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EMBRACING A BOLD AP- PROACH TO PUBLIC POLICY

The Innovation in Politics Award is a prestigious accolade that celebrates politicians and projects making a positive impact within their communities. This international honor recognizes groundbreaking initiatives across all levels of government, from local to regional and national, aiming to draw attention to innovative contributions that enhance public life and promote positive change throughout Europe.

Organized annually since 2017 by the Vienna-based Institute for Policy Innovation, these awards have become a beacon of recognition for visionary endeavors that redefine the boundaries of political action.

FROM IDEAS TO SUCCESS

The journey to securing an Innovation in Politics Award nomination is a challenging one. How can projects ensure they are noticed and considered for this esteemed honor?

In Slovakia, citizens are empowered to directly submit projects or engage with the official partner, Seesame, dedicated to project scouting and assistance during the application process. Seesame plays a pivotal role in advancing impactful public policy, providing valuable support to aspiring projects.

Nominated projects must meet several criteria, placing particular emphasis

on innovation, impact, and sustainability within their respective domains. Crucially, these projects should be associated with a politician, such as a mayor or municipal deputy, who can contribute to the steering committee and provide resources, budgetary support, staffing, political endorsements, or strategic guidance. Additionally, partial funding from public funds is essential to ensure project viability.

Projects span a wide range of categories, encapsulating various aspects of public life, including democracy, climate change, social cohesion, and education. The introduction of a new category, "party innovation", further celebrates political parties' efforts to enhance accessibility and promote public participation in politics. Once the application process concludes, an impartial jury of over a thousand European citizens meticulously evaluates the projects, selecting the finalists in each category.

SLOVAK PROJECTS SHINE ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

Slovakia made its debut in the Innovation in Politics Awards in 2020, and its impact was resoundingly felt. Six outstanding projects from across the country reached the finals, with two receiving well-deserved awards in their respective categories. The No Data

Waste project in Košeca garnered recognition for its innovative approach to waste management, effectively tracking waste disposal, reducing mixed waste production, and boosting recycling rates. Similarly, the Homeless Quarantine project in Bratislava provided vital support to the homeless population during the COVID-19 pandemic, offering shelter and access to vocational, health, and social care.

In the most recent edition of the awards, three Slovak projects achieved recognition as finalists, with one hailing from Dubnica nad Váhom and two from Bratislava. The SmartMap data project, initially implemented in Dubnica and Váhom but gradually expanding to other municipalities, offers a comprehensive integrated mapping system. It provides invaluable information on public infrastructure, facilitating decision-making and process management. From land and real estate data to public greenery, roads, and public lighting, this platform supports better tax collection, the preparation of investment projects, effective communication and presentation of municipal issues, and the exploration of solutions.

Another remarkable Bratislava-based project, Barrier-Free Communication, led by the Bratislava City Hall, revolutionized

Intelligent maps revolutionize local government management, enhanced accessibility empowers diverse communities, and a youth-led festival ignites inspiration. These remarkable Slovak projects, alongside other outstanding finalists, have captured Europe's attention through their remarkable innovations at the latest Innovation in Politics Awards held in Warsaw.



Photo: Sebastian Philipp

communication for individuals with hearing and speech impairments as well as seniors. Implemented across nearly 20 locations within the capital, including municipal police branches, galleries, museums, and tourist information centers, this initiative facilitated easier and more effective interactions for vulnerable groups.

The Camp Bratislava project, led by Mayor Vallo's municipal party, Team Bratislava, has played a pivotal role in engaging the youth in public affairs. With a primary objective of strengthening their interests and fostering a stronger bond with the capital, this initiative has successfully increased young people's involvement in public life through an array of workshops, seminars, and interactive discussions.

By combining policy and innovation, these determined nominees have not only served as an inspiration but have also provided tangible evidence that forward-thinking solutions driven by data can lay the foundation for societies that are better prepared and resilient in the face of future challenges.

CONTINUING THE TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE

The Innovation in Politics Awards will once again shine a spotlight on innovative and successful projects in the upcoming year, allowing Slovakia to build upon the achievements of the current edition. Over the years, Slovakia has consistently demonstrated its potential for impactful public projects that significantly enhance the lives of citizens and communities, deserving recognition and wider acclaim.

The nomination process is set to commence this fall, offering an opportunity for anyone to put forward an innovative political project or initiative for consideration. Whether individuals choose to submit their projects independently or seek assistance from the official partner, Seesame, this prestigious competition invites contributions from all corners. For further details on how to participate in the Innovation in Politics Awards, please visit www.innovationinpolitics.eu or reach out to the Slovak partner responsible for the awards.