

# Structure of Administration and Positions in Municipalities in Bulgaria

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**Abstract:** This text examines the key aspects of the structure of local administration in Bulgaria and introduces the main positions within it. It outlines the primary areas of interaction between the administration and society, assesses the extent to which these activities are fulfilled, and identifies the main deficiencies. Additionally, the text details the powers of the mayor as the head of the administration and the normative practices for promotion within the organization. The local administration in the country is the public authority closest to the citizens, and its efficiency is crucial for the proper functioning of the state. Therefore, the ineffective transfer of obligations and responsibilities from the state to the municipalities is a significant problem, as it often lacks the necessary funding and other guarantees for successful implementation. In addition to the state's attitude toward municipalities, the role of the employees is also key to the success of local administration. The administration lacks effective approaches to career development and evaluation that motivate and retain good employees.

**Keywords:** local government, mayor, municipal administration, positions in the municipality.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Following the democratic changes of the late twentieth century and the adoption of the new Bulgarian Constitution in 1991, Bulgaria embarked on a path of democratic governance. This shift opened up new opportunities for the country, emphasizing improvement through the implementation of various local and national policies. The constitution establishes that Bulgaria is a parliamentary republic with local self-government. The municipality serves as the primary administrative-territorial unit where this self-government is enacted. Through this system, the local population is granted the opportunity and right to participate in managing their community. This participation includes electing the mayor and the municipal council and engaging in direct civil activities such as local referendums, general meetings of the population, and other forms of civic participation. A key indicator of self-government is the formation of local electoral bodies that manage their specific areas of activity, providing certain services to the population. Consequently, in Bulgaria, regions, planning regions, municipal regions, and town halls do not constitute levels of self-government [1].

## II. BASIC POSITIONS IN LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

Local self-government is expressed in the right and the real possibility of citizens and their elected bodies to independently decide all issues of local importance, which the law has provided in their competence. According to Article 17, Paragraph 12 of the Law on Local Self-Government and Local Administration (ZMSMA), the competences of local government bodies cover the following areas [2]:

1. Municipal property, municipal enterprises, municipal finances, taxes, and fees, municipal administration;
2. Organization and development of the territory of the municipality and its settlements;
3. Education;
4. Healthcare;

5. Culture;
6. Improvement and communal activities;
7. Social services;
8. Environmental protection and rational use of natural resources;
9. Maintenance and preservation of cultural, historical, and architectural monuments;
10. Development of sports, recreation, and tourism;
11. Disaster protection.

### III. THE MAYOR

The mayor of a municipality, as part of the state authorities, carries out the general management of the municipal administration [3]. Among the powers defined in the Law on Local Self-Government and Local Administration (ZMSMA), the following relate to the management of the administration:

- Manages all executive activities of the municipality;
- Appoints and dismisses deputy mayors, the municipal secretary, heads of units funded by the municipal budget, civil servants, and persons working under an employment relationship in the municipal administration, except those in districts or town halls;
- Imposes disciplinary penalties as provided by law;
- Assigns functions to the mayors of town halls and regions, and coordinates and controls the expediency and legality of their implementation;
- Controls the legality of acts and actions of mayors in the exercise of their powers and imposes the prescribed administrative penalties;
- Represents the municipality before individuals, legal entities, and the court;
- Approves the regulations of the municipal administration.

Within the framework of his powers as the head of the municipal administration, the mayor must ensure its functioning in accordance with the legally established principles:

- Legality;
- Openness and accessibility;
- Responsibility and accountability;
- Efficiency;
- Subordination and coordination;
- Predictability;
- Objectivity and impartiality;
- Continuous quality improvement.

According to the distribution of activities carried out in support of the mayor, the municipal administration is divided into general and specialized sectors. The general administration supports the mayor's executive powers, creates conditions for the specialized administration to function effectively, and performs technical tasks for the administrative service of citizens and businesses. The specialized administration assists in executing the mayor's powers directly related to his competencies. The Law on Administration specifies the mandatory units within the administration that ensure the implementation of the mayor's general powers.

The powers of the mayor of a municipality as the head of the administration are defined by the framework of the units of the general administration, as outlined in the Law on Administration. The mission of these units is to support the implementation of the powers of the state authority and the mayor, as defined in the Law on Local Self-Government and Local Administration (ZMSMA).

Comparing the areas within the scope of the mayor's powers according to the ZMSMA with the functions of the units in the general administration reveals that the management of the municipal administration can be categorized into the following areas:

- Administrative service
- Legal assurance of activities
- Information security
- Bookkeeping, document circulation, and municipal archives
- Information systems
- Management of financial resources
- Human resource management
- Management during defense-mobilization preparation
- Protocol, activity publicity, and public relations
- Other powers related to the general competence of the mayor

The mayor of the municipality is assisted by the municipal secretary and deputy mayors. The mayor, or the mayor of a region, appoints deputy mayors according to the approved number and structure of the municipal administration and determines their functions.[4]

#### IV. LAWS IN ADMINISTRATION

Normative acts regulating the human resources management system in public administration include:

- Administration Law
- Civil Servant Law and related ordinances:
  - Ordinance on the Implementation of the Classification of Positions in the Administration
  - Ordinance on Conducting Competitions for Civil Servants
  - Ordinance on the Documents for Holding a Civil Service
  - Ordinance on the Job Characteristics of Civil Servants
  - Ordinance on the Terms and Conditions for Evaluating the Performance of Civil Servants in the State Administration
  - Ordinance on the Salaries of Employees in the State Administration
  - Ordinance on the Official Position of Civil Servants
- Labor Code and the applicable sub-normative acts

The mayor or persons authorized by the mayor are responsible for planning, selecting, appointing, and releasing human resources. This includes the development and approval of a job schedule, job descriptions, conducting competitions for civil servant positions, and evaluating the performance of employees in the administration [5].

#### V. POSITION IN THE ADMINISTRATION AND CAREER GROWTH

What are the important issues in the effective management of a municipal administration?

To manage a municipal administration effectively, several critical aspects need to be analyzed and addressed[6]:

**1. Human Resources:**

- Assess the available human resources in terms of demographics, competency levels, and the ratio between management and executive staff.

**2. Financial Resources:**

- Determine the financial resources available to support administrative activities and how they are allocated among individual units. Understand the principles behind their budgeting.

**3. Management Structure:**

- Clarify the management structure, including the positions and employees involved in decision-making processes, the distribution of rights and responsibilities, and the delegation process.

**4. Information Technology and Communication Resources:**

- Evaluate the ease of use of information technology and communication resources, their promotion, and whether the technological resources are up-to-date with the latest trends.

**5. Communication Process:**

- Analyze how employees are informed about past and upcoming events, decisions made, and the nature of both formal and informal communication within the organization.

**6. Organizational Culture:**

- Investigate the prevalent values, beliefs, and attitudes of employees, along with the written and unwritten ethical rules governing their behavior.

**7. Goal-Setting Mechanism:**

- Establish a mechanism for setting goals, explaining annual or mandated objectives, and creating work plans for each employee.

**8. Control Function:**

- Detail the control function to establish and enforce rules and procedures.

The mayor, occupying the highest elected post, must ensure the necessary leadership to steer the municipality in the right direction. As the leader of the community and a political figure, the mayor must focus on important development goals, respond adequately to external challenges, and lead administrative activities in the best interests of local residents. Thus, the mayor must be a capable administrator, a skilled leader, a visionary strategist, and a person with a broad general knowledge who can quickly understand problems across various spheres and is aware of the wide range of municipal activities.[7]

The determination of mandatory positions in the administration structure of local government is based on the following factors:

**1. Covering All Authority Responsibilities:**

- Ensuring all responsibilities of the mayor and the municipal council, as provided for in current legislation, are covered.

**2. Compliance with Organizational Norms:**

- Achieving full compliance with the norms for organizing structures within local government, including the minimum number and ratio of employees in the general and specialized administration, as well as management positions in relation to the total number of employees.

**3. Regulatory Requirements:**

- Meeting regulatory requirements for including structural units that perform specific functions in the general and specialized administration.

#### 4. Current Practices:

- Considering current practices for grouping similar functions by specific policy areas and maintaining established links that allow for the combination of functions within one position if necessary.

The number of personnel should be determined based on the needs, workload, and size of each municipality. There is no legally defined minimum number of positions in the functional areas of specialized administration. However, the normative requirements for the minimum number of units in general and specialized administration, in accordance with the population served, must be respected. This includes maintaining the required ratio of personnel in general and specialized administration and the number of management positions relative to the total number of personnel.

A position in the administration is a legally defined role that is held through an official legal relationship or an employment contract. This role is based on specific requirements and criteria related to the type of activity associated with the position. It is defined through a system of functions, duties, and requirements, which are detailed in the job description. The minimum professional experience required for holding the position includes the period during which the employee performed activities in a field or fields related to the functions specified in the job description for the relevant position [8].

The positions in the administration are occupied by:

- Government employees
- Persons working under an employment relationship

The following positions are held by civil servants:

- Management positions
- Expert positions with analytical and/or control functions
- Other specific positions specified in the Classifier of Positions in the Administration

Career growth in the administration is based on many regulatory requirements and follows the natural course of a person's professional path, which may result in slower growth compared to the private sector. The extensive set of obligations for municipalities, both in implementing specific policies and in the administration of the organization itself, requires different types and qualities of human resources.

The administration must have a variety of positions in terms of profile and rank, and this heterogeneous activity creates tension regarding the planning of resources invested in specific activities and the personnel who perform them. Therefore, career development in municipal administration is a complex and multifaceted process that requires careful planning and coordination. The leader of the organization plays a crucial role in balancing and motivating the staff[9].

Experience shows that due to limited human resources, mayors often assign new functions to already employed experts, requiring them to fulfill additional duties. At the same time, the possibilities for increasing these employees' salaries are limited. This trend was also evident during the declared anti-epidemic situation, when staff reductions in municipal administrations were necessary to comply with the regulations of the Minister of Health and to implement new and additional functions.

Practice shows that if a person stays in one position for too long, they stop developing. In this regard, career development opportunities are an excellent motivator in human resource management[10]. This is also a problem in municipal administrations, where there are strictly profiled employees with uniform activities that lack development opportunities. The work must be enriched to create positive change.

Career development today should provide municipal employees with opportunities for growth, aimed at increasing the quality and efficiency of administrative services and powers. It should also enhance the prestige and reward of the profession, creating a comprehensive set of expectations for the level of commitment to professional development. This approach provides clarity and appropriate differentiation for each career stage.

Successful professional development is closely related to the presence of established professional standards. These standards provide clarity on what is expected of an employee at each stage of their career. However, this series of activities is still not at the necessary level to give employees the clarity and opportunities for growth within the municipal administration.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The success of local governments is closely linked to quality governance, which includes effective coordination and communication between mayors, municipal administrations, and citizens. Mayors, as municipal leaders, play a crucial role in organizing administrative processes and optimizing the use of human resources to meet the diverse needs of citizens and businesses. Municipalities must regularly update their work processes, communication strategies, and interactions between different administrative units to ensure high efficiency and maintain their role as a valuable pillar of stability within the state structure. In this context, it is essential to prioritize the systematic development of skills that demonstrate expected behaviors by providing quality training, useful feedback, and rewards for a job well done. Effective governance includes not only the skills to respond to crises but also the ability to adapt and innovate administrative processes, as well as maintain open and effective communication with the public.

The results of more in-depth research can lead to the creation of new regulatory documents in local administration, such as updated administrative regulations and a revised hierarchical structure. These changes can establish new standards for administrative services and document circulation, aimed at improving and optimizing processes and communication within municipal administration.

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