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PROVOSTS IN LOCAL POLITICS: CASE STUDY OF AN URBAN-RURAL COMMUNITY (GMINA)

In this article an urban-rural community (gmina) case study is shown where a high level of public involvement in local politics is present. An adequate array of practices has led to a well-established cooperation between the gmina, assigned a proper role to the function of provost (sołtys – head of the village administration) and empowered significantly village administrator's offices. These practices include, among others, provosts' regular meetings in the gmina, provosts' regular participation in village assemblies, care of proper facilities for residents' meetings in each village, existence of local village funds for 20 years and introduction of participatory budgets. An overall attitude of openness of the city office plays a significant role in establishing a cooperation between gmina authorities and village administrator's offices. The easy access to the mayor and to his deputies as well as assigning a plenipotentiary for organizational assistance encourages provosts to come to the gmina and talk straight about their villages' problems and needs.

Keywords: local politics, village administrator's office (*sołectwo*), gmina (local community, municipality), funds of village administrator's office, local authorities