From e-Government to Public Value Creation

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Abstract: Public value as a relatively new term argues that public services are distinct in character because they are characterized by citizens’ rights to services that have been approved and funded through certain democratic processes. In a simpler way, public value is proportional to the desire to maximize shareholder value in the private sector. It is designed for executives to think about what is valuable in the service they are working for and to consider how effective management can make the service as efficient as possible. On the other hand, public organizations are obligated by the law to ensure quality in public services to the citizens (Tsotsolas, 2010). From this point of view, governments across Europe face the challenge of providing more valuable, responsive, efficient and effective services (Tsotsolas and Drosos, 2010). Furthermore, the current social, economic and technological developments are leading towards the emergence of a new generation of eGovernment Services (European Commission, 2014) and from this point of view these developments could bring value for society and how the public sector should innovate to foster their use and maximize their impact on society. In this paper we aim to define the term of public value and discuss the main advantages in the public sector’s services through the implementation of e-government practices and examples.

Keywords: value, public value, e-government, public sector

1. Defining the “Public Value”

There are many definitions and perspectives from a variety of sciences such as economics, finance and psychology that aim to define what “value” means to people. The dictionary defines value as “relative worth, utility, or importance” of something (Merriam-Webster, 2014). The content of this term is very complicated and depends on a variety of different criteria. Literature distinguishes among (1) public values, which are many (e.g., Andersen et al. 2012; Bozeman 2002, 2007; Jørgenson and Bozeman 2007; Meynhardt 2009; Van Wart 1998), (2) the creation of public value, which is defined as producing what is either valued by the public, is good for the public, including adding to the public sphere, or both, as assessed against various public value criteria (Alford 2008; Alford and O’Flynn 2009; Benington and Moore 2011; Stoker 2006); and (3) the public sphere or public realm, within which public values and value are developed and played out (Benington 2011).

As Meynhardt (2009) states, “public value from a management perspective, shifts the focus of value creation from a narrow financial-economic performance perspective to a broader concept of value creation that maintains and influences individual well-being as well as societal progress. In this sense, public value redefines the whole nation of value creation” (Meynhardt, 2015). He continues with the consideration that public value creation ‘is situated in relationships between the individual and ‘society,’ founded in individuals, constituted by subjective evaluations against basic needs, activated by and realized in emotional-motivational states, and produced and reproduced in experience-intense practices” (Meynhardt 2009). In this sense, public value is only created or destroyed when the experiences and behavior of individuals and groups are influenced in a way that they (de)stabilize social order evaluations, sense of community, and self-determination in a societal context. Along these lines, public value is seen as a result of valuing processes, which are collective and social in their very nature. In an almost exhaustive overview, Rescher(1982) puts together a list of definitions, more specifically:

- A value has or is a value if and when people behave toward it so as to retain or increase their possession of it.” (Lundberg, 1982)
- “Anything capable of being appreciated (wished for) is a value.” (Park and Burgess, 2002)
- “Values are the obverse of motives . . . the object, quality, or condition that’s satisfies the motivation.” (Richard T. LaPiere)
- “Values are any object of any need.” (Howard Becker)
- “[A value] is a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available means and ends of action.” (Clyde Kluckhohn)

One main proposition is that value is created in relationships. So public value is created in relationships in which “the public” is involved. But what or who “is” the public? The answers to this highly discussed notion vary depending on political, sociological or legal considerations. For example, Frederickson(1991) distinguishes between five perspectives:

![Figure 1: The five perspectives of public value from Frederickson (1991)](image)

Public value provides a systematic framework for a new approach to defining and measuring goals for a variety of reasons (Talbot,2008). First of all, executives would think constructively about the purpose they were supposed to
serve. There will be a debate with the public or other way of research to ensure that these goals are in line with the expectations of the public - understanding of course that these expectations can be reshaped by politicians and public officials. Or, from a management standpoint, public servers need to check if the end results are aligned with the original programming. These expectations can be translated into clear goals against which performance can be measured using appropriate KPIs.

Public officials must identify the purposes that the organization serves. This is not just a process of illuminated reflection that leads to an awareness of how the service can be refined. Managers are not obliged to make their own judgments about goals that could be considered valuable. In addition, public services are financed by taxpayers' money and subject to democratic accountability. From an educational point of view, there are various factors that need to be measured in relation to the value that education brings to students, employers, organizations, the public and the power of governance. Measuring the outcomes of education and learning will ensure a greater appreciation of how public programs serve the public interest. Measuring results is not a new idea. The National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) now requires accredited programs to determine how to measure learning outcomes and how to evaluate the success of their assignments.

Measuring public value is not a simple process, especially when an organization has to measure its end results. The reason is that no data are available to evaluate these results. At this point the contribution of technology is obvious. Technology can be very useful for executives who want to manage data collection. Another useful process is the exchange of data between many organizations. This raises the question of how the "bottom line" contribution to public value will be measured. The government does not seek financial gain like a business. These are the provision of various public goods and services whose real value to stakeholders cannot be easily expressed in monetary terms, so there is a great need to determine value and measure performance.

Value as a condition is something that has caused a lot of debate, especially when it comes to public organizations and institutes where there is no direct financial exchange. Friedman said that a responsible organization is the profit organization, so it is profitable and follows the law, so it is legal.

2. How and Where Public Value is Created

The concept of public value emphasizes the importance of focusing on outputs and processes ("what value is added to the public sphere, by whom and how?") Not just on inputs and outputs or on inputs / outputs and productivity ratios. For example, public offering prospects will focus on improving public health and respect for patients, as well as reducing waiting lists and times. Public value creation can be visualized on the basis of an open system in which inputs are transformed, through activities and processes, into outputs and outputs, with the active assistance of co-producers and partner organizations. Value appraisal includes aspects of, but beyond, public satisfaction, as public outcomes are expressed by the economic, social, political and ecological value added to the public sphere. Therefore, public outcomes may include factors that are not easily recorded in public satisfaction surveys (e.g., investments in clean water maintenance or sewer repairs, which may not be visible to the service user). Public outcomes may also include factors that certain segments of the public experience have negative constraints (for example, controlling drug trafficking, alcohol consumption or child pornography).

Consequently, public outcomes are complex and controversial and often result in compensation not only between 'goods' and 'bads' but also between competing priorities. However, the concept of public value helps to focus on the processes by which they are created or co-created and the outcomes for whom and with whom. Public value can therefore be used not only as a conceptual tool for strategic planning but also as an exploratory device to stimulate dialogue between competing interests and prospects and to engage in a debate on how to improve services, who wins and who loses for the benefits and costs involved.

Value is created by public service organizations in their decisions about the services they must provide and how they justify the allocation of resources to specific results, carry out strategic planning and develop processes compatible with public value. This section looks at three of the key issues that organizations must address if they want to incorporate what they learn from their dialogue with citizens into their creation processes. First, public value has a significant impact on the way organizations outsource services, whether they are external providers or the development of internal resources. Secondly, organizations must consider the possibility of direct citizen participation in the design and delivery of services. Third, organizations must also consider the role of staff seriously. Moore (2017) may have been guilty of emphasizing the importance of the heroic public-sector manager and paying very little attention to those who work lower in the organizational hierarchy. Increased levels of industrial action in the public sector and professional dissatisfaction with public service reform demonstrate the importance of staff involvement being very visible. In this context, some of the key challenges are:

- **Effective risk sharing and management.**
- **Establishing clear lines of accountability -** the new forms of governance associated with outsourcing to private and third sector organizations do not fit the traditional constitutional model of democratic policy structured around ministerial services. With many typical functions of government being transferred from services, Commissioners are working in an environment where the once simple lines of accountability have become increasingly fragile, with ministers increasingly reluctant to take responsibility for delegated functions. , (Gains & Stoker, 2008).
- **Striking a good balance between transparency and commercial secrecy,** and ensuring that measures to promote openness do not create an unstable form of
procedural nature that may impede the effectiveness of public bodies.

- **Ensuring that private and third-party service providers are able to provide services that meet not only the needs of users or consumers**, but also broader citizens' preferences, as public, private and charitable trends make different demands of people and create different expectations and experiences in terms of responsibility, responsibility and transparency.

- **Moving on to results-based evaluation**: Outsourcing represents a departure from standard approaches, which focus primarily on the results and quantity of services provided, rather than their impact on service users.

It is designed to shift the focus from activities to results, outputs to results and how a program works in relation to the benefits it achieves. According to this rationale, the results can provide a means to bring users closer to the value of the service in question and a more accurate assessment of their public value. For example, when deciding to invest in a training program for young offenders, a traditional outsourcing approach may ask how many people will attend and complete the course, while a results-based approach will consider the extent to which illegal behavior will be reduced of the target population.

In addition, the outcome-based outsourcing is clearly an innovative process with the potential to deliver significant improvements to current outcome-based commissioning, an approach that has not been largely tested. What is needed is the practical learning that comes from the application, in particular to meet its challenges: to establish a workable definition of the desired outcomes that can be sought, realized and actively measured, an evaluation of when it is appropriate to measure the outcome and when it is not? Resolving how to measure outcomes that are the responsibility of more than one organization or service; establishing methods for making intermediate judgments about the success of long-term policy interventions, ensuring that results are not just another objective.

**From the new public management to public value: example change and management implications**

Public sector reform has been a common experience across the world despite its various forms (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004). Usually as scholars and practitioners we refer to the reforms of recent decades as "new public management" (NPM), which, for Hood (1991), was an exemplary shift from the traditional model of public administration. During this time several countries have become models of the NPM, notably New Zealand and Australia, which have undergone significant change in the public sector to escape the bureaucratic example of public administration. More recently, however, cracks have emerged, and a new way of thinking and applying public management practice has begun to be sought, in part to address the alleged weaknesses of the NPM. At the end of the 20th century, a multi-system model of public administration was firmly incorporated in many countries, reflecting the result of a series of reforms aimed at breaking away from the traditional model of public administration, backed by the Weber bureaucracy (1946), a political administration Wilson's (1887) and the scientific management model of Taylor's work organization (1911). At least in part, the NPM was a response to the perceived weaknesses of the traditional bureaucratic paradigm of public administration (O'Flynn 2005a, Stoker 2006) and included a "critique of monopoly forms of service and an argument for a wider range of public sectors in the market-orientated approach "(Stoker 2006: 45). In articulating this NPM example in the early 1990s, Hood (1991) commissioned his main dogmatic components:

- Professional management
- Strict performance standards and measures.
- More emphasis on output controls.
- Distribution of units in the public sector.
- Greater competition in the public sector.
- Private-sector style of practical management and
- Greater discipline and resourcefulness in resource use.

In this new example, the dogmatic components were accompanied by four reinforcing trends:

- development; privatization and quasi-privatization
- automation in the production and distribution of public services, and,

Or an international agenda for public sector reforms (Hood 1991: 3–4).

Fifteen years after Hood (1991) and Hughes (2006) in their work on "new pragmatism" formulated the following major themes that characterized NPM:

a) Management (i.e. results and management responsibility) as a function of higher order than management

b) Contemporary management theories and practices (i.e. staff flexibility and organization) can improve public administration and service delivery is important to citizens.

As Stoker (2006: 46) pointed out, the NPM sought ... to eliminate the bureaucratic pillar of the traditional public administration war. Outside the large, multi-hierarchical bureaucracies, the [NPM] proclaims, and with rigid, flat, autonomous organizations that come from the public and private spheres and are led by a narrow central leadership body. Given the problems and challenges of the experiments with NPM, especially during the 1990s, there is growing interest in what can be described as a public value approach that is largely based on Moore's work (1994, 1995) and marks a shift from the strong ideological positions of the market to state forecasting. In part, this may reflect the growing recognition that "the social values inherent in public services may not be adequately addressed by the calculation of the cost-effectiveness of markets" (Hefetz and Warner 2004: 174). In addition, it can support what has been referred to as new pragmatism. Where old ideological debates have largely disappeared (Hughes 2006: 11). A new post-competitive 'example would mean a shift from focusing on results and efficiency to achieving the broader government goal of public value creation.

The debate over public value has become increasingly popular, but a clear definition remains unclear. Public value has been described as a multidimensional construct - a reflection of the collectively expressed, politically mediated preferences consumed by the citizen - that are created not
only through "results" but also through processes that can create trust or justice (O’Flynn 2005b). Others have declared public value as "the value created by government through services, legislation and other actions" (Kelly et al., 2002: 4) and this could be used as a "hard criterion" against which they can be measured performance, resource allocation decisions and defining appropriate delivery systems. Stoker describes public value as "more than a sum of individual preferences of users or producers of public services. . . . [this] is created collectively through the debate involving elected and appointed government officials and key stakeholders' (2006: 42). Horner and Hazel (2005: 34), more clearly, define public value as a correlation of shareholders' private value or performance: Think of citizens as shareholders about how their taxes are spent. Value can be created through economic prosperity, social cohesion or cultural development. Ultimately, value - such as better services, enhanced trust or social capital, or social problems that have been reduced or avoided - is decided by the citizen. Citizens do this through the democratic process, not just through electoral voting, but through participation. . . . consultations and surveys, for example.

This is well linked to some of the points promoted by Moore (1995), who argue that public value creation is the central activity of public executives, just as private value creation is at the core of private sector action. Such a distinction is supported by Hefetz and Warner (2005), who argue that in contrast to their private counterparts “. . . public sector executives do more than direct a buying process. They offset technical and political concerns to ensure public value”. Therefore, the role of the public official is central to this approach. More recently, Stoker has sought to formulate a public value management model, an "alternative example" or a "general framework" for post-competitive, collaborative forms of network governance (Stoker 2006: 41). In part, he argued, this represented a reaction to the weaknesses of the NPM approach, but he also acknowledged that the new institutional and neoclassical economic perceptions of human behavior conflict with the central goals of the more collaborative forms of organization and function. Horner and Hazel argue that the value approach to the public has recently acquired 'significant currency' as a general framework in which issues of legitimacy, allocation and resource measurement can be made ‘.

From New Public Administration has been transformed into New Public Governance

More recently, there have been allegations that the New Public Administration has been transformed into New Public Governance (NPG), according to Osborne (2006). Others have even called it "embedded public administration" to emphasize the role of domestic policies and institutions in reforms (eg McCourt, 2008). O'Flynn (2007: 358) reports that there has been "a shift from focusing on results and efficiency to achieving the broader government goal of Public Value Creation". In this, politics has a primary role to play in both public administration and the new public administration. O'Flynn (2007: 360-361) explains: The difference between New Public Management and Public Value Management can be summarized very quickly in the following table, as provided by O'Flynn (2007: 361). In the NPM model, critical performance targets focused on profitability and economy, largely reflecting the economic shaping of government activity and the reconstruction of citizens as customers. The public value model has many goals pursued by public managers, including limited service goals, broader results, and the creation and maintenance of trust and legitimacy. Such changes require a shift in accountability models away from narrow performance contracts, for example, to the use of more complex systems. The public value model recognizes that a more realistic approach to selecting providers for public services would create more room for maximizing public value.

Creating value through e-government: the Greek case

E-Government is defined as the use of ICT in public services (central and regional, central or local government), in combination with organizational changes and new staff skills. The aim is to improve the delivery of public services, as well as to strengthen the democratic processes and support of public sector policies for the benefit of citizens. E-government is one of the major priorities of the European Union, which has even drawn up a relevant Action Plan (European e-Government Action Plan, 2011-2015).

In line with the modern understanding of the role of the state as a key provider and user of ICT, the State must lead the effort to ensure and maximize the potential benefits of the adoption and use of ICT to all citizens, as well as to the economy and society. A key step in this direction is to take advantage of the opportunities offered by ICTs to transform and improve public services to citizens and businesses, to increase the operational efficiency of the public sector itself at all levels, to tackle bureaucracy and corruption.

As we can see through the following figure (Figure 2), there is a strong relationship among quality of services, citizens and public value creation. Citizens are increasingly using digital technology resources and living in a networked world, which challenges governments to deliver services that generate experiences that meet the needs of the public and increase their level of empowerment. The quality of those services in combination with other factors such as the open dialogue, the citizens’ empowerment, the openness to collaboration mechanisms etc., drive to the trust to the government and technology that uses and this trust can lead to the creation of public value and to a general climate of convenience, positive experience and perception of public value.

Figure 2: The relationship among quality of services, citizens and public value creation (adopted from OlusegunAgbabiaka, 2018)


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Citizens and businesses can become familiar with ICT through the development of services in the areas of public administration, health and education, three pillars of development that can truly make a difference in a citizen's life. After all, citizens do not buy technologies, but services, as they understand them better because they improve their day-to-day lives.

Law No. 3979/2011 on e-Government was adopted in Greece in 2011 (European commission, 2018), which stipulates, inter alia, the observance of an electronic protocol by all public bodies, the legal and documentary validity of electronic documents, and the electronic communication between bodies of the Public Administration, both natural and legal persons, as well as between public bodies, and the Public Sector Network and the Single Authority for the Payment of Telecommunications Fees are established. The Greek public administration has faced many problems that have highlighted the need, among other things, for consolidation. Most of the efforts made in this field have not been particularly positive because of the culture of political and client-based approach. In fact, public administration in Greece is not developed on the basis of institutions but on the basis of customer and political perceptions and relationships (Rammata, 2018).

According to Sotiropoulos (2006), this is attributed to the fact that public administration in Greece did not follow the basic principles of modern administration as it did in other European countries. The regulation of every aspect of administrative work by laws and decrees has been over-applied and fragmented in Greece. The result was a very complex legal framework that sought to regulate every activity of the public sector carefully. The simultaneous absence of clearly structured policy objectives and standard administrative procedures has gradually transformed public services into large, complex organizations that provide poor quality services to citizens. In addition, the state mechanism was characterized by the absence of methods and techniques that would rationalize the actions of civil servants and specify specific administrative procedures. As a result, the Greek public administration is plagued by procedural ambiguity and non-standardized answers to even everyday issues and in addition there is no meaningful scrutiny at any level (Sotiropoulos, 2006). Furthermore, the lack of control in public administration was reinforced by the fact that there were no open and therefore accessible data from the public and especially on resource management. In addition, there was no control or knowledge of decisions taken by the public sector that could influence the daily lives of citizens.

In order to have open governance, citizens should be aware of these decisions, which means easy access to them. In this way, people not only get information but can see how the public sector manages public money that is essentially their own after they come out of taxation (Beris et al., 2019).

This gap attempted to fill the Diavgeia and other platforms in Greek public sector. Diavgeia was a program launched in 2010 in several areas of the public sector forcing them to post decisions on it. The portal is managed by the Ministry of Administrative Reform and is now integrated into all public services and agencies. According to Beris et al. (2019), the volume of information available on the portal is significant but also very large. Approximately 42,000 decisions are posted every day on a daily basis and a total of approximately 32.5 million decisions have been posted to date. The decisions posted are from 4,200 government agencies and services in Greece, with 91,000 accounts opened on the portal. (Beris et al., 2019). This greater degree of transparency can lead to greater participation in public life, further support for civil society and an increase in the democratization of society as a whole. As evidenced by international experience, citizens respond positively to such efforts as in the case of Diavgeia (Schellong, 2008).

**Other practices that were incorporated in the Greek public sector are included and described in the following table (Table 1)**

| Taxisnet (http://www.gsis.gr/) | It enables citizens to monitor and handle all their tax liabilities electronically, such as filing income tax returns, periodicals and aggregated VAT statements, etc. |
| Διαγεία (https://diavgeia.gov.gr/) | The program informs citizens of all decisions and actions taken by government and administration bodies and aims, as stated on its website, “to achieve the highest possible publicity of government policy and administration, to ensure transparency and consolidation.” Responsibility and accountability on the part of public authorities.” |
| Ombudsman and ASEK | Citizens can immediately receive valid information on the recruitment of staff in public bodies and information on their procedural support. |
| National Printing Office (ET) (http://www.et.gr/), | Includes laws, decrees and regulations, and provides online ordering, downloading and searching services for the Government Gazette. |
| Single Social Security Agency (EFSA) (https://www.efsa.gov.gr) , (call center / 1555), | provides electronic or telephone information to citizens on all their insurance issues, such as insurance contributions, health services, etc. |
| Workforce Employment Organization (OAED) (http://www.oaed.gr/) | It offers online job search services. |
| Hellenic NARIC | It provides online information on Higher Education studies abroad and abroad, as well as on the recognition of degrees abroad. |
| The “SYZEFXIS” project (http://www.syzefxis.gov.gr/) | This is a large-scale telecommunications and telematics service project for the electronic in-service interconnection of public services. The purpose of this network is to form the National Public Administration Network where it will provide integrated entities with broadband Internet access and e-mail services, digital certificate security infrastructure, e-learning system, video conferencing services |

**Table 1: E-government practices in the Greek public sector**
be important to expand ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) that can be used in a variety of ways by the public administration (Apostolakis et al., 2008). This issue is addressed in the present work, which focuses on how the Greek public administration has handled the issue of e-government in order to create public value.

In a period of severe economic downturn, Greece is currently facing one of the most severe social and political crises in its history, and citizens are characterized by genuine frustration with politics and a cynical attitude towards the government and its representatives. In this context, the Greek Government recognized in 2009 the critical importance of transparency, accountability and citizen involvement in the effort to move to a new model of public administration seeking new ways to continuously improve the services provided to citizens. The government has introduced a set of open initiatives aimed at introducing significant levels of transparency, accountability and citizen involvement at all levels of Greek public administration and the introduction of a new "social contract" between the citizen and the state. In this context, Transparency was developed and implemented by the Greek Government in 2010 with the aim of restoring transparency and confidence in the political process, allowing citizens to access government spending and related decisions.

Governments globally have recognized the significance of e-Government to the creation of public value and thus they have invested huge capital on eGovernment practices with a view to improving internal efficiency and providing better and quality services to the citizenry. Democracy, reflexivity and productivity in order of importance, as the three distinct value types desired as outcomes by citizens.

3. Conclusions

A new vision for the public sector is required, whereby public managers become public entrepreneurs. This can only happen through a pervasive change of mindset, with more experimentation, controlled risk taking, and an agile and personalized response to new constituent challenges. This will help unleash the potential of an innovative public sector, which can be transformed into a much needed growth engine for the economy. In order to overcome these barriers, Europe needs a new policy framework for its public sector, built on a pro-active and engaging narrative of institutional innovation and an ethos of stewardship in the use of public funds. Much can be done by the European institutions, the Member States and regional and local governments to leverage their own capacity to innovate and to drive concrete change processes. There are efforts underway to achieve this, both in the European Union (e.g. Joinup, the common portal for e-Government solutions) and globally (e.g. the OECD's Observatory of Public Sector Innovation), and the Expert Group has reviewed an extensive amount of scientific literature and best practices. However, a paradigm shift is needed in order to embed and encourage an innovation culture within the public sector which will also improve its absorptive capacity.

Public administration must respond to citizens’ needs in an environment dominated by new data and challenges. To the old problems it has already encountered, new ones have been added which, due to the prevailing conditions, are more complex, which makes them even more difficult to resolve (Apostolakis et al., 2008). In general, it should be said that citizens are not satisfied with the level of services they receive from the public sector and feel that their needs are not being met. The situation has been further exacerbated by the reduction of public sector expenditure due to budgetary measures taken (Apostolakis et al., 2008).

Citizens’ dissatisfaction regarding the provided value has resulted in a negative image of public administration and, consequently, of politics because of the relationship that exists. This, in turn, has led to denial of participation and highlights the need to find a solution that will make citizens again trust the public administration. In this context, it may be important to expand ICT (Information and

| Citizens Information Centers, through scattered information points (Infokiosks) | Through online and in physical presence, enabling citizens to receive up-to-date and up-to-date information on administrative matters of responsibility for public services, cultural events, city guides, maps and urban transport routes. |
| The Telephone Citizens Information Centers | They inform citizens on various issues that concern them, as well as administrative matters of competence of Ministries, Local Authorities, Social Security Funds, etc. |
| Electronic transactions with the public (e-Transactions) | The Governmental Public Administration Portal that aims to inform citizens and businesses and secure e-government services. Provides comprehensive information to citizens and businesses on all their public administration transactions (physical or electronic), as well as selected e-commerce services, through which citizens can be served electronically. From an operational point of view, the ERMES Portal is the “department store” of the public administration and is divided into three main pillars: (a) information provision, (b) interoperability and (c) transaction security. |
| E-Democracy | The service enables calls for proposals and draft regulations to be publicly consulted as well as calls for expressions of interest, etc. |
| OpenGov.gr (http://www.opengov.gr/) | Through online and in physical presence, enabling citizens to receive up-to-date and up-to-date information on administrative matters of responsibility for public services, cultural events, city guides, maps and urban transport routes. |

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