

Good Democratic Governance Based on a New Model

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Abstract: *The paper contains an analysis of good and democratic governance within the central and local administration of Romania. The analysis of the results contributed to the identification of key pillars of good governance. Based on these main elements a model of good governance was set-up. The final part of the paper contains several strategic recommendations needed to improve good governance within the Romanian public administration.*

Keywords: *government, governance, multilevel, democracy, public administration.*

JEL: *I128; J38; O21.*

Introduction

Millennium Development Goals cannot be achieved without good governance. The European Commission proposes to strengthen the European Union to promote good governance in the new Member States and invites all Member States to harmonize their efforts in this area. These goals are:

- Elimination of extreme poverty and hunger;
- Ensuring primary education for all;
- Promote gender equality and empowerment of women;
- Reduce child mortality;
- Improve maternal health;
- Combat HIV / AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
- Ensuring a sustainable environment;
- Establishment of a global partnership for development.

On 20 December 2005, the Presidents of Commission, Parliament and Council have signed a new statement on EU Development Policy called "The European Consensus". For the first time in fifty years of cooperation it defines the common principles in the EU and the Member States and put each application development policies in a spirit of complementarity. Common principles governing cooperation and development activities are: possession, partnership, in-depth political dialogue, civil society participation, gender equality and an ongoing commitment in order to prevent fragility.

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Developing countries are primarily responsible for their own development, but the EU assumes its share of responsibility in joint efforts provided in the partnership. The Commission stresses the importance of addressing governance in a broader perspective, taking into account all its dimensions (political, economic, social and environmental). In fact, good governance is not limited to the fight against corruption, including issues such as access to health, education and justice, media pluralism, functioning parliaments and public finance management and natural resources. The EU has committed to increase aid budgets dedicated to 0.7% of gross national income by 2015 and to encourage developing countries from Europe to intensify their efforts to reform.

The Commission proposed an approach based on political dialogue, respect for ownership of reforms by the governments and citizens of partner countries, as well as incentives. Identification reforms and support measures appropriate to the situation of each country requires an assessment of governance in the country. This assessment is based on a participatory approach that encourages local actors (such as government and civil society) to develop their own tools and capabilities.

Assuming prior existence of adequate conditions of democratic control, financial management and institutional development, budget support helps to strengthen governance and institutions at central and local level.

The Commission emphasizes the increased use of this support, especially in the new Eastern member states. The effectiveness of this new approach depends on the ability of fund providers to act in a coordinated and harmonized way.

1. Current state of art

There is no consensus on the terminology of 'governance' in the literature. It comes either from the comparative politics. The first distinction is between the government, as a group of authority institutions and governance, as a process of intervention based on this authority's actions (Stoker, 1998) and governance. Governance is a "different kind of government," an alternative to government action, targeting (re) distribution of power in public space through a (re) negotiation of authority and an incremental approach to decision partnership networks: social partnerships (government - employers - trade unions), public - private partnership (state structures - business) or civil partnership (public authorities - civil society).

Collective bargaining decision substantiates a new perspective on power. There is a dispersal of public authority through interactive networks and is based on a set of political principles of postmodern: management of mandatory collective action without the intervention of the state, the involvement of institutions and actors that do not belong to the sphere of government, involving networks of local actors, especially civil society, business and the beneficiaries ("stakeholders") (Stoker, 1998) and their communicative action.

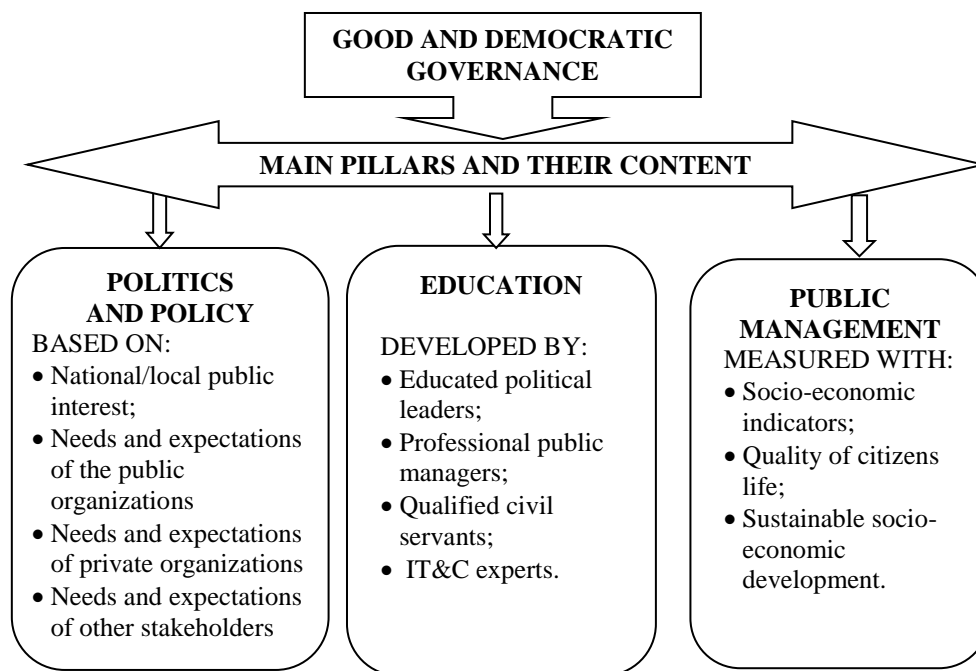


Figure 1. Main pillars of good and democratic governance

Source: the author

The first and most important consequence of the new perspective on the political process to solve problems is a participatory democracy, grounded by the Article 47 of the Constitutional Treaty, entitled "participatory democracy" and which states citizens and representative associations have the opportunity to make their views known and to exchange views in public in all areas of Union actions. In this regard, the combination of democracy based on public deliberation, in the sphere of collective choices, of free and equal citizens (Cohen,1989), configure a discursive concept of deliberative democracy, which J. Habermas (2005) considers the basis of normative theories of democracy.

Pollack and Wallace (2006) argue the need of a "governance" in the EU, mainly because of the non-hierarchical or "network" of policy development involving sub-national actors, national and supranational, and a normative concern about the "democratic deficit" in the EU, meaning the Union potential to be a deliberative democracy. A clear picture with the main pillars of good and democratic governance is presented in figure 1.

2. The new model of good governance

Since 2001, a political and institutional framework of governance was defined at the EU level. It encourages cooperation policies between the EU countries in the process of public policy, governance in the public sector, a space of political action which directly promotes the political interests of citizens who can participate in decision-making through active representation. For many authors, governance was a concept to highlight a new way to solve international problems of governance encompassing the old formula with a new model of participatory approach to various problems and needs of the states.

Multi-level governance is a modern style of European governance, based on subsidiary principle stipulated in the Treaty of Lisbon over 30 times. The principle of subsidiarity states that political decisions should always be made as close to the citizens and their interests.

The multi-level governance is based on a political decision and should be feasible, transparent, competitive and cost effective. (Androniceanu, 2010). According with the author view, the new model for an effective good and democratic governance for the Romanian public administration should contain few key elements included in a simple cycle, as it can be observed in figure 2.

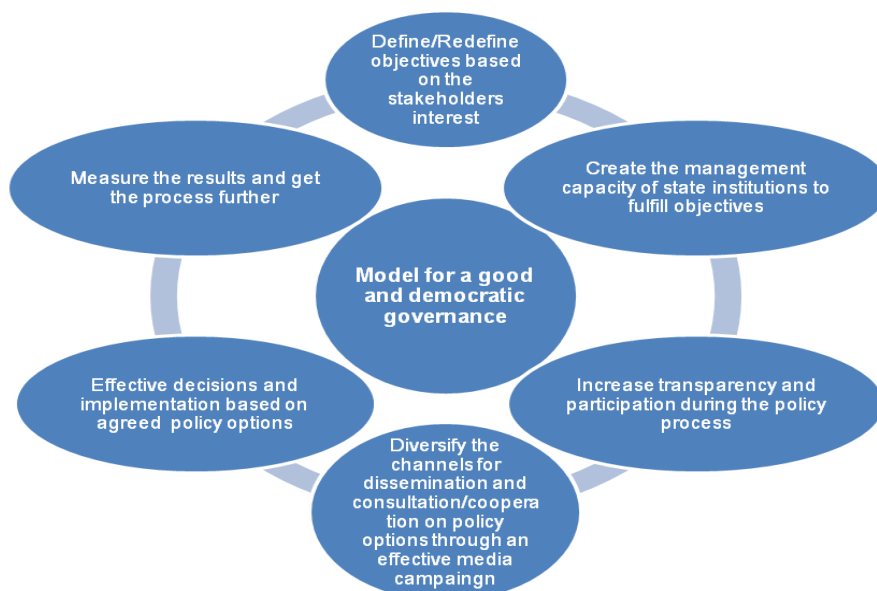


Figure 2. Model of an effective, good and democratic governance

Source: the author

For Kohler and Eising (1999), the basis of good governance is the set of institutions, laws, procedures and rules that allow people to express their concerns and fight to defend their interests in a context of relatively predictable and fair. Naturally, good governance also applies in the private sector, since it is the expression of an integrated and effective management.

The national parliaments, courts of audit, and other institutions of democratic control clearly have their role to play too. Although good governance is first and foremost a state of mind and a fresh culture in the way the state operates, assistance programmes are put in place to strengthen the management capabilities of our partner countries in all sectors of development. Democratic governance is a condition for an effective social and economic development. It is now acknowledged that political processes, regulations and institutions play a major role in economic growth and human development. The fight against poverty is not simply a social, economic and technical objective but also a political and institutional goal.

In the Millennium Declaration, the international community reached an agreement on the importance of good governance for development. It goes hand in hand with the theory that development problems are linked to a failure in governance. The efficiency of governance and public institutions is determined by the work of human resources, mainly public managers and politicians. If the institutions do not work properly, the vulnerable and poor members of society will suffer.

Democracy is directly linked to the concept of governance and cooperation. In fact, an effective governance has to meet public needs and not the other way around. Cooperation seeks to remain primarily technical, not political. A democracy or a functional public administration cannot simply be imported. The type of democracy and form of governance that a state will develop depend on its history, cultural values and local circumstances.

Actual democratic practices will therefore vary. Democratic values and cultures need to be firmly rooted throughout society, if a new democracy is developed. Good governance is becoming more and more commonplace as a key element of development. In fact, the success of development is dependent on good governance. In fact, good governance or democratic governance is a concept or rather a practice. It means the implementation of which is fundamental in allowing countries receiving international aid to take control of their political, economic and social development effectively. Good governance will also ensure that the various support and assistance programmes from which they benefit operate as efficiently as possible.

In 2013, the Freedom House Report revealed that democracy is in decline across the world. Romania is mentioned as one of the most vulnerable countries from Central and Eastern Europe having a semi consolidated democracy. In the same category were included Bulgaria, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia. Freedom House notes the countries surveyed - in Central Europe and

Eurasia - with ratings from 1 (the highest level of democratic progress) to 7 (the lowest democratic progress) based on the criteria: electoral process, civil society, independent media, national democratic governance, local democratic governance, legal framework / independence of the judiciary and corruption. According to the report, Romania registered a "democracy score" of 3.5, which is the average grade 3 (electoral process), 2.5 (civil society), 4.25 (independent media), 4 (national democratic governance), 3 (local democratic governance), 3.75 (legislative framework / independent judiciary) and 4 (corruption). Romania ranks 40 in the world in terms of the degree of democracy in a ranking led by Norway, Sweden and Finland, published by Vienna Democracy Ranking Association. Preceded by Bulgaria (position 39), our country ranks last among the European Union countries analyzed by the authors of this comparative study. The list was made based on the data provided by the American organization "Freedom House" and the UN human development index, taking into account indicators of political, economic, gender equality, access to education and healthcare, and the degree of environmental protection.

Based on the author analysis, the main deficiencies of democracy and good governance in Romania are determined by the following:

- Volatility of the legislative framework;
- Corruption within state institutions;
- Lack of solidity and coherence times of public policies in the economic and foreign policy;
- Reversibility of national strategies and public policies with each election cycle;
- Lack of political commitment.

Governance structures in Romanian public space, especially in terms of cooperation between NGOs and the government, have now a more formal institutional framework which is supported by a culture of genuine autonomy, transparency in the public sector and public-private partnership. In Romanian organizations from the public sector there is a lack of "learning" strategic coherence, low level of decisional transparency and access to public information.

The process of reforms in public policies is ongoing, but good results are not visible enough. The Government of Romania has some hybrid attempts to improve governance and the governance process, but still no sufficient connection to support a cooperative strategy, other than formal. Thus, Romania is situated at a considerable distance from the provisions of the White Paper on European governance which measures the differences between the governance process in post-socialist countries and the Europeanization. The Prime Minister of Romania has attributes related to cooperation with civil society and set-up several advisory bodies called ministerial councils. They may choose to invite representatives of civil society in the work of committees and working groups, but there are no specific regulations regarding their participation and, especially, the decision to which they have access.

Body for Civil Society Consultation is another advisory body without legal personality, working in the Romanian Prime Minister Office. This structure has to ensure the associative participation in the development, evaluation, amendment and implementation of public policies.

The Romanian ministries have a set of regulations regarding the public consultation process, but do not have a coherent system of cooperation, represented by specialized structures and sets / code procedures. Another typical form of cooperation is the establishment of advisory bodies on issues, including representatives of government and the non-profit organizations, councils and joint committees formed at ministerial level. The Romanian governmental agencies and other authorities working in the area should be major players in inter-sectoral cooperation, as they are designed after the European model. Often NGOs establish assessments of government policies and make public reports to show to what extent it promotes public interests. The active role of civil society in Romania can be extended.

3. Strategic changes for an effective good governance in Romania

Based on the analysis of contextual and institutional framework, and current practices related to democracy and governance in Romania the following strategic changes can be taking into account:

- Improving management capacity of state institutions to analyze and develop options to ensure the democratic formulation of public policies involving civil society. In this context, the first recommendation is to increase the role of think tanks whose institutionalized consultation would substantially contribute to better public policies.
- Consultation of economic interest groups to develop strategies to Romania's economic recovery.
- Adoption new legislation and a set of comprehensive anticorruption procedures.
- Using more active and professional public diplomacy tools, especially economic diplomacy. It requires a careful identification of public diplomacy actors and their actions, such as studies, forums, events in major capitals etc.
- Using the mass-media professionally, as a tool of articulation and dissemination of national interest.
- Promoting a new style of governance with an increased sensitivity to the requirements of the population and behaviour leading to an improvement in the living conditions of the people and the public interest generally.
- Setting up of a new procedures for good governance, according to the Western "model".
- Creating and developing a functional balance between different agents with the real power in international relations.

4. Conclusions

Although development cooperation highlights governance and institutional development as core and priority areas for cooperation, what is missing, however, are guidelines and a shared methodical and political approach which can be used as a basis for cooperation activities. Everyone agrees on the guiding principles for governance (equality, transparency, participation, responsiveness, the presentation of accounts, the rule of law and so forth). However, how to deal with these aspects in cooperation is by no means as clear question the public authorities and suggest different methods of political participation. Cooperation seeks to remain primarily technical, not political. A democratic governance within the Romanian public administration should be developed in a proper way, it cannot simply be imported. The type of democracy and the form of governance that a state will develop depend on its economic, social, legal and political circumstances.

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