

E-ADMINISTRATION SYSTEMS IN ROMANIA AND FRANCE. A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Abstract

In 2004, the President of France announced the launch of the ADELE (ADministration ELEctronique) project as a priority for the French Government in reforming the state. In Romania, one year earlier, Parliament adopted Law 161/2003 on certain measures for ensuring transparency in the exercise of public dignities, public functions and business environment, preventing and sanctioning corruption that provided for transparency in the management of public information and services by electronic means.

Today, more than a decade ago, we aim to present the state of electronic administration evolution in the two countries, as well as a comparative analysis of the main achievements in the field.

Keywords: electronic administration, public services, the ADELE project.

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SISTEMELE DE E-ADMINISTRAȚIE DIN ROMÂNIA ȘI FRANȚA. O ANALIZĂ COMPARATIVĂ

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Rezumat

În 2004, președintele Franței anunța demararea proiectului ADELE (ADministration ELEctronique) ca o prioritate pentru Guvernul francez în reformarea statului. În România în 2003 era adoptată Legea 161 privind unele măsuri pentru asigurarea transparenței în exercitarea demnităților publice, a funcțiilor publice și în mediul de afaceri, prevenirea și sancționarea corupției ce prevedea iTransparența în administrarea informațiilor și serviciilor publice prin mijloace electronice.

Astăzi, după mai bine de un deceniu, prin prezenta lucrare ne propunem să prezentăm stadiul evoluției administrației electronice în cele două țări, precum și o analiză comparativă a principalelor realizări în domeniu.

Cuvinte cheie: administrație electronică, servicii publice



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1. INTRODUCTION

France

French President Jacques René CHIRAC said in one of his January 2004 speeches that eGovernment is a major lever for the reform of the French state and a priority of the French Government. To support this ambition, the French Government, through the voice of Prime Minister Jean-Pierre RAFFARIN, presented the "ELEctronique 2004/2007 ADELE Administration to Simplify Your Life" project. The project presented citizens, French Prime Minister believes that e-government is for all, and therefore a powerful factor in the modernization of the state. This will deepen the administrative procedures by enhancing the agents' activity, making it profitable for the network by excluding hierarchies and redundancies. Thanks to the emergence of a safer virtual environment, the trust of French fellow citizens in the use of the Internet will develop, which will help to simplify citizens' relations with the public administration by increasing its receptivity. In summary, the ADELE project proposes four requirements for future public administration:

- Institutionally: extensive inter-departmental consultation was conducted involving community health and social and industrial organizations in the sector. The National Commission for Informatics and Freedoms (CNIL) was the one who has always responded to government advisers.
- Interactive: 100 pioneers of custom portal to access the administration launched in 2003 (mon.service-public.fr) in which they tested new services to take account of users' expectations. These pioneers have defined and evaluated e-services at every stage of their development.
- Representative: pioneers in French e-administration and probably in Europe. As part of the strategic plan development, Henri Plagnol conducted a series of consultations and exchanges with national representatives of users, officials, trade unions, businesses and local communities but also lawyers, sociologists and philosophers, MEPs were also consulted.

Romania

In October 2001, Law no. 544/2001 on free access to information of public interest. In March 2002, the e-procurement system in Romania is launched, "www.e-licitatie.ro". In July 2002, the National Regulatory Authority for Communications and Information Technology (ANRC) is set up, which has the task of drafting and adopting regulations, their execution and general authorizations or individual

licenses. In March 2003, the document on the IT Strategy of the Ministry of Public Finance for 2003-2006 was published. In July of the same year, Law no. 304/2003 on universal services and users' rights related to electronic communications networks and services. In September, the Government is launching the eGovernment portal, *egovernare.ro*, similar to the UK Government Gateway, to provide a one-stop shop for online public services. The portal, also called the National Electronic System, provides 24/7 access to information from central and local government institutions, official forms and interactive services. On January 19, 2006, an existing ordinance is amended to legally regulate electronic payments between the government and its citizens. It allows electronic payment of fines, taxes and other tax obligations and aims to improve electronic payment conditions through bank cards.

In November 2006, the Ministry of Communications and Information Society (MCSI) launches the Virtual Payments Office. Its purpose is to facilitate citizen interaction with public administration institutions by accepting online payments quickly, transparently, efficiently and securely through bank cards, fees, fines and other financial obligations.

In December 2007, Romania establishes the Local Domain Contact Point (LDCP-RO) allowing connection to sTESTA - the European Union's Telecommunication Network. The DCP-RO infrastructure aims to enable the use of pan-European information applications such as EuroDAC (a system that includes fingerprints of asylum seekers), PROCIV-NET (European Civil Protection and Environmental Emergency Network), EUCARIS Information System), SIGL for the management of licenses for imports of textiles, clothing, footwear and steel into the EU) and TachoNET (communication infrastructure for the exchange of information on truck tachograph cards).

On April 16, 2008, the Government approved the Memorandum on the implementation of the single (electronic) contact point requested by Services Directive 123/2006. According to this memorandum, the Agency for Information Society Services (ASSI - dissolved by Law no 329/2009) will be allocated to the conceptualization, implementation and operation of the single contact point. Romania has the opportunity to interact in a single electronic contact point with the Public Administration, providing the completion of specific procedures for the authorization or delivery of a service by electronic means. In order to ensure equal access for visually impaired people, people diagnosed with dyslexia and people who do not have adequate access to education, the Ministry of Communications and Information Society (MCSI) launches in September 2008 a "spoken" version of its website. Demonstrating full support and commitment to the concept of "access for all," MCSI also publishes a guide to the development of public authorities' websites, highlighting the importance of accessibility issues.

One of the most important ways of action is put into practice to simplify the modernization procedure in the payment of the customs duty by electronic payment (by card). The action is implemented on 1 October 2008 in the Virtual Payments Office ("www.ghiseul.ro") and is operated by ASSI.

In March 2009, the e-CAESAR Advanced e-Learning Center, e-CAESAR, was created to conduct eService research and to set up an eService platform for Romania and its neighbors in southern Europe. The main topics of interest of e-CAESAR include international interoperability in e-government and standardization, service-oriented infrastructure, enhancing administrative process security and cross-border exchange of services.

The Prime Minister of Romania, together with the Minister of Communications and Information Society, launches the "eRomania" project on 16 June 2009. The project is designed to include general facts on Romania's history, geography and administrative structure; demography, culture and religion; education, health, justice and tourism.

In addition, it aims to provide on-line real-time services to citizens and businesses, paying taxes, issuing legal acts, criminal records and certain permits.

In accordance with the "Emergency Ordinance on Freedom of Service Providers for Establishing and Provision of Services in Romania", the unique contact points provided by the EU Services Directive from November 2009 in Romania. Through these points (ePCU), service providers in the EU could easily complete the procedures and formalities needed to access and exercise their service activities in Romania. In June 2010, the Ministry of Communications and Information Society (MCSI) launches the "National Supercomputing Program" program, which aims to modernize public administration services and systems. This technology allows public institutions to benefit from the next-generation services and infrastructure and better control their spending by avoiding expensive ICT purchases and maintenance.

On June 19, the Strategy on the transition from analogue to digital technology and the implementation of digital multimedia services at national level was approved. Its main objective is to achieve the full and effective transition from analogue television services to digital television services and to completely suspend analogue transmissions before June 17, 2015, in line with international obligations.

On October 15, MCSI launched the project "Developing Infrastructure for Interoperability and Secure Access to Central Government" or "Developing PKI-BRIDGE". The project has as main objective the development of the information security infrastructure for interoperability, allowing for secure transactions between organizations using PKI (Public Key Infrastructure) technology from different companies. The project objective is a public administration designed to provide support to citizens for

the intense exchange of information and data, both within the system and in relation to the outside world, the business environment and NGOs.

On December 23, the Ministry of Communications and Information Society (MCSI) organizes the launch of the necessary procedures for launch, evaluation and testing under the conditions of the online portal promoted under the name of e-Romania portal - Participatory Democracy (the official name project: eRomania 2) . The actual phase of environmental testing runs until March 31, 2014 and aims to get feedback from public administration, citizens and the media about current functionality, future potential developments and the necessary training for institutions wishing to use the functionality offered by portal. The e-Romania portal is a portal of national importance designed to contain the largest information content about Romania, a space for discussion and interaction between citizens and public authorities, as well as a platform for collaboration between officials from the entire government.

On November 25, the Ministry of Information Society (MSI) published the "National Strategy for the Digital Agenda for Romania 2014-2020". The National Strategy for the Digital Agenda for Romania is not only an instrument of convergence of Romania to the European Union in the field of ICT but also an opportunity to accelerate economic growth and sustainable development in Romania. This framework document will ensure the alignment of the intelligent development of the information society with the neighboring countries in the region and will create premises for the sustainable and inclusive integration of Romania in technological terms into the digital single market in Europe. As a result of one of 18 strategic lines of Romania's digital agenda development, all Romanian public administrations are expected to start using open source software and open standards to enhance the interoperability of ICT systems.

On 23 September 2015 in Bucharest, at the Ministry of Information Society, a workshop on "Interoperability Solutions for Public Administration" was organized. The event took place due to the European Commission's interest in supporting the cooperation between the Romanian authorities through the ISA Program, promoting the European Interoperability Framework and contributing to the implementation of the National Interoperability Framework. ([Http://www.mcsi.ro/Minister/Comunicate-de-presa2014/workshop](http://www.mcsi.ro/Minister/Comunicate-de-presa2014/workshop)). Information on e-Governance in Romania is available in the work published by the European Commission in February 2016 and titled eGovernment in Romania (European Commission, 2016).

2. LITERATURE REVIEWS

For research in e-Administration, some researchers have analyzed local government websites in their country (PIÑEIRO-NAVAL et al., 2018). For example, in Portugal, the sites of 308 municipalities were analyzed. The research method chosen was to analyze and discuss the formal parameters of online communication such as the audiovisual aspect, the information architecture, the utility, accessibility and Web 2.0 features present on the sample website. As a major data processing strategy, Portuguese researchers have created a quality index from the calculation of certain elements. They relied on their previous studies for creating this index. This indicator was used to make interregional comparisons, which revealed statistically significant differences and was also correlated with factors such as population, budget, purchasing power or technological development of municipalities. This research allowed them to make assumptions about the formal status of local Portuguese e-Administration. A first conclusion of their research was that web quality is a multidimensional construction and therefore it seemed complex to develop a coherent aggregate indicator. They went into building it from the idea that the sum of the variables can be statistically coherent and built an index they named the Official Quality Index (ICF). ICF included state of portals, external factors identified as having an impact on that state and allowing for the development of territorial comparisons. The authors of the study conclude that from a methodological point of view, the usefulness of content analysis allows the evaluation of web environments and formal parameters of online communication and, consequently, ICF, the replication and consolidation of which has been satisfactorily carried out in relation to their previous investigations, can be a starting point for evaluating the design of web sites, regardless of their nature or purpose (municipal, tourist, business, organizational, media, etc.), and support their validity with similar empirical proposals.

3. FINDINGS

Other researchers have to investigate the link between the current level of electronic administration in the county of Romania and education at the same level (here refers specifically to education in the field of information technology and communication) to check if there is a connection between these data (Vrabie, 2015). It is noted that the study started from previous research in which the researcher says radiographs e-Romanian administration as it was included in January 2014 based on the study by Mark Holzer's digital governance in municipalities worldwide. In fact, the researcher abandons the idea of e-administration and brings to discussion the notion of e-government. The question that prefigures the conclusion and to which the researcher attempts to respond is described in the title of section 4. Conclusions. Is education the development engine for e-government?

The answer to this last question could come from the market for educational software developers that is growing in both France and Romania (Burlacu, S., Grigorescu, S. D., Stefan, C., & Popescu, C., 2013) (Burlacu, S., Enache, A. C., & Stefan, C., 2013); the global market value being estimated to reach \$ 8.1 billion in 2020 (Adkins, 2017)

To highlight the level of development of eGovernment, some researchers have made a ranking by taking into account elements available on the sites of the territorial administrative units of that country (Sabău, 2009).

Other researchers have used a tool for evaluating sites in Bucharest, replicating the method used by Holzer, et al (2007, 2009 and Stoica & Ilas, 2009, apud Elvadeanu, 2013). In fact, it contains an index containing 98 measures per five distinct categories: 1. Security / confidentiality; 2. Usability; 3. Content; 4. Service; 5. Citizen participation (e-democracy) (Elvadeanu, 2013).

On the other hand there are voices who believe that there is no e-government model, but rather many "isolated" solutions and different technologies that address the same basic problem: better management, better planning, more solutions / services good and quicker for citizens, and information, although it is a vital, strategic resource, without turning it into knowledge, it becomes useless, a waste of time, money and effort. So the researchers conclude that information needs to be interoperable and scalable (Gatman, 2011).

CONCLUSIONS

We agree with the idea that sustainable development can be improved by effective eAdministration. Sustainable development can be seen as a lever for the power and capabilities of technology in delivering public administration services and is more than just a technological phenomenon that affects the management of processes based on human, technological and organizational resources (Andreica, Marin; Păcurar, 2014).

E-government processes are influenced by social media through the openness and transparency of eGovernment for the public, as well as the impact of collaboration between different administrative units (Gheorghe-Moisii et al., 2017). Moreover, they are researchers believe that since 2003 Romania has made significant progress in recent years in ICT and also in implementing e-government. They argue that some Romanian projects (pilot) were really appreciated at international and European level (Stoica and Filip, 2003).

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