

POST-COVID-19 WORLD

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Abstract

The research is focused on the pandemic's impact on the contemporary society. Moreover, the effects of the Covid-19 are analysed from different perspectives.

Keywords: complex crisis; Covid-19; emancipation; digitalization.

1. World of today and Covid-19

“Covid-19” disease (the virus is called SARS-CoV-2, *Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2*)¹ has been part of all discussions and concerns for several months. Theories have been woven, combating methods have been spread, laws have been issued, strategies have been reasoned and shortages have been „minimized”.

For the whole picture, on short, the disease was identified for the first time at the end of the year 2019 in Wuhan, China, and its evolution was assimilated to pneumonia² without a clear cause. In this context, and due to the fulminatory spread of the virus from its epicenter, Wuhan, to all states of the world, the World Health Organization declared pandemics at the beginning of March 2020³.

The first reaction at world level was to take measures for limiting the spreading of the virus, measures which have affected all activity sectors: economy, health, education, tourism etc.

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¹ It is called Sars- CoV-2 due to the fact that another coronavirus emerged in 2003.

²<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/what-you-need-to-know-about-coronavirus-covid-19#symptoms> ;

³ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-51839944> ;

Some States have foreseen the crisis moment, consequently acting long before being declared a pandemics, following to the increasing number of infected citizens, reason for which Italy ruled State of Emergency at the end of February⁴, following that later, some counties such as Spain declared "State of Alarm" on 14th March 2020⁵; 2 days later, the President of Romania declared "State of Emergency", example followed by Portugal which declared the establishment of the same state on 18th March⁶.

Once the virus has spread, the issue of actual management of the cases confirmed positive and of the efforts for its limitation, the involvement and vision of the powers of the world in the confrontation of this crisis have been brought forward, from the perspective of maximizing the managerial potential of the public institutions and the fast implementation of a series of measures.

The actual situation, from management's perspective, is a crisis one. It is defined in the specialty literature as being an event interrupting dramatically the normal operation of an organization⁷ and even of a society, being a fateful unforeseen event and intolerant to routine. Also, it is determined by triggering and development, facts for which there are violent and non-violent crises, each of the categories having three subdivisions, respectively: crises produced by nature, crises produced by intended human actions and crises produced by unintended human actions⁸.

For some states, this crisis state has triggered, due to the need to take measures,

⁴ By Decree-Law no. 6 dated 23rd February 2020, with subsequent amendments, published in the Official Gazette no. 45 of 23.02.2020, on the urgent measures for the containment and management of Covid-19 epidemiological emergency, available at the address: <https://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:decreto.legge:2020-02-23;6!vig=>

⁵ By Royal Decree 463/2020 on declaring the State of Alarm for the management of the health crisis situation caused by COVID-19, available at the address: <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2020-3692> ;

⁶ Decree no. 2-A / 2020 - Diário da República no. 57/2020, first supplement, series I dated 20-03-2020, together with the Regulation for the implementation of the State of Emergency declared by the President of the Republic, available at the address: <https://www.portugal.gov.pt/pt/gc22/comunicacao/documento?i=decreto-do-governo-que-regulamenta-o-estado-de-emergencia-> ;

⁷ Chiciudean I., David G., *Managementul comunicării în situații de criză / The Management of communication in crisis situations*, University Course, Bucharest, 2011, available at: <http://snspa.ro/ion-chiciudean-george-david-managementul-comunicarii-in-situatii-de-criza/>

⁸ Iacob D., Cismaru D. M., Pricopie R., *Relațiile publice. Coeziune și eficiență prin comunicare / Public Relations. Cohesion and Efficiency in Communication*, 3rd Edition, Bucharest, 2011, page 216;

the declaration of the State of Emergency, or State of Alarm in other states⁹ under Constitutional grounds. The particularity of the administrative structure and the endeavor for the establishment of this state is relevant for our analysis, giving as example the Italian Government which has adopted provisory measures with value of law in an exceptional context, being subsequently validated by the Chambers of the Parliament¹⁰ in order to produce its effects, or the American city New York, its Mayor declaring State of Emergency by a local declaration with emergency execution no. 98/12.03.2020, by which he appealed to all public institution leaders and managers to take all necessary measures for maintaining the public safety and health¹¹.

A particular vision in what concerns the crisis management comes from the American city, Atlanta, which has initiated a strategic plan for the minimization of Covid-19 impact on the city and for protecting its population since February; accordingly, the City Hall issued an executive order by which it allocated a fund of 7 million US\$ for starting programs for ensuring food for children and adults, homes for the homeless, support for small enterprises, but also for employees¹². At the same time, the Governor of Texas, after declaring the State of Emergency¹³, has established as measures for managing the extremely important situation the allocation of 168 million US\$, through Texas Health and Human Services (HHS), for The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

⁹ Article 116, paragraph 2), The Constitution of Spain - available at: <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-1978-31229>; case when the Spanish Government took control of all national and regional police forces

¹⁰ Article 77, paragraph 2), the Constitution of the Republic of Italy, available at: <https://www.senato.it/application/xmanager/projects/leg18/file/Costituzione%20in%20lingua%20romena%20-%20Archivio.pdf>, especially important in the toning of the exceptional character being the provisions of Article 77 from the same Constitution, providing that “the exercise of the legislative function cannot be delegated to the Government but only with the establishment of the principles and criteria of orientation and only for a limited period of time and for definite things”.

¹¹ The full declaration is available at: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/home/downloads/pdf/executive-orders/2020/eo-98.pdf>

¹² The full document is available at: <https://www.atlantaga.gov/Home/ShowDocument?id=45468>

¹³ https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/press/DISASTER_covid19_disaster_proclamation_IMAG E_03-13-2020.pdf

SNAP¹⁴, in order to ensure food¹⁵ (including seeds in order to be planted).

It follows that crisis management involves an administrative and managerial vision, whether temporary or long-term, as well as financing the good development of social life, even if the latter is limited, given the extraordinary situation, by reporting directly to the primary needs such as food, shelter, security, a vision that validates the theories of good faith in the state administration and the managerial ideal.

The theory refers to the situation in which the first step after the crisis assessment is planning. The following make the distinction between the action and the plan designed in normal situations: the establishment of a list of causes and effects including simulations, backup vision or alternative crisis plans, the emphasis on communication, the establishment of an information center (especially for press relations), continuous revision and regular improvement¹⁶. On the other hand, in what concerns the actual action against the coronavirus for investments, considering the “economic force” ratio, if the European Commission has allocated to Italy 2.3 billion Euro (out of the total of 37 billion Euro for supporting the European economy against the Coronavirus), its exports being affected considerably due to the limitation of cross-border movement and to the enforceability of controls at the borders,¹⁷ the United States of America are preparing the greatest package of stimulation from the word’s history amounting to 2 trillion US\$, in the context in which the Stock Market Indices have dramatically decreased, as well as the price of petroleum, being foreseen a recession.¹⁸ Naturally, the concern that global confrontations might occur due to the emergence of this virus arises and this situation generates instability and distrust in the efforts of smaller states, together with their rulers, to stop the high

¹⁴ <https://yourtexasbenefits.hhsc.texas.gov/programs/snap>, program by which the allocation of money per month varies according to the number of persons from a family. An important aspect is the fact that the adults with ages comprised between 18 and 49 years old, childless, cannot benefit from this aid for more than 3 months for a period of 3 years; also, the sum is transferred to a certain type of card which can be used in the shops accepting the following prohibitions: it cannot be used for tobacco and alcohol.

¹⁵ The New York Administration also starts a program for ensuring food, with hourly time ranges for picking up the meals; supplementary information at: <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/food/free-meals>

¹⁶ Iacob D., Cismaru D. M., Pricopie R., op.cit., page 217-218;

¹⁷ Pawłowski M., *The Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Italy’s Internal Politics and European Policy*, article published in the Bulletin no. 56 (1486) dated 27.03.2020, Poland, available at: <https://www.ceeol.com/search/gray-literature-detail?id=846357> ;

¹⁸ Piotrowski M., Waśniński M., *The U.S. Fight against Coronavirus*, article published in the Bulletin no. 55 (1485) dated 26.03.2020, Poland, available at: <https://www.ceeol.com/search/gray-literature-detail?id=846363> ;

mortality rate and the risk of new diseases.

In what concerns Romania, by Government Emergency Ordinance (G.E.O.) no. 43 dated 6th April 2020¹⁹, it has been intended the application methodology and categories of persons eligible for the development of the Operational Programme for assisting the Disadvantaged Persons - POAD, with non-refundable money from the Budget of the European Union for the financial year 2014-2020. Accordingly, based on the mentioned regulation, disadvantaged persons are those persons in isolation, quarantine, seniors in nursing homes, institutionalized children and seniors with disabilities, as well as any other vulnerable persons at the request of the public authorities.²⁰

If public money exists from an economic point of view, the next question concerns how we make this aid more efficient in the Romanian space, and what public services are offered to the citizens. From this perspective, a series of legislative measures have been adopted to make society work, and to feel as little as possible the lack of mobility in the pursuit of public interests.

Accordingly, in what concerns the administrative capacity in Romania, the usage of qualified electronic signature within the activity of public institutions and authorities was introduced by G.E.O. no. 38/2020²¹, procedure by which the requested documents will be validated, having the character of authenticity and truthfulness of information, being sent to the applicants through remote communication means. The adaptability and continuity of public service²² arises thus from practice, reason for which the administrative capacity has been developing step by step and securely, based on two factors: collapse and world's

¹⁹ Emergency Ordinance no. 43/06.04.2020 for the approval of some support measures settled from European Funds, following to the spread of the Coronavirus COVID-19, during the State of Emergency period, available at: <https://www.ilegis.ro/oficiale/index/act/224714>

²⁰ Article 1, Emergency Ordinance no. 43/06.04.2020 for the approval of some support measures settled from European Funds, following to the spread of the Coronavirus COVID-19, during the State of Emergency period.

²¹ Emergency Ordinance on the usage of documents in electronic form at the level of public authorities and institutions, ordinance adopted in Covid-19 context; paradoxically, a "good opportunity" to de-bureaucratize the public administration and to implement modern practices, considering also UE Regulation no. 910/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23rd July 2014 on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market;

²² Law of Cadastre and Real Estate Publicity no. 7/1996 was changed by Emergency Ordinance, as it results from ANCPPI Minutes no. 12249/16.03.2020, so that all procedures should be performed remotely, without going to the cadastre offices or agencies and without transmitting in original the documentation corresponding to the land registration, being reiterated the usage of electronic signature, practice stipulated also in what concerns Law no. 17/2014 on some measures for regulating the sale-purchase of agricultural lands situated outside the built-up areas;

trend. Although the necessity has existed for a period of time, the innovation was delayed up to the emergence of the crisis, to which the practice of other countries is added (remote notary services are used in Lithuania, considering even the possibility of using IT services for following up a penal trial, or pre-trial investigations)²³.

Relating to the European Union, a recommendation²⁴ was adopted in this sense, by which it is intended to establish some common practices under the form of a toolbox focused on two directions: a pan-European approach of using mobile applications in order to allow its citizens to observe the social distancing, but also the private life, their²⁵ personal information, as well as a joint data usage system under anonymity in order to monitor the development of the disease and to make efficient the decision process of the authorities from the Member States.

Also, in the light of emancipation, digitalization is analyzed as a process of the future²⁶, a strategy allowing the faster evaluation of the positive and negative effects within an often public organization, having a significant potential in order to develop the administrative capacity to manage aspects pertaining to the public interest. Conceptually, the digitalization is a new term emerging in accordance with the existing necessities, offering them a name. These needs have become the basis of the pyramid for both the employees desiring to obtain the few clicks they need, as well as for the employer trying to analyze, to standardize and to improve the processes by using data from the digitalized processes.²⁷ Furthermore, the digitalization supposes a deep cultural change of the way in which we report to the usage of technology, to information security, to various levels of access to information, to decisions-taking and to communication between members and the team. The transformation is much

²³ The full information is available at the address: <http://lrv.lt/lt/naujienos/notarines-paslaugos-ir-baudziamuju-bylu-nagrinejimas-kelsis-i-elektronine-erdve>;

²⁴ Commission Recommendation (EU) 2020/518 of 8th April 2020 on a common Union toolbox for the use of technology and data to combat and exit from the COVID19 crisis, in particular concerning mobile applications and the use of anonymised mobility data.

²⁵ To this sense, a very important role is played by The National Supervisory Authority for the Processing of Personal Data established based on Law no. 102/2005

²⁶ Möller K. , Schäfer U. , Verbeeten F., *Digitalization in management accounting and control: an editorial*, article available at the address: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00187-020-00300-5>

²⁷ Majid H. H., *The Power of Mentoring and Digitalization as Processes of Strengthening the Human Resource Departments' Activity*, article published in the Journal of Economic Development, Environment and People nr.3/2019, page 49, available at the address: <https://www.cceol.com/search/article-detail?id=814664>

more subtle than the implementation of a new system and it is a paradigm shift affecting the people first of all and, accordingly, the business leaders, operational managers, and Human Resources people are those who must prepare first and understand the effects of the transition to digitalization.²⁸

The crisis generated by coronavirus has brought not only the population, but also the entire public system in front of change which cannot be postponed any longer. However, according to a doctrinarian opinion, the development of the Romanian administration from managerial point of view would suddenly stop due to various reasons, such as the demographic decline, the emigration of the active population, actions having as affect the degrading of the environmental factors, the deficiencies from the national health, education and social security systems, distortions of the labor market, the tendency to escalate the criminality phenomena (the proliferation of underground economy, tax evasion); the low degree of resistance against the major turbulences from the external markets, especially in the finance - banking area, the corruption and the lack of performing management²⁹.

2. Post-Covid-19 World

The post-Covid-19 horizon is soon expected. The occurrence of a certain and visible change is of interest, change in what concerns especially the Romanian public administration. If, according to the above mentioned examples, there is a vision (arisen from forced circumstances), it means there must be continuity in this direction.

From the perspective of the explanatory memorandum, both legislative and practical, as direct effects of the change and development of the capacity of the Romanian administration, we take in consideration to following actions: first of all, considering the huge step made by the public institutions in achieving the public interest remotely, it is desired that the action will be focused in the immediate future to this direction. The investments from the technological infrastructure³⁰ and IT can lead to the creation of a national information system, by which the authorities can hold updated data on the Romanian citizens, in what concerns, for example, the criminal record, in case an individual is wanted by Police, if it has debts to the State, storing practically a small history on each

²⁸ Idem

²⁹ Mincu C., *Apărarea națională și dezvoltarea durabilă / The national defense and sustainable development*, article published in the Military Sciences Magazine no. 52/2018, pages 15-16, available at the address: <https://www.cceol.com/search/article-detail?id=700601>

³⁰ Uşaklıoğlu A. Y., *The Crucial Effects of COVID-19 on Digital Law*, article available at the address: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3572561

and every individual, only the information which is exclusively of public nature and which might affect the good development of the public commitment by the authorities. At present, such information does not get out of the “doors” of the “prejudiced” institution, being accessible only to the authorities requesting and justifying its usage. The concept of information system exist at the EU Council’s level, information managed by UE-LISA Agency³¹, responsible for processing large-scale data, being developed the information system on visas, Schengen information system, Eurodoc under its aegis, ETIAS, ECRIS-TCN system and input/output system being under development, concept which is focused on the security of the European Union space, on free circulation, terrorism and on protecting common interests.

Consequently, it would be possible to cooperate in all areas that affect good governance and prevent Human Resources Managers from applying unitary practices in the training of public servants. Although the regulatory framework exists for the provision of public services, it is very difficult to have a general practice in terms of bureaucracy. This justifies in practice the need and opportunity for digitalization.

Secondly, another way by which the administrative segment would gain new performances is the promotion of meritocracy and ethical management within the public institutions. The latter is concerned by the development of the management tools having the capacity to contribute to the ethical development of an organization and to develop methods which can be used in order to determine the orientation which all developed organizations should have.

According to anti-corruption specialists, maintaining a healthy climate in public institutions can be achieved only by attending ethics courses, so that officials have a fair conduct towards the institution they serve, and the citizens in their turn should not lose the confidence in the Romanian administration. The existence of ethics in a public institution also means the existence of integrity. In translation, the two notions shade the correctness in all respects, being fundamental for the administration³².

Also, the capacity of the public administration must be consolidated in order to promote values such as honesty, by increasing the transparency and a culture of responsibility, by priority actions, in order to reduce the annual successive

³¹ Supplementary information is available at the address: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ro/policies/it-systems-in-the-area-of-freedom-security-and-justice/>

³² Milutin I. M., *Etica și integritatea în managementul public / Ethics and Integrity in Public Management*, article published in *Studia Universitatis Vasile Goldiș Magazine, Arad - Seria Științe Economice / Economical Sciences Series*, No. 1 / 2009, page 529

integrity incidents. The improvement of the rule of law and the consolidation of the ethics adviser role, by the intervention on the actual normative texts and by access to a mandatory specialized training for these socio-professional categories, according to a unique training standard established by the National Agency of Public Servants in consultation with the concerned persons³³.

These short considerations are only few actions which can be applied as such, in order to develop the Romanian public administration and to create Smart City³⁴. Smart City concept is rich, reason for which only some of its characteristics resume to: a Smart City uses information and communication technology in order to improve life, work and sustainability conditions, monitoring the vulnerable sectors and being involved in the optimization of its resources and not lastly, integrating the technologies in order to ensure the necessities of its citizens.

In another train of thoughts, post-Covid-19 world promises progress starting from the basic elements of a democratic society and from the legislative norms applied literally. Why such a fatidic event for humanity was necessary in order to acknowledge the shortcomings more than ever and to review the administrative perspective is a question with an answer we will never understand.

The emergence of this virus has brought the entire world in the middle of a tilting board, any action or strategy with no sense and future affecting the life balance and consequently, all states of the world must think in perspective.

If in other states this virus impelled the administration to “put forth all available weapons” to limit human losses and the collapse of the economy, the Covid moment in Romania is an x-ray of the lack of interest and action of a society that is “educated” very hard and only with harsh measures. As for the public administration and its ability to cope with such an event, the conclusion is that we have remained at the prehistoric stage of survival. We cannot assess whether this is good or bad, but it is clear that this attitude is not for the future.

We have been a part of the European Union for more than 13 years (whim or necessity?) and it seems we are moving quite slow in reaching to its standard due to various reasons. We consider that the most important is the shortage in investments for the development of the administrative capacities, because the rule of law supposes cooperation, managerial vision, solidarity and de-

³³ Marin S. C., *Managementul integrității în instituțiile publice / The Management of Integrity in Public Institutions*, article published in *Revista Economia Contemporană / Contemporary Economics Magazine*, No. 2/2017, page 127

³⁴ Papuc I. E, Andrei A. C., *Smart city-tomorrow's city*, article published in *Revista Management Cultural / Cultural Management Magazine*, Volume XX, no. 40 (1/2018)

politicization.

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