** means that the City Hall requested the citizen's opinion as an obligation deriving from the legislation, but did not take into account their expressed ideas, being scored with 3 points;
 - **Non-consulted** means that the City Hall did not request the citizen's opinion, being scored with 1 point.
 - 1.3. **Active participation** (Table 4.3.)
 - **Participatory** means that the City Hall and the citizens want to cooperate and there is an active involvement on both sides, being scored with 5 points;
 - **Requested** means that one of the parties requested the participation in accordance with the legislation, but this did not materialize, being scored with 3 points;
 - **Non-participatory** means that there was no request from any part, being scored with 1 point.
2. We determine the intervals for each stage of the scheme described at point 1. Thus, we will note the descending:
 - 2.1. **For the three characteristics of the sub-criteria, we will have a maximum of 15 points (corresponding to the hypothesis in which each characteristic would obtain the maximum of 5 points of the first qualifier).**
 - Transparent/consulted/participatory: 10-15 points;
 - Semi-transparent/requested/requested: 5-9 points;
 - Opaque/non-consulted/non-participatory: 1-4 points.
 - 2.2. **For the two sub-criteria of the criteria, we will have a maximum of 30 points (corresponding to the hypothesis in which each of the characteristics would obtain the maximum of 5 points of the first qualifier multiplied by 3 characteristics per sub-criterion).**
 - Transparent/consulted/participatory: 21-30 points;
 - Semi-transparent/requested/requested: 11-20 points;
 - Opaque/non-consulted/non-participatory: 1-10 points.
 - 2.3. **For the three criteria of the stages, we will have a maximum of 90 points (corresponding to the hypothesis in which the two sub-criteria will obtain a maximum of 30 points, summing up six sub-criteria related to the three criteria per stage).**
 - Transparent/consulted/participatory: 61-90 points;
 - Semi-transparent/requested/requested: 31-60 points;
 - Opaque/non-consulted/non-participating: 1-30 points.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1. Comparative Analysis on Information Stage

	Bucharest City Hall	Paris City Hall
INFORMATION stage	Total of 56 points	Total of 86 points
1. Criterion 1: Adapting the website interface to all categories of audience	Total of 16 points	Total of 28 points
1.1. Sub-criterion 1: website interface	Total of 7 points	Total of 13 points
1.1.1. Unity between the appearance of the websites of the General City Hall and of the District City Halls	<i>There is no unity between the ways information is grouped on the website in the same branches, chromatic, positioning news, and images on the opening page. – 1p.</i>	<i>There is unity between the way of grouping information on the website in the same branches, chromatic, positioning news, and images on the opening page. – 5p.</i>
1.1.2. The information has a deductible place for the user	<i>The information is largely present on the website, but its grouping is deficient, and the place of all the information cannot be deduced. – 3p.</i>	<i>The place of information is easy to deduce given the identical positioning of the categories of documents. – 5p.</i>
1.1.3. Search engine diversification, minimizing the number of clicks used to reach the desired information, and the usefulness of the keywords	<i>The search engine is functional, there is no keyword search function, and due to the lack of a deductible place for information, minimizing the number of clicks is not possible. – 3p.</i>	<i>The search engine is functional; there is no keyword search function, but search suggestions are offered, which may lead to a minimized number of clicks. – 3p.</i>
1.2. Sub-criterion 2: adaptability to the needs of the audience categories	Total of 9 points	Total of 15 points
1.2.1. The information is intended for reading	<i>All information on the website can be read. – 5p.</i>	<i>All information on the website can be read. – 5p.</i>
1.2.2. The information is available in video format, having the sign language	<i>The existence of the sessions in video format is noted, but they are not processed in the sign language. – 3p.</i>	<i>The existence of sessions in video format, which are processed in the sign language, is noted. – 5p.</i>
1.2.3. The information is available in audio format	<i>There are no recordings only in audio format, intended for listening in the form of radio information. – 1p.</i>	<i>Information can be found only in audio format, different from those described by the previous characteristics, through the function 'vocalization'. – 5p.</i>
2. Criterion 2: Details about human resources and how to contact them	Total of 18 points	Total of 28 points
2.1. Sub-criterion 1: description of human resources	Total of 9 points	Total of 15 points
2.1.1. Presentation and listing of positions	<i>There is a list of positions and the organizational chart. – 5p.</i>	<i>There is a list of posts and an organizational chart. – 5p.</i>
2.1.2. Existence of CVs and statements of assets of personnel	<i>We do not find these elements for the entire staff. – 3p.</i>	<i>We find these elements for the entire personnel. – 5p.</i>

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2.1.3. Publication of the number of positions and teams involved in projects	<i>The existence of the organizational chart is noted, but the number of employees occupying the positions is not specified. Equally, in the description of the projects, we do not find mentioned the composition of the work team. – 1p.</i>	<i>The description of the projects also contains information regarding the actors that will be involved. – 5p.</i>
2.2. Sub-criterion 2: the contact section	Total of 9 points	Total of 13 points
2.2.1. Classic: address, phone, email	<i>The authorities do not provide an e-mail address, but we find the address and the telephone. – 3p.</i>	<i>The authorities do not provide an e-mail address, but we find the address and the telephone. – 3p.</i>
2.2.2. Interactive: we find platforms specially created to contact the personnel	<i>It does not exist. – 1p.</i>	<i>There is a platform for claims and complaints through the account 'Demandes et réclamations', which is also extended on social networks under the name of 'Paris j'écoute'. – 5p.</i>
2.2.3. Direct: we write to the Mayor	<i>There is the section 'message to the Mayor' – 5p.</i>	<i>There is the section 'Madame la Maire, J'ai une idee' -5p</i>
3. Criterion 3: obtaining a document upon request <i>*Analysis conducted on the circuit of obtaining an urban planning certificate</i>	Total of 22 points	Total of 30 points
3.1. Sub-criterion 1: stages, forms, process	Total of 11 points	Total of 15 points
3.1.1. Compliance with the legal period of 30 days of processing the request	<i>Under normal conditions, the legal term should be respected. However, delays occur both because of the petitioner who can come with an incomplete file, and because of the authorities, in the case when they have too many requests to solve. – 3p.</i>	<i>In the case of the urban planning certificate, after one month, the applicant is notified regarding the status of the file. – 5p.</i>
3.1.2. Minimizing the steps taken by the petitioner	<i>The petitioner has several steps to take, at the Information and Documentation Office, at the cashier, at the registry, using the post, returning to pick up the document at the Information and Documentation Office. – 3p.</i>	<i>The petitioner must go to a single meeting at the City Hall, with the representative of the Urban Planning Department; the rest of the steps (purchasing the form, completing, and sending it, and scheduling the meeting) can be carried out directly from his account, and a simulation of the process is possible. – 5p.</i>
3.1.3. Accessibility of forms	<i>They are obtained on the spot from the Information and Documentation Office, but also from the website. – 5p.</i>	<i>They are obtained from the website. – 5p.</i>
3.2. Sub-criterion 2: results and sanctions	Total of 11 points	Total of 15 points

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3.2.1. Receiving the requested document	<i>The document is personally collected from the Directorate responsible for solving the file. – 5p.</i>	<i>The document is received in the account. – 5p.</i>
3.2.2. Sanctions in case of non-compliance caused by the petitioner	<i>The petitioner must resume the whole procedure, filling in the deficiencies that led to the delay of his file. – 5p.</i>	<i>The petitioner must resume the whole procedure, filling in the deficiencies that led to the delay of his file. – 5p.</i>
3.2.3. Sanctions in case of failure caused by the representative of the Directorate.	<i>There is no sanction published in order to justify the delays coming from the City Hall. In extreme cases, the administrative litigation court can be appealed. – 1p.</i>	<i>There is an interlocutor between the administration and the citizens, an independent administrative authority, with an advisory role, called 'Cada – Commission d'accès aux documents administratifs' = Commission for access to administrative documents, which can put pressure on the administration when it refuses the release of a document, release provided by law. – 5p.</i>

Source: Author, 2021 (based on data available on website in 2018)

Interpretation:

As we could observe, by summarizing of all the scores given to each criterion, sub-criterion, and characteristics, Bucharest City Hall obtained for the INFORMATION stage 56 points, falling therefore within the range of the 'requested' qualifier 31-60points, while Paris City Hall obtained 86points, falling therefore within the range 'consulted' qualifier 61-90points.

4.2. Comparative Analysis on Consultation Stage

CONSULTATION stage	Total of 48 points	Total of 86 points
4. Criterion 1: public debates	Total of 26 points	Total of 30 points
4.1. Sub-criterion 1: project debate	Total of 11 points	Total of 15 points
4.1.1. The text of the project described	<i>We find documents that explain the project. – 5p.</i>	<i>We find documents that explain the project. – 5p</i>
4.1.2. Detailing the project by objectives, budgets, and team	<i>We find project objectives, but not an analysis of the budget involved, as well as of the team that will carry it out. – 3p.</i>	<i>We find objectives of the project, the actors involved, and pages specially dedicated to the broad presentation of the project and the ways in which citizens can make their contribution. – 5p.</i>
4.1.3. Integration of public opinion objections	<i>The analyses or objections coming from some institutions are integrated rather than those coming from a single individual when we talk about the improved version of the initial proposal. – 3p.</i>	<i>Citizens' opinions are integrated; the administration launches special meetings with the future beneficiaries of the project in order to ask their opinion. – 5p.</i>
4.2. Sub-criterion 2: requesting the citizen's opinion	Total of 15 points	Total of 15 points

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CONSULTATION stage	Total of 48 points	Total of 86 points
4.2.1. Announcement of public debate in public meeting	<i>The announcement can be found on the website. – 5p.</i>	<i>The announcement can be found on the website. – 5p.</i>
4.2.2. Publication of the projects for which the consultation of the citizens and the legally constituted associations is asked	<i>We find the projects to be discussed in PDF format. – 5p.</i>	<i>We find the projects to be discussed in PDF format. – 5p.</i>
4.2.3. Project search engine	<i>We can browse through the projects of the City Hall, and we can search for one using the engine. – 5p.</i>	<i>We can browse through the projects of the City Hall, and we can search for one using the engine. – 5p.</i>
5. Criterion 2: online environment	Total of 10 points	Total of 26 points
5.1. Sub-criterion 1: the possibility of creating a personal account on the website	Total of 3 points	Total of 15 points
5.1.1. Obtaining forms, documents in the account	<i>It is not an existing feature. 1p.</i>	<i>It is an existing feature. – 5p.</i>
5.1.2. Scheduling meetings with representatives of the City Hall in the account	<i>It is not an existing feature. 1p.</i>	<i>It is an existing feature. – 5p.</i>
5.1.3. Establishing the terms in the account	<i>The website does not offer the possibility of creating an account. – 1p.</i>	<i>The website offers the possibility of creating an account, through which the citizen can solve his administrative problems, minimizing the number of requests in front of the public offices. – 5p.</i>
5.2. Sub-criterion 2: use of social networks as an extension of the website	Total of 7 points	Total of 11 points
5.2.1. The information is also made through social networks	<i>There is no direct link from the website to the only social network that the PMB uses (Facebook). – 3p.</i>	<i>There is a direct link from the website to the social networks used by the City Hall. – 5p.</i>
5.2.2. The consultation is also carried out through social networks	<i>The consultation is not carried out on these networks. – 1p.</i>	<i>The consultation is not carried out on these networks. – 1p.</i>
5.2.3. The City Hall urges citizens to actively participate through all means of communication	<i>Citizens are urged to participate with their projects within the participatory budgeting. – 3p.</i>	<i>Citizens are urged to participate in the life of the community by all means of communication that the City Hall has. – 5p.</i>
6. Criterion 3: consultation of documents	Total of 12 points	Total of 30 points
6.1. Document archives	Total of 12 points	Total of 15 points
6.1.1. Existence of archives	<i>It is not an existing feature. 1p.</i>	<i>It is an existing feature. – 5p.</i>
6.1.2. Existence of archives and their superficial explanation	<i>It is not an existing feature. 3p.</i>	<i>It is an existing feature. – 5p.</i>

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CONSULTATION stage	Total of 48 points	Total of 86 points
6.1.3. Existence of archives with explanations and ways to get in possession of information upon request	<i>We cannot find a presentation of the archives of the documents, but they are uploaded on the website, and there is the possibility to release other details upon request. – 3p.</i>	<i>We find the archives in the form of newsletters: 'BMO' (monthly newsletters) and 'BDO' (two-week newsletters). They deal once with the debates and deliberations of the Paris Council, and then, with the decisions. We can find them on the website, but there is also the possibility of creating a subscription by email (the citizen is notified by email when the new bulletin appears) or in printed format (for a year, the citizen paying a fee). The archives can be consulted upon request for research purposes, after making a reservation. – 5p.</i>
6.2. Updating information in real time	Total of 5 points	Total of 15 points
6.2.1. Out of date	<i>It is an existing feature. – 1p.</i>	<i>It is not an existing feature. 5p.</i>
6.2.2. Delayed updates	<i>It is an existing feature. – 3p.</i>	<i>It is not an existing feature. 5p.</i>
6.2.3. Updates during and after solving a case, and the existence of a chronology of the announcements	<i>The projects submitted for consultation are updated by publishing an improved version. – 1p.</i>	<i>The projects submitted for consultation are updated by publishing the two types of newsletters, and there is a chronological planning of the meetings. – 5p.</i>

Source: Author, 2021 (based on data available on website in 2018)

Interpretation:

Summarizing all the scores given to each criterion, sub-criterion and characteristics, Bucharest City Hall obtained for the CONSULTATION stage 48points, falling therefore within the range of the "requested" qualifier 31-60points, while Paris City Hall obtained 86points, falling therefore within the range of the "consulted" qualifier 61-90points.

4.3. Comparative Analysis on Active Participation Stage

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION stage	Total of 42 points	Total of 90 points
7. Criterion 1: the participation is adapted to the age categories	Total of 10 points	Total of 30 points
7.1. Sub-criterion 1: the modalities of participation are adapted to the age of each citizen	Total of 3 points	Total of 15 points
7.1.1. Citizens' meetings are held in an organized, formal framework, in the form of associations of an associative type, where they can debate the problems that their own community faces	<i>It is not an existing feature. – 1p.</i>	<i>It is an existing feature. – 5p.</i>
7.1.2. The meetings are held in an informal setting, due to the lack of the above groups	<i>It is not an existing feature. – 1p.</i>	<i>It is an existing feature. – 5p.</i>

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ACTIVE PARTICIPATION stage	Total of 42 points	Total of 90 points
7.1.3. The absence of citizens' meetings	<i>It is not an existing feature. 1p.</i>	<i>It is an existing feature. – 5p.</i>
7.2. Sub-criterion 2: the decision-making capacity is adapted to the age of each citizen	Total of 7 points	Total of 15 points
7.2.1. Existence of citizens' committees, which can debate part of the budget	<i>There is no council, but citizens can propose projects for participatory budgeting and submit proposals to amend the City Hall's budget at the beginning of each year. – 3p.</i>	<i>It is an existing feature. – 5p.</i>
7.2.2. Existence of councils, without the possibility of debating the budget	<i>It is not an existing feature. 1p.</i>	<i>It is an existing feature. – 5p.</i>
7.2.3. The absence of citizens' committees, but the possibility of expressing the decision by other methods	<i>Citizens can in this case attend public meetings. – 3p.</i>	<i>There are citizens' committees, created at the central level, as well as at the district level, to represent all age categories. – 5p.</i>
8. Criterion 2: participatory budgeting	Total of 22 points	Total of 30 points
8.1. Sub-criterion 1: platforms specially created for this type of projects	Total of 15 points	Total of 15 points
8.1.1. Existence of platforms for projects	<i>It is an existing feature. – 5p.</i>	<i>It is an existing feature. – 5p.</i>
8.1.2. Allocation of part of the budget to the City Hall	<i>It is an existing feature. – 5p.</i>	<i>It is an existing feature. – 5p.</i>
8.1.3. The voting system of the projects is realized through the creation of an account	<i>Starting with the autumn of 2017, we find the three features on the website, the 'Propose for Bucharest' platform, which details the entire proposal process, informing and the total estimated value of a project proposed by citizens, that of a maximum of 200.000 euros, VAT included (taking into account the equivalent in lei). – 5p.</i>	<i>It is an existing feature. – 5p.</i>
8.2. Sub-criterion 2: explanation of the institution's budget	Total of 7 points	Total of 15 points
8.1.1. Publication of the budget because of law enforcement	<i>On the website, we will find the budget for at least the last three years. – 3p.</i>	<i>It is an existing feature. – 5p.</i>
8.1.2. Publication of the budget in an editable form (Excel and not PDF)	<i>The budget is published in PDF format, thus making it difficult to analyze and propose modifications. – 1p.</i>	<i>It is an existing feature. – 5p.</i>

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ACTIVE PARTICIPATION stage	Total of 42 points	Total of 90 points
8.1.3. Explaining and debating the budget for the general public	<i>Citizens have the opportunity to discuss the levels of local taxes at the beginning of the year, but the City Hall does not provide the general public with a detailed explanation of the budget. – 3p.</i>	<i>Citizens are offered the opportunity to access the budget and its detailed explanations, more than a table in PDF format. – 5p.</i>
9. Criterion 3: volunteering	Total of 10 points	Total of 30 points
9.1. Sub-criterion 1: participation guide	Total of 5 points	Total of 15 points
9.1.1. Existence of a support which explains <i>ex officio</i> the modalities of participation	<i>It is not an existing feature. 1p.</i>	<i>It is an existing feature. – 5p.</i>
9.1.2. Explaining the modalities of active participation on request	<i>It is not an existing feature. 3p.</i>	<i>It is an existing feature. – 5p.</i>
9.1.3. The modalities of active participation through any medium are not explained	<i>On the website, we do not find a developed active participation guide, but citizens can get directions on request. – 1p.</i>	<i>On the website, we find a developed active participation guide. – 5p.</i>
9.2. Sub-criterion 2: Community projects	Total of 5 points	Total of 15 points
9.2.1. The existence of voluntary actions	<i>It is not an existing feature. 1p.</i>	<i>It is an existing feature. – 5p.</i>
9.2.2. The existence of solidarity actions	<i>It is not an existing feature. 1p.</i>	<i>It is an existing feature. – 5p.</i>
9.2.3. Existence of actions to train citizens in writing projects, information campaigns, civic activities	<i>At the level of volunteering, a very well-known program is 'Proedus', which offers the possibility for young people to participate in different activities, but it is not mentioned on the City Hall's website, having a distinct website. Training or solidarity actions do not exist on the website, but solidarity activities are sporadically organized. – 1p.</i>	<i>The town hall organizes meetings with the citizens to train them in the process of writing projects for participatory budgeting, to urge them to actions of solidarity with refugees, poor people, and homeless people named 'SDF sans domicile fixe'. – 5p.</i>

Source: Author, 2021 (based on data available on website in 2018)

Interpretation:

Summarizing all the scores given to each criterion, sub-criterion and characteristics, Bucharest City Hall obtained for the ACTIVE PARTICIPATION stage 42 points, falling therefore within the range of the 'requested' qualifier 31-60 points, while Paris City Hall obtained 90 points, falling therefore within the range 'consulted' qualifier 61-90 points.

5. RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

Taking into account the comparison between the municipalities of Paris and Bucharest, we can conclude that the City Hall of Paris offers through its websites attractive and useful information, easily accessible to all citizens and thus encourages civic participation of each community; on the contrary, the Bucharest City Hall is to some extent compliant with the legislation on access to public information, but the available resources are not enough in order to support data analysis, the civic apathy being continuously sustained by this visible lack of information and encouragement for public consultation and participation.

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