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Number of freedom of information requests increased again - press conference "Transparency in Corona times" The year 2020 was an extraordinary year - also for freedom of information in Rhineland-Palatinate. The corona pandemic was omnipresent, and citizens made a corresponding number of freedom of information requests related to COVID-19 to the public authorities of the state. In the press conference "Best of Freedom of Information - Transparency in Corona Times", Professor Dieter Kugelmann, the State Commissioner for Data Protection and Freedom of Information (LfDI) Rhineland-Palatinate, with a view to freedom of information in the year Taking stock of 2020: The number of requests for advice and complaints received in Rhineland-Palatinate rose again compared to previous years to a total of 200 (190 in 2019 and 180 in 2018). This does not include the numerous telephone consultations. The number of Freedom of information requests with which the LfDI sel bst information requested increased again with a total of 74 (55 in 2019 and 12 in 2018). The PC took place virtually. In addition to Professor Kugelmann, the responsible speakers at the LfDI, Uli Mack and Oliver Müller, reported.

The mediation and advisory activities of the LfDI had a strong connection to the corona pandemic. In some cases, authorities did not process freedom of information requests within the appropriate period and justified these missed deadlines with the current situation: On the one hand, the pandemic had resulted in an unforeseen, significant additional burden and, on the other hand, they had to reorganize their business operations due to the requirements for combating corona. In the course of mediating between applicants and authorities, the LfDI took the special circumstances into account and often asked applicants for their understanding of the delayed processing. In one case, the LfDI made a complaint to an authority: a citizen had applied to a district, among other things, for the transmission of corona test results. The administrative district let the legal deadline for answering the inquiry pass without making use of it and did not give a statement to the state commissioner despite his repeated requests on this matter.

Specifically, citizens asked the following, among other things: An applicant requested the transmission of positive and negative corona test results as well as quarantine orders. Another person wanted to find out more about the significance of PCR tests and requested information about their sensitivity, the percentage rate of false positive rates and the billing modalities between the requested district and the test laboratories. Another inquiry was addressed to a ministry and dealt with the calculation basis

for the 7-day incidence and the related correspondence between public authorities.

The handout, which collects interesting cases related to freedom of information, can be found [here](#).

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