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GAGAUZIA AUTONOMOUS ADMINISTRATIVE-TERRITORIAL UNIT FROM MOLDOVA REPUBLIC. PARTICULARITIES IN ORGANIZATION IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE COMRAT MUNICIPALITY

Petronela SCUTARIU[1], Olga BORDAN[2]

Abstract

In the pages of the present paper we propose the analysis of the administration organization of the Gagauzia Autonomous Administrative- Territorial Unit of the in Republica Moldova, with particularity at the City Hall of Comrat Municipality, in order to highlight its self-determination right. The research carried out shows that their own national emblems - flag, coat of arms, but also the establishment by referendum of their own capital, are prerequisites for the Gagauz autonomy. We found that, from the point of view of the administrative-territorial division, the autonomous territory of Gagauzia is divided into rayons, cities and villages, the Comrat Municipality representing the administrative center of the Gagauz autonomy. In Gagauzia, the local public administration bodies are the Gagauz Bascan, the People's Assembly and the Executive Committee. At the level of Comrat Municipality, the authorities exercising attributions in matters of local interest are the Municipal Council and the Mayor, the latter being assisted by three deputy mayors. From the analysis of the administration organization of the Gagauzia Autonomous Administrative-Territorial Unit, we noticed that it has a special legal status consisting of the right of the gagauz people to self-determination.

Keywords:

Autonomous administrative-territorial unit; the right to self-determination; Gagauzia Autonomy; rayons; cities; villages; municipal council; mayor; deputy mayor.
JEL classification: *H10, H83*

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I. LOCATION OF THE GAGAUZIA AUTONOMOUS ADMINISTRATIVE-TERRITORIAL UNIT AND INTRODUCTION INTO THE GAGAUZIA AUTONOMY

The Gagauzia Administrative-Territorial Unit - a component part of the Republic of Moldova, is situated in the southern part of the country and is part of the southern economic-geographical region of the country.

The territory of Gagauzia is located in the Bugeacul steppe, which is part of the southern Moldavian hilly plain. Grapes, cherries, pears, apples, peas, nuts, etc. are cultivated in this area from the ancestors. The Gagauzia has 3 rayons: Comrat, Ceadâr Lunga and Vulcănești, 4 cities: Comrat, Ceadâr Lunga, Vulcănești and Congaz, including 28 villages. The Gagauzia Capital, in accordance with the law and the local results of the referendum, the Comrat Municipality was elected [8] (see Figure no. 1):



Figure no. 1. Location of Gagauzia on the map of the Moldova Republic

Source:https://fi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gagauzia#/media/File:Gagauzia_map.svg [accessed on 22.10.2019] [4]

Gagauzians are a very friendly, hardworking and welcoming people, located within Europe centre. It is very easy to establish relationships with them. Friendship helps them keep their people and, also, to preserve their language, customs, traditions and culture.

Flag. The Gagauzian flag presents itself in a small rectangular sheet, containing three stripes of colors, located horizontally from top to bottom in the following view: blue - represents 60% of the size of the flag, white and red are equal of 20% in size. The golden stars, in a number of three, symbolize the past, present and future of Gagauz people [1].

Coat of arms. As we also stated in the case of the flag, the three golden stars, located above the shield in an equilateral triangle, symbolize the past, the present and the future. Located in the center of the flag, the heraldic shield has the blue color and from the bottom a golden semicircle of a sun rises. It is flanked by golden spikes wrapped around the flag of Gagauzia. Underneath the shield is the stylized image of the vine leaves and grapes (see Figure no. 2):



Figure no. 2. The flag and the coat of arms of Gagauzia
Source: Coat of arms, Flag, Hymn, Pages from the history of Gagauzia (2017), Comrat Publishing House, pp. 4, 6 [1]

Gagauz capital. The capital of the Gagauz autonomous unit is the Municipality of Comrat. It is to be found in the central part of the Budjacul's steppe, cross the Ialpug river. Established in the year 1789, it is recognized as the Gagauzian capital due to the referendum of the Gagauzian people in 1995. [1] (see Figure no. 3).

It is an important city from the politic, economic, cultural point of view, being the educational center of the Gagauzian autonomous unit. Here important historical monuments have preserved, the pride of the city being the Church of the Holy Johanna and the monument of architecture from the 19th century.

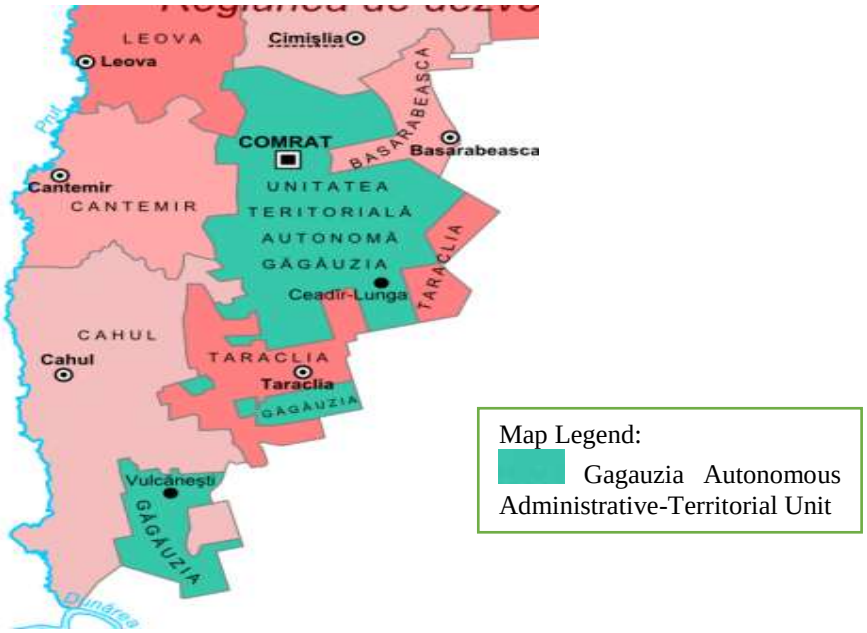


Figure no. 3. Identification of the Comrat Municipality on the UATA map

Source: https://moldova.md/ro/content/organizarea-administrativ-teritoriala [accessed on 23.10.2019] [2]

Gagauzia People. In the Gagauz autonomous unit live about 160 thousand people. Most of them are Gagauzians. There are Gagauz settlements in Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Greece, Bulgaria, Uzbekistan, Russia and America. For many years on the Gagauzia territory has lived Bulgarians, Moldavians, Russians, Ukrainians, Roma, and other nationalities.

The inhabitants of Gagauzia speak in different languages, the official ones being: Gagauzian, Romanian and Russian. The Gagauz language is part of the Turkish language group. In schools and universities is taught in Russian language [1].

II. LEGAL STATE OF GAGAUZIA IN MOLDOVA REPUBLIC

Gagauzia represents a administrative-territorial structure in the composition of Republic of Moldova with special legal status, which provides for the right of the Gagauz people to self-determination, which carries out its activity in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, in accordance with the Law of the Republic of Moldova "On the special legal status of Gagauzia and of the Gagauzian Regulation". The law "On the special legal status of Gagauzia" was adopted

by the Parliament of the Moldova Republic on December 23, 1994, the Gagauzia Regulation, which is the basic legal act and has legal power throughout the territory of Gagauzia, was adopted by the deputies of the Popular Assembly of Gagauzia on 14 May 1998. From June 5, 1998 the Regulation came into force [9].

On October 31, 1995, the Local Law "On the operation of languages on the territory of Gagauzia" was adopted, in accordance with which the official languages in Gagauzia are: Moldovan, Gagauzian and Russian [9].

Administrative-administrative division. The territory of Gagauzia comprises 1,848 square kilometers or 5.5% of the total territory of the Republic of Moldova. In accordance with the Law "On the special legal status of Gagauzia" and "On the administrative-territorial division of Gagauzia" the territory of Gagauz Autonomy is divided into *rayons, cities and villages.*

The Gagauz Autonomy comprises 3 rayons (Comrat, Ceadâr-Lunga and Vulcăneşti). Gagauz Autonomy also includes a municipality, two cities, twenty villages and three communes.

Comrat represents the administrative center of the Gagauz Autonomy. On the Moldova Republic Map, Comrat is located on the Chisinau-Cahul-Bucharest and Bălți-Ceadâr-Lunga-Odesa roads, having very good and secure connections through the rail and the roads with the neighboring rayons. The city has become a true transport centre, economic and cultural center in the south of the country [9].

Public administration authorities. In Gagauzia, the public administration authorities are represented by:

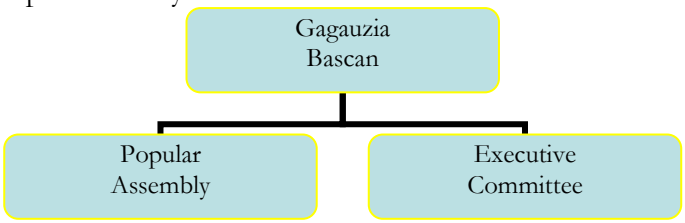


Figure no. 4. Public administration authorities in Gagauzia

In the following table are presented, from the point of view of competence, the organs of the government in Gagauzia (see Table no. 1):

Table no. 1. Description of the government authorities in Gagauzia

Government Authority	Description
Gagauzia Bascan	It is the most important authority in the administrative system of Gagauzia. The term of mandate of the Gagauzian leader is 4 years, a mandate obtained through direct and freely expressed general elections. He/She is appointed a member of the Government of the Moldovan

	Republics through the Disposition of the Moldovan Republics. Currently, Gagauzia Bascan is Irina Vlah. [5]
Popular Assembly	It constitutes the legislative authority of Gagauzia. The Popular Assembly has in its composition 35 deputies, who are appointed by election for a 4-year term. The activity of this authority is ensured by the President, the deputy Presidents and the Popular Assembly Presidium of Gagauzia. In the Republic of Moldova Parliament, this body has the right of legislative initiative.
Executive Committee	It is the executive authority of Gagauzia. This body is registered by the Popular Assembly for a mandate of 4 years, being entrusted by the Bascan of Gagauzia.

Source: http://www.gagauzia.md/pageview.php?l=ro&idc=411&id=234 [accessed on 25.10.2019] [10]

III. THE ADMINISTRATIVE-TERRITORIAL STATUS OF THE COMRAT MUNICIPALITY OF GAGAUZIA

The total area of Gagauzia covered 1,848 km², containing 170,000 people, of which 78.7% are Gagauzians, 5.5% Bulgarians, 5.4% Moldovans, 5% Russians, 4% Ukrainians as well as other nationalities.

As we have already mentioned, in Gagauzia there are 3 rayons: Comrat, Ceadâr Lunga and Vulcănești, 4 cities: Comrat, Ceadâr Lunga, Vulcănești and Congaz and 28 villages. In accordance with the law and the results of the referendum, the Comrat Municipality was appointed the Gagauzia capital.

Table no. 2. Area, population and people from the Gagauzia Autonomous Administrative-Territorial Unit

	Area	Population	Ethnicity
Gagauzia	1,848 km²	170.000	78.7% are Gagauzians, 5.5% - Bulgarians, 5.4% - Moldovans, 5% - Russians, 4% - Ukrainians, and the rest is representative of other nationalities.
Comrat Municipality	*16 km²*	*20.113*	*72.85% - Gagauzians, 8.92% - Moldovans, 7.33% - Russians, 4.8% - Ukrainians, and the rest of them representing other ethnicities*
Ceadâr-Lunga City	9,61 km²	16.605	73.68% - Gagauzians, 8% - Russians, 7.78% - Bulgarians, 3.77% - Moldovans, the rest of them representing other ethnicities
Vulcăneşti City	15,26 km²	12.185	70.25% - Gagauzians, 11.23% - Moldovans, 7.67% - Russians, 5.46% - Ukrainians, 4.14% - Bulgarians

Source: http://www.gagauzia.md/pageview.php?l=ro&idc=408&nod=1& [accessed on 25.10.2019] [11]

From the above data we observe that, in the Gagauzian Administrative Autonomous Unit, the biggest city, both in terms of area size, as well as in terms of people number, is the Comrat Muncipality, the capital of Gagauzia. As the history tells, since 1995 the people has vote that the Comrat should be the capital of Gagauzia Autonomy, following that it should develop and become a true economic, cultural and politic center.

IV. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE COMRAT MUNICIPALITY CITY HALL

The next figure presents in detail the organizational structure of the Comrat Municipality City Hall (see Figure no. 5):

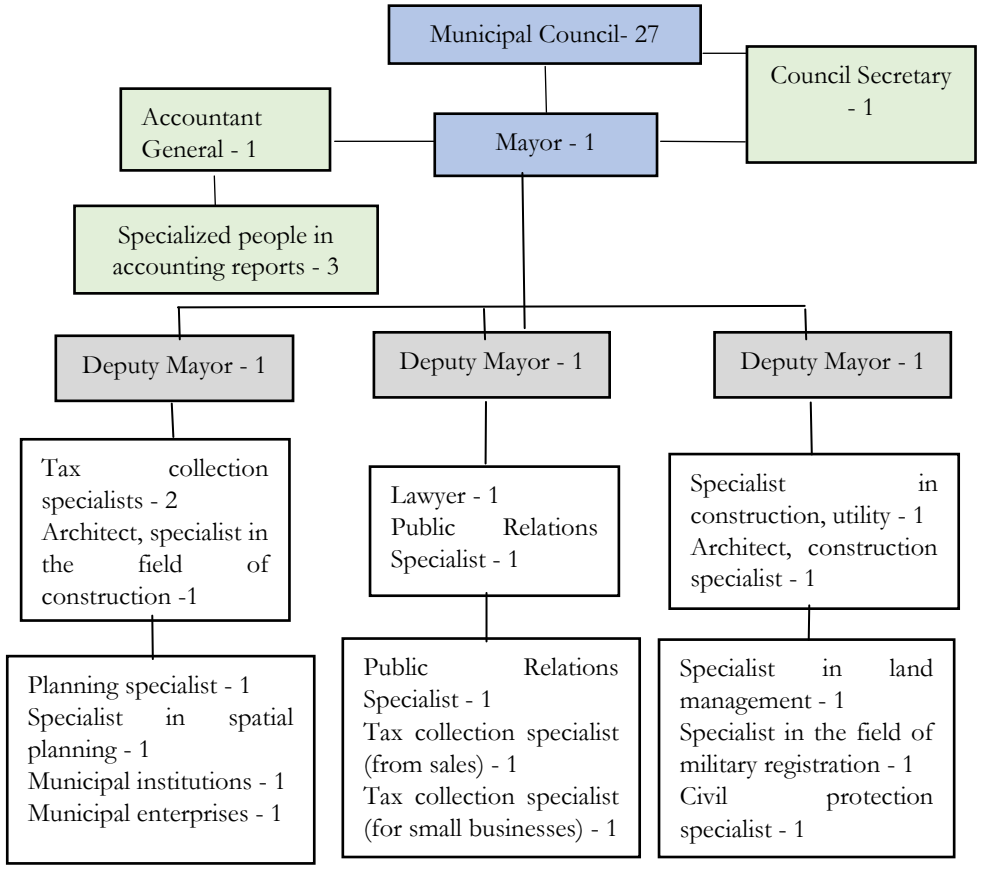


Figure no. 5. Organizational structure of the Comrat Municipality City Hall
Source: Information taken from the City Hall of Comrat Municipality, based on a request addressed to the Institution Mayor [6]

Given the organizational structure, the Comrat Municipality City Hall has the following human resources:

Table no. 3. Human resources available in the Comrat Municipality City Hall

Functions	**Personal number**
Leading functions	6 people
Execution functions	47 people
Total	53 people

The municipal councils are formed if are confirmed the orders of the two-thirds of the number of councils. Since the validation, the municipal council will meet in a meeting within a period of 20 days. The local council realizes its mandate from the moment when it was established by the law until given legal formation to the newly elected council. Every three months, the municipal council, at the request of the mayor, shall meet in ordinary sitting, with the exception of the first meeting [7].

In a time interval of 5 days after the meetings, the council secretary includes the council decisions in the state registry of the local acts and publishes the normative council decisions in public places

The attributions of the municipal council. In the legal frameworks, the municipal council has the right of initiative and decides in local interest matters, except those belonging to other public authorities. According to art. 14 of Law no. 436 of 28.12.2006 regarding the Local Public Administration, the Council, in the administrative territory, has competences such as [3]:

- manages the public and private domain assets of the municipality;
- decides to establish cooperating, including cross-border, and twinning relations with localities from abroad;
- approves, at the proposal of the mayor, the organization chart and the City Hall states, of the subordinate public structures and services, as well as the scheme for the remuneration of their personnel;
- approves the statute of the municipality and the regulation of the council on the basis of the framework-statute and the framework-regulation, approved by the Parliament;
- approves, in accordance with the law, the urban plans of the localities within the respective administrative-territorial unit, as well as the spatial planning plans;
- approves studies, forecasts and programs of social-economic and other development.

Article 26 of Law no. 436 of 28.12.2006 regarding the Local Public Administration provides that the mayor is „the head of the local public

administration. He/she participates in the meetings of the local council and has the right to decide on all the issues under debate". The local council, at the proposal of the mayor, decides to establish the position of deputy mayor and establishes the number of deputy mayors who will assist the mayor in exercising his duties. Any person, including counselors, can be elected as deputy mayor. The deputy mayors exercise the powers established by the mayor and bear responsibility in accordance with the legislation in force [3].

According to art. 29 of Law no. 436 of 28.12.2006 on Local Public Administration, among the main tasks of the mayor are the following [3]:

- ensures the execution of the decisions of the local council;
- proposes, according to the law, the organization chart and the states of the City Hall, the personnel pay scheme of its staff and submits them to the approval of the local council;
- appoints, establishes the duties and ceases the service or working relations with the heads of the subdivisions, services, municipal enterprises, subordinated to the authority of the respective local public administration, the staff of the City Hall, conducts and controls their activity, contributes to professional training and recycling;
- establishes the duties of the deputy mayor (deputy mayors);
- represents the local community in relations with other public authorities, as well as in the courts, according to the law; signs the acts and contracts concluded on behalf of the local community, with the exceptions provided by law;
- presents to the local council, annually and whenever necessary, reports on the social and economic situation of „the village (the commune), the city (the municipality)";
- proposes to the local council to consult the population by referendum on local issues of particular interest, and takes measures to organize these consultations;
- supports collaboration with localities from other countries, contributes to extending cooperation and direct links with them.

Art. 31 of Law no. 436 of 28.12.2006 on the Local Public Administration stipulates that the deputy mayors are elected, at the proposal of the mayor, by decision of the council, adopted with the vote of the majority of elected councilors [3].

The secretary of the council is also secretary of the village (commune), city (municipality). „The candidate for the position of secretary will be selected on the basis of the competition". The person appointed,

under the conditions of the law, as secretary must be a graduate of a law or public administration faculty (department).

According to art. 39 of Law no. 436 of 28.12.2006 regarding the Local Public Administration, the secretary fulfills, under the authority of the mayor, the following basic attributions [3]:

- ensures the notification of the local council summons;
- attend the meetings of the local council;
- approves the drafts of the decisions of the local council and countersigns their decisions;
- ensures the proper functioning of the City hall;
- ensures the secretarial work;
- keeps and applies, as the case may be, the seal;
- gives help to the councils and commissions of the local council;
- manages the headquarters of the City hall and its assets.

V. CONCLUSIONS

In light of the above, we can conclude that the study carried out made it possible to identify the particularities in the organization of the administration of the Gagauzia Autonomous Administrative-Territorial Unit from Moldova Republic, especially at the level of the City Hall of Comrat Municipality.

The analysis started with the location of the administrative-territorial unit of Gagauzia, which is part of the Republic of Moldova, situated in the southern part of the country.

Then, the study presents symbols of the Gagauz autonomy, namely the frag and the coat of arms of Gagauzia, both of which have symbols that symbolize the past, the present and the future.

Also, as a result of the referendum of all the inhabitants in Gagauzia, the capital of the Gagauzia autonomous unit is the Comrat Municipality, an important city from politic, economic, cultural point of view.

Regarding the legal status of Gagauzia, we found that in the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, the Law of the Republic of Moldova "On the special legal status of Gagauzia and the Gagauzian Regulation, the right of the Gagauzian people to self-determination is provided.

The territory of Gagauzia Autonomy is divided into rayons, cities and villages. The organs of the local public administration are the Bascan Gagauzia, the People's Assembly and the Executive Committee.

At the level of Comrat Municipality, the authorities exercising attributions in matters of local interest are the Municipal Council and the Mayor, the latter being assisted by three deputy mayors.

On the whole, we can conclude that the Gagauzia Autonomous Administrative-Territorial Unit is emblematic in highlighting the right of self-determination in the territory of the Moldovan Republic.

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