

Ambassador Vincent Obsitnik, Retired
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February 25, 2010

Mr. John-Mary Kauzya
Chief of Governance
Governance and Public Administration Branch (GPAB)
DPADM-UNDESA
2 UN Plaza DC-2 Room 1734
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Kauzya,

I am writing this letter in support of a United Nations Public Service Award for the City of Martin, Slovakia. The City of Martin has already been nominated for this award which, in itself, is a great tribute to, and accomplishment for, the city and its citizens.

I served as the United States Ambassador to the Slovak Republic in the years 2007 to 2009. Although Slovakia has developed a strong and vibrant economy, transparency and corruption are still topics that deserve much attention. In this regard, I was very impressed with the leadership shown by the Mayor of Martin, Andrej Hrnčiar upon coming into office. He provided the leadership and executive commitment to make Martin a transparent city for the benefit of all its citizens. When he moved to initiate the project, "Transparent Town", we in the US Embassy supported his efforts. However, it was interesting that, on announcement of the project, Mr. Hrnčiar was approached by officials of other cities to not go forward with the project. However, in his determination to serve his city and citizens, he proceeded and the results are truly commendatory. His is the first city in Slovakia, to my knowledge, that has moved in this direction with openness and energy.

Martin followed a very structured and determined approach to bringing transparency to the town activities. They audited 17 key policies to determine the extent of corruption possible. They developed policies that were then approved by the city council. The usage of the town's website has increased 40% indicating that citizens are increasing their involvement with town

processes. The use of electronic documentation, processing and auctions are now showing cost savings to the town of Martin. I believe that you are well aware of the results of Martin's efforts.

The question now is why should Martin receive the Public Service Award? To summarize:

1. Creative and determined leadership of the town Mayor in the face of opposition.
2. First town in Slovakia to embark in this direction.
3. Well thought out and implemented program to understand the processes and the subsequent development of new policies for the town.
4. Acceptance by the town's citizens as evidenced by their increased use of the E-Government systems.
5. Demonstrated savings to the town in using more transparent processes.
6. In summary, Martin is a shining example not only to Slovakia but also to the rest of Europe.

In conclusion, I would like to again express my strong recommendation for Martin to be selected for the United Nations Public Service Award.

Sincerely yours,

Vincent Obsitnik
U.S. Ambassador, ret.