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KUBAN STATE UNIVERSITY

# ПАНДЕМИЯ COVID-19

НОВАЯ ПОВЕСТКА  
БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ ДЛЯ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИХ СТРАН

Материалы Международного  
научного семинара

Краснодар 2021



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Краснодар 2021

УДК 16-036.21:327

ББК 59.9:66.3

П16

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**П16 Пандемия COVID-19: новая повестка безопасности для европейских стран:** Материалы международного научного семинара / под редакцией Е.В. Морозовой, А.С. Евтушенко; Министерство науки и высшего образования Российской Федерации, Кубанский государственный университет. — Краснодар: Кубанский гос. ун-т, 2021. — 100 с. — 100 экз.  
ISBN 978-5-8209-1994-7

В издание включены материалы международного онлайн-семинара «Пандемия COVID-19: новая повестка безопасности для европейских стран». В семинаре приняли участие в качестве слушателей более 100 студентов, аспирантов и преподавателей из университетов – участников проекта. Дискуссия велась вокруг таких тем, как влияние пандемии на политические проблемы ЕС и европейских сообществ, сфера образования в период пандемии COVID-19, социальная солидарность, гражданское общество и публичный дискурс в условиях пандемии. Материалы семинара публикуются на русском и английском языках. Издание адресуется ученым, работающим в различных отраслях социально-гуманитарного знания, специалистам сферы публичного управления, представителям структур гражданского общества.

**Издание подготовлено на основании исследований, проведенных в рамках реализации исследовательской сети «Война и мир в вызовах европейской безопасности», международного проекта по направлению «Акции им. Жана Монне» программы ЕС Эразмус+.**

Проект реализуется при финансовой поддержке Европейской Комиссии. Данная публикация отражает точку зрения авторов, Европейская Комиссия не несет ответственности за содержание данной публикации и его дальнейшее использование.

УДК 16-036.21:327

ББК 59.9:66.3

ISBN 978-5-8209-1994-7

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**COVID-19 PANDEMIC:  
A NEW SECURITY AGENDA FOR  
EUROPEAN SOCIETIES**  
International Workshop Papers

Krasnodar 2021

**COVID-19 pandemic: a new security agenda for European societies:**  
Proceedings of the international research workshop

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This working paper has been produced as a result of research activities conducted in the framework of Jean Monnet Network “Peace, War and the World in European Security Challenges – POWERS”. The project is funded with the support of the ERASMUS+ programme of the European Union in the framework of Jean Monnet Actions (Project Number: 599962-EPP-1-2018-1-RU-EPPJMO-NETWORK).

This publication contains proceedings of the international research workshop “COVID-19 pandemic: a new security agenda for European societies”. The workshop was attended by more than 100 master students, post-graduate students and scientists from the Network-member universities. The discussion was scoped by such topics as the pandemic influence on political problems of EU and European societies; education under COVID-19 pandemic; social solidarity, civil society and public discourse under COVID-19 pandemic. The workshop proceedings are published in Russian and English.

The publication is aimed at research fellows and teachers in the field of humanities and social sciences, students and young researchers, public officers, civil society representatives and wider audience interested in international relations and European security.

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Published by Kuban State University, 149 Stavropolskaya st., Krasnodar, Russia

ISBN 978-5-8209-1994-7

# **Влияние пандемии на политические проблемы ЕС и европейских сообществ**

# Europe's Geopolitical Challenges in an Age of Pandemic

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## Introduction

This paper departs from the assumption that Covid-19 could be a “historical accelerator” of the global trends that were already present before the pandemic, such as the blocking of the multilateral order and geopolitical disorder due to the rivalry between an increasingly assertive China and an isolationist United States, despite the willingness of certain European institutions to give impulse to a “geopolitical European Union” or to “exercise geopolitical power”.

In a world in which China and the United States dispute the throne of world supremacy, many scholarly works point that in the era post Covid-19 Beijing will become the great power and Washington will be relegated to a second place. The question is where will the European Union be?

In order to search an answer to this question from European foreign policy and international relations perspective, this paper analyses and discusses the geopolitical challenges that the EU has been facing since before the pandemic outbreak. Among the challenges being raised, three have a strong geopolitical component: technological, economic and security. These feature amongst the priorities of the Commission and the Council for 2019–2024. The Covid-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the contradictions between open markets and security, between interdependence and sovereignty, particularly in the Union's neighbourhood and in the Western Balkans.

## Technological challenges

The technological challenges concern the dominant position of China. In the last four years Beijing has made investments in Europe in prominent strategic areas. For instance, China has invested in many European countries to create the world's first electricity grid through its Global Energy Interconnection Initiative, in parallel with its New Silk Road. Analysis of data points out that China's dominance is impressive in all renewable energy equipment.

Europe is therefore in a weak position vis-à-vis China on one of the important tracks of the Green Pact promoted by the Commission as a priority of its mandate. Its strategic action plan regarding batteries, initiated by Germany and France, should help to restore the Union's position in this area. The future of this industry remains to be seen. This is an external challenge, therefore, with China, but also an internal one to ensure the sustainability of a nascent industry.

Besides, Europe is dependent on the major digital operators whose virtual monopoly in the EU is well known, and which poses a clear risk to the security and use of our digital data. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has further



strengthened the weight of these operators, whether in terms of home working, security connections and exchanges or simply social links. The contribution of these digital operators to public welfare through taxation is not at all proportional to their dominant position.

### **Economic challenges**

Many economic challenges need to be considered under this section. A prominent challenge concern the consequences of an eventual trade war with the United States. Actually, the European Union has adopted an ambitious programme to combat global warming, with the notable exception of Poland, which wishes to keep coal in its economy. This difficulty, detrimental to the Union's position, comes on top of the United States' withdrawal from the Paris agreement (COP 21). The challenge is then a commercial one: how will EU businesses be able to compete with those from countries applying weaker standards?

Moreover, the position of President Trump, also includes rejection of multilateralism, very aggressive use of retaliatory trade and tariff measures and hostility to the principles of the European project.

There is a real risk that the US President will retaliate with customs duties, since the European Union recorded a surplus in trade in goods with the United States of €153 billion in 2019, an increase of 10% compared to 2018, including significantly trade in motor vehicles. This underlines an internal problem for the EU, since Germany is the dominant exporter, regularly threatened by President Trump with customs retaliation. Here again, one finds a combination of external challenge and internal constraint.

Another high-profile geopolitical dispute has to do with the North Stream 2 (NS2) pipeline project. Washington is threatening sanctions against the companies involved. Again, finding a European consensus here is difficult since Poland has taken the lead in a campaign against NS2. The Council reached an agreement on 12 February 2019 whereby the European Commission will have to decide on a request for exemption by Germany from this *a priori* exclusive use by Gazprom.

Threats by Washington pose a double equation for a Geopolitical Commission: its ability to thwart US extraterritorial legislation while one of the Member States would be delighted if the former were implemented. This is also an external challenge and an internal constraint.

Economic challenges regarding the issue of competitiveness for the EU are raised by the Union's deficit in trade in goods with China totalling €164 billion in 2019. China is implementing a dirigist economic strategy, combining a long-term geopolitical vision and economic interests in a set of rules and financing that distort the open rules of competition and the WTO.

In contrast with China, the Union wants more balanced and reciprocal conditions for trade and investment, particularly regarding subsidies, access to public procurement markets, technology transfers, industrial property and social and environmental standards. The EU faces a difficult year ahead since

China has launched an economic offensive in Central and Eastern Europe, with Greece joining the so-called 17+1 group (12 member states and 5 candidate countries from the Western Balkans) in 2019. China is multiplying strategic purchases and investing in infrastructure there, as well as in Italy and Portugal. This represents an economic commitment with a political return on investment, since Hungary has twice opposed a common European position calling China into question.

Moreover, Beijing has just inflicted a cruel lesson on Europe through the aid provided in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Its supply of sanitary equipment amounts to 80% of the world's production. Its "mask diplomacy" is shocking. It is designed as a global-scale public relations campaign, it is intended to make people forget their failure and to promote their system, and it is also combined with a campaign of disinformation aimed at discrediting the Union and more generally the Western liberal model. In this respect, it joins Russia - and paradoxically also the United States on certain points - in using the populist and illiberal movements in Europe to aggravate the divisions within the European Union.

The Covid-19 crisis has also highlighted the European Union's "morbid dependence" on China and India for the supply of medicines. The Union's health sovereignty is under challenge. It will necessarily demand review and reinvestment, including common rules, even derogating from competition law, to ensure sustainability, since this is a matter of "common European interest".

## **Security challenges**

Several profound and complex challenges in the security field need to be highlighted: they have to do with the security rift with the United States, the emergence of a European defence policy, the definition of a "new security structure in Europe", the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Western Balkans.

The security rift with the United States is caused by the withdrawal of this country from the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty on 2 August 2019, which comes on top of the end of the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe. This break could, however, lead to a new arms race and leave Europe helpless. The Atlantic Alliance is certainly the guarantor of its security, but Trump's attitude, the desire of the United States since Obama to give priority to the Asian hub, as well as the Union's excessive dependence, as much as NATO's expansionism, create a very uneasy situation.

The continued expansion of NATO has not always served the cause of peace. Ukraine and Georgia's plans for membership were not pursued at the 2008 Bucharest summit, but NATO maintains constant ambiguity. The situation is therefore conducive to the emergence of the Union's autonomy within the Atlantic pillar, because "the time when the Union could depend entirely on other for its own security is over" (Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, 2019).

Another important development took place in 2017 when the European Council established the emergence of a security and defence policy on the basis of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the European Defence Industry Programme and the European Defence Fund from the Community budget. This major step forward nevertheless faces three stumbling blocks. First of all, there is the old suspicion that France is seeking European power, especially after the departure of the British. Secondly, there is the problem about joint investment decisions since the arms industries are in fierce competition with each other. Franco-German examples (battle tanks and the aircraft of the future) are still too rare. Besides, under the Permanent Structured Cooperation collective purchases only represented 14% of those made overall, in contrast to a goal of 35%. The third pitfall is the United States' opposition to this European defence policy. The US Administration favours Russia and in fact represents a hidden industrial policy against arms purchases from the United States, whereas it is not true to say that American budgets only benefit American companies. Washington is conducting an active campaign against the European Defence Fund, reminiscent of the one launched against the Galileo system in 2007.

The Union also faces the weight of the history carried by the new members. They have retained the deep sense that the Cold War was "won" by the United States. While the Union is certainly a symbol of peace, in their eyes it was NATO that ensured it. Convincing them that the situation calls for a "new architecture of trust and security in Europe" (Pierre and Xavier Mirel, 2020) is not at all easy.

As those authors noted, "Russia's desire to protect its "near abroad", its "hybrid" political system, its rewriting of history, its massive disinformation campaigns and its denial of international law would rather argue that the Union should wait for better days" (Pierre and Xavier Mirel, 2020). Therefore, in spite of the "Putin system", the Union should engage in dialogue and address the many interests in common (trade, security, terrorism, energy and climate, etc.). Trade should be a shared objective for the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and the European Union, through sectoral agreements, facilitated by the adoption of European standards by the EEU.

However, this dialogue cannot be launched without a real breakthrough in the Minsk Donbass Agreement and then in the resolution of the other separatist conflicts. This presupposes that NATO renounce the membership of Georgia and Ukraine, in the framework of a structure still to be invented. This dialogue would be all the more beneficial to the EU and Russia as China's great game in Central Asia through its new Silk Road is disrupting the position of both protagonists.

Another significant challenge is raised by the European Neighbourhood Policy, that was launched in 2003 to establish stability and prosperity with six countries in the East (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) and those on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, from Morocco to Syria. In 2009, the Eastern Partnership targeted their political

association and economic integration with the Union. Revised in 2015 to be more flexible, focused and coherent, this neighbourhood policy continues to be the framework for the Union's differentiated relations with association agreements coupled with comprehensive and deep free trade agreements – under discussion with Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia – signed with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine in 2013–2014.

This policy has failed to prevent conflicts, which from Ossetia to Donbass and from Syria to Libya have inflamed the Union's neighbourhood. Russia will obviously maintain this frozen conflict in the Donbass region, like those in Georgia (Abkhazia) and Moldova (Transdniestria) until it has a guarantee that NATO will not extend its reach there. This makes dialogue with Russia indispensable. A first step would be to explore what kind of agreement could be envisaged between the EU and the EEU.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, on 5 May 2020 the Council adopted a package of financial aid under favourable conditions to help these countries cope with the economic consequences (European Council, 2020). By this demonstration of solidarity, the Union is underlining the importance it attaches to the Eastern Partnership (European Council, 2020), although the Union keeps its ambiguity.

Last but not least, addressing the Western Balkans requires to affirm that for twenty years the Union has endorsed a “European perspective” applied to this regions without much progress can be reported. Only Croatia has joined the Union. Accession negotiations with Montenegro and Serbia, which opened in 2012 and 2014 respectively, are at a standstill in the absence of reforms in terms of the rule of law and governance. France requested a modification of the negotiation method (European Commission, 2020), as a condition for the launch of talks with Albania and North Macedonia, which were finally approved by the European Council of 26 March 2020. The new method is important but in the end only political will can make a difference on both sides. On the candidate countries' side to undertake real reforms. On the Union's side, to agree to move forward when the conditions are met.

Up to now, most Balkan leaders have placed their short-term interests in staying in power, including through “State capture”. In the Western Balkans there has been a strong decline in democracy. It has been reported a regression in standards of justice, elections and media freedom. It is true that they are in good company with Hungary, a counter-model that some nevertheless look to with envy.

A Geopolitical Commission also has a duty to regain the ground lost in the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia, no longer against China, but against the United States<sup>1</sup>. This is a serious external challenge for the Union. And

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<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Ambassador Richard Grenell, the US President's special envoy, tried to obtain an agreement, secretly negotiated with Serbian President A. Vucic and Kosovar President H. Thaci, which would have involved an exchange of territory. In no way did this exchange achieve unanimity in Kosovo.

a twofold internal challenge since five Member States do not recognise an independent Kosovo and there is no consensus on the terms of an agreement, exchange of territory or not, which, while contravening the inviolability of borders, could call into question other situations, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Whether it is its technological backwardness, security disruption or disputes in its neighbourhood, the European Union therefore faces a range of external challenges and internal constraints which need a constant follow-up.

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# **The Pandemic Influence on the Nation-State Model in Spain**

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The paper's purpose was to highlight a few key points of the pandemic influence on the nation-state model in Spain. This past spring and in recent weeks of the autumn 2020 Spain became the first European Union country to confirm more than half a million COVID-19 cases since the start of the pandemic (La crisis del coronavirus, 2020; Coronavirus en España, 2020; Información estadística..., 2020). We must unfortunately acknowledge that for years, especially after the 2003 outbreak of SARS, epidemiologists and public health experts have been calling for the development of concrete plans for handling the first months and years of a pandemic, pointing out the national health systems risks in the event of a recurrence of such a crisis situation. Clearly, throughout the world, not only in Spain, there are crisis programming and may be two levels of preparation, long range and short range. Nevertheless government, business, national and local health authorities largely failed on both.

With regard to Spain, currently it is considered as a developed and affluent European country with very high life expectancy. In assessing the national health system Spain is consistently at the top of the Human Development Index elaborated by the United Nations Development Programme (Human Development Report, 2019). Despite all this, the pandemic has become a trigger systemic factor for the country. In the economic dimension, COVID-19 has exposed weaknesses of the Spanish economic model, whose vulnerability the global financial crises and its negative consequence revealed. In the political one, it has aggravated the already serious vertical conflict between the center and the autonomous communities.

With more than eight hundred thousand jobs lost in March, Spain's labour market has suffered its worst month on record due to the coronavirus. The services sector has been the most affected. The second most affected sector was the construction. International tourism to Spain, which direct contribution to gross domestic product is about fifteen per cent, collapsed in the first two months of a summer season.

The economic and social difficulties (a sharp increase in unemployment and an increasing number of bankruptcies of small and medium-sized enterprises) are inevitably politicizing during the pandemic. On the one hand, there is a growing need for a higher State support, which is reflected in the rise of the left-wing sentiments in the Spanish society. On the other hand, we can clearly see disagreement in the current left coalition government, criticism of the center, center-right and far-right opposition, conflict between the central and regional authorities about the quarantine measures and health policy, which are often due to the political parties-based ideological differences. However,

all these once again raised the issue of the effectiveness of economic and political governance in Spain.

As is known, Spain has become one of the most decentralized states in Europe. It is a regional state, or the State of Autonomies, in a wider context of the European integration, where the subnational authorities have been given an opportunity to be active beyond national borders within the European Union transnational space. The country's model of territorial governance is something between unitary and federal state. A similar model of State and territorial arrangement is in force in neighbouring Italy, which is also facing a difficult and troubled time in relation to the pandemic. Now the seventeen Autonomous Communities have broad administrative and legislative powers in various fields, including public health. In the absence of strong and consistent central leadership, regional authorities and many large-city mayors have taken the primary responsibility of pandemic response on themselves. The challenge of central management and control has become crucial for Spain.

As a result Spain (and other countries) went to war against a rapidly spreading infectious disease without a battle plan and a centralized command. It's evident to everybody that no single nation can fight a pandemic on its own. Microbes do not respect borders, but the current global health architecture is far from sufficient to combat the pandemic effectively. At the same time, we may have to consider the possibility that an even more threatening disease outbreak can happen. Which is why, for many stakeholders including those in Spain, which is generally accepted as one of the EU-optimists or even enthusiasts, this public health crisis has helped the European Union learn some lessons and the challenge now is to decide what is next, how the EU health policies can be better managed and coordinated at the European level. However, a greater coordination would result in a more important role of national governments in this communitarization of health policy at the European level. In my view, it would be the central government probable support and obvious resistance from the authorities of some Autonomous Communities in Spain, in particular Catalonia and Basque country, where there is a strong separatist movement.

To make progress on either a specific vaccine or a vaccine platform for diseases of pandemic potential, national governments have to play a central role. That includes funding basic research, development, and the Phase 3 clinical trials necessary for validation and licensing. Now we can see all these issues and development processes in Spain.

However, can the State of Autonomies in its current form be able to resist the challenges of the pandemic? The Spanish State decentralisation derives rather from party strategies, competition, and bargaining. Regional governments and political parties compete with each other for resources from the center and more advantageous positions in the national system of intergovernmental and cost-sharing relations. It is very difficult and risky to make forecasting and foresight, but electoral ambitions of political parties' leaders can play a negative role for effective functioning of public health. The future

of the Spanish State of Autonomies thus depends on short-term political developments and is more uncertain than federalism in more formally institutionalised states.

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# **“The Rest is Upon Us” The Covid-Crisis as a Game Changer**

Lars Klein

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In order to make sense of the Covid-crisis, it was not only referred to historical situations such as that of the Spanish Flu, but often enough to rather recent political crises. The Financial Crisis of 2008 and following as well as the “long Summer of Migration” of 2015 have often been mentioned here. Both were understood to be a political crisis and even “crisis of the European project” (Kasperek, 2015). In both cases one could argue that political reactions were insufficient or wrong – or even the cause of the problem.

With Covid, in the words of the Italian philosopher Donatella di Cesare, the “political-administrative governance that rules in times of crisis was itself ruled by something that has proven to be ungovernable” (Di Cesare, 2020, p. 36) – the “sovereign virus”. Since this problem was a given for almost all countries around the world, there seems to be a certain comparability and the question how governments reacted is particularly interesting.

As early as April 2020 two billion people lived in countries in which parliaments were restricted, the role of courts reduced, and elections postponed (Provost, 2020). It was the time of the executive. An article for “Carnegie Endowment” has concluded early on during the crisis that those countries managed to react most effectively, which a) had experience in dealing with crises, b) that were most effective in terms of running the country, and 3) which had shown the higher levels of trust by society in their governments (Kleinfeld, 2020). This, as we learn, was not a question of the political system, for at that stage at least the countries included were e.g. China and Germany.

This “hour of the executive” has taken on different forms. Germany is one of the countries that has a “Protection Infection Law”, on which it based the measures taken against the pandemic. They include the transfer of power to the Federal government and to the governments of the “Länder” to take measures via decree. Authority was thus handed over by the Federal Parliament to the executives (Gesetz zur Verhütung und Bekämpfung von Infektionskrankheiten beim Menschen (Infektionsschutzgesetz – IfSG) 2000). There seems to be agreement on evaluating the measures taken in Germany as having been as successful as they could be, and although we can regularly read about demonstrations against the measures taken, trust in the executive has gone up from 60 to even 80 percent in the course of the crisis (Marschall, 2020, p. 16). Still, political scientist Stefan Marshall rejects a too positive idea of an “hour of the (Länder-)executive”, and instead speaks of a “stress test for German Federalism” (Marschall, 2020, p. 16). More importantly, he does not consider a simple law the proper basis for the provisions it foresees. He thus calls for a change of the Basic Law and for a bigger role of the parliament (Marschall, 2020, p. 14). As for the judiciary, the former president of the German Federal Con-

stitutional Court, Hans-Jürgen Papier, highlights how disputed all measures taken necessarily need to be. Still, he holds that since nobody knows how to evaluate the threat by Covid, one can also not say whether the measures taken have been adequate or not. And yet, he adds, given the severity of measures taken it is their continuation that needs to be substantiated, not their relaxing. All measures need to be delimited as good as possible and cannot be evoked indefinitely (Papier, 2020, p. 5f.).

This has not been the case in Hungary, where the parliament declared the state of emergency on March 30, which allowed Prime Minister Victor Orbán to rule by decree and for example imprison journalists for up to five years (Roth, 2020). The step was followed by outrage throughout Europe and sharp comments in the media. Di Cesare notes that the European Union had proven to be ineffective earlier already (a statement supported by a majority of citizens, by the way, according to opinion polls ), but now has simply set other priorities and let it go (Di Cesare, 2020, p. 62) Di Cesare's position was shared by many other observers, so that the question raised by Ivan Krăstev stood out. Why, he asks, was Orbán taking that step to transfer powers to him, when he possessed such encompassing power already? Krăstev understood it to be a symbolic step, and we can add as communicative action directed towards the European Union: look, I can break the rules with no consequences (Krăstev, 2020, p. 49). This conclusion was confirmed by a measure taken on September 1, when Hungary closed the borders after the cases of new infections had risen. Borders were not closed for all, however. Visitors of the UEFA soccer super cup to be held later that month in Budapest and most importantly citizens of the Visegrád countries were exempted. Discrimination between EU citizens is prohibited according to EU legislation and was thus heavily criticized by the EU Commission (nob/qu (afp 2020).

For authoritarian leaders, the Covid-crisis posed other challenges. They build on crises and fear anyway, but on those they create themselves (be it actual or fictitious crisis), and which they can thus control. They do not like, as Krăstev unfolds, crises that need to be met by the introduction of rules and explains that this was why Brazilian President Bolsonaro or Belarussian ruler Lukashenko preferred to ignore the threat (Krăstev, 2020, p. 69), and we can add that this was US President Trump's position as well as long as he could afford it.

So by adding an element to the initial quote by Di Cesare, we can hold with Slavoj Žižek that "[t]hose in charge of the state are in panic because they know not only that they are not in control of the situation, but also that we, their subjects, know this. The impotence of their power is laid bare." (Žizek, 2020, p. 123) Downplaying a crisis like the Covid pandemic is not easy, given that it spreads everywhere and dominates not only the news, but the communication between people in general. It thus comes to no surprise that media are under threat, journalists detained, as are "opposition activists, healthcare workers, and anyone else who dares to criticize the official response to the coronavi-

rus”, as we learn from Kenneth Roth. He names Thailand, Cambodia, Venezuela, Bangladesh, Turkey and Egypt as countries in which this happened, and there are surely more (Roth, 2020).

### **The Pessimistic Conclusions**

When Europe itself was the main hotspot and epicenter of the pandemic, di Cesare emphasizes, European countries have declared entry restrictions for foreigners. She understands the virus as outer symptom of a crisis of identity happening in climate controlled and purified places of aseptic, artificial immunity; places from where the other has been expelled, the self is safe of otherness and starts turning on itself (Di Cesare, 2020, p. 29).

One way of drawing conclusions would be to understand the “hour of the executive” as coming at the expense of the basic freedoms of citizens, further delimiting the role of parliaments and courts, thus hampering the separation of powers between the branches of the government as well as their checks and balances. If we understand that not only President Trump has applied the logic of the “survival of the fittest” to how he runs the country (Assheuer, 2020); if we highlight that keeping the economy going, or at least allowing it to restart as soon as possible, even at the expense of putting people at risk, we arrive at a pessimistic outlook. Žižek thus concludes that the “real struggle will be over what social form will replace the liberal-capitalist New World Order” and that the most probable outcome of the epidemic is that a new barbarian capitalism will prevail; many old and weak people will be sacrificed and left to die; workers will have to accept a much lower standard of living; digital control of our lives will remain a permanent feature; class distinction will increasingly become a matter of life and death (Žizek, 2020, p. 127).

### **The Optimistic Conclusions**

Those who can afford it, who did not lose their job, for whom it was not a matter of life and death, can draw more optimistic conclusions from the Covid-crisis. They can conclude that the political sphere has much more leverage than we had imagined and certainly so much more than we were told during the “financial crisis”. Alternatives are possible, and they can be implemented. The creativity to imagine, to build and live our lives differently is available and can be enacted.

We could also see in the case of Germany that the first “nationalistic reflex”, as I want to call it, was corrected, unlike in the “long summer of migration” in 2015. At first, masks were kept for themselves; borders sealed. As an effect there were long lines of trucks at the borders and goods could not be delivered; crops could not be harvested, because of the reliance on workers from Eastern Europe. So it was slowly understood that mutual help and support was needed, and that help was returned. It was also understood that only cooperation can really help in this crisis. Hospitals opened for people who could not be treated in French hospitals, masks delivered to Italy. Finally, the

fact that the EU for the first time in its history decided to took on its own debts and that is: establish its own fiscal household, is considered a breakthrough (Habermas, 2020, p. 16).

Furthermore, the Covid-crisis led to a situation in which an otherwise rather utopian cosmopolitan idea of citizenship beyond nationality was made applicable – if only momentarily. Bulgarian political scientist Ivan Krăstev has earlier, in 2017, called what he considered to be a “migration crisis” the most pressing and dangerous threat to the European Union (Krăstev, 2017). He now writes that ethnic nationalism and xenophobic populism was very different from the “stay-at-home-nationalism” that we were seeing during the Covid-pandemic, which would be territorial and inclusive at the same time. It did not matter where one came from, but where one happened to be at the moment the crisis broke out. Place of residence thus was more important than passport (Krăstev, 2020, p. 35).

While I would be cautious to join those commentators, who hold a rollback was not possible anymore after the Covid-crisis, I would want to join those who belief that changes will be fundamental. I see three main lessons:

Firstly, cultural theorists Bruno Latour has understood the Covid-crisis as “dress rehearsal” for the climate crisis (Latour, 2020). As much as such a position was criticized, as much is it one lesson indeed to prepare and to prepare in a way that alternatives are being considered and evoked.

Secondly, it is on all of us to use the moment wisely, to use the pause to get an idea of how we really want to live. How much home office was effective or not, how much work was impaired by not being able to fly, and how many of temporary solutions can actually be taken on. “The breaks are pulled, the rest is upon us”, writes di Cesare (Di Cesare, 2020, p. 27)

Thirdly, we have seen how much can be changed and changed relatively easily. We also see how much money is available. So I agree with those who now revisit claims made, for example, by climate activists, who had previously been greeted by politicians saying: we can only do so much because of the economy, the job market, the possibilities and creativity of the markets, the authority of the government. The measures declared now against the Covid-Crisis can indeed not be reversed and show how much is possible.

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# **The COVID-19 Pandemic and Redistribution of Political Power in the EU**

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The COVID-19 pandemic has had a direct and negative impact on all spheres of human life, society and the state on the planet. In the current period experts pay considerable attention to inter-state relations within the EU and the difficulties associated with the development and implementation of a pan-European policy to overcome the coronacrisis. The main focus is on which state will strengthen and which will weaken as a result of the pandemic. However, it is overlooked that there are processes of redistribution of power at the domestic level. And in the future, this can seriously change international relations. This article focuses on the redistribution of political power from national to subnational and local levels in the EU in the face of a dangerous biogenic challenge.

Unfortunately, attempts to manage the crisis supranationally in the first months of the pandemic were unsuccessful. Serious contradictions between EU member states have emerged. The Northern States of the United Europe (Austria, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden) blocked the EU aid to Spain and Italy (Euro Group Fails..., 2020). This situation is only a new projection of an old problem: the disparity in economic development between the North and South of Europe. However the EU has shown itself to be a self-learning system. In July the situation began to stabilize and the supranational level started working (The EU Countries..., 2020). The EU recovery plan has come into force (Coronavirus Response, 2020). First of all this is manifested in the formation of special assistance funds. This suggests that the pan-European solidarity still exists and has started to “work”. The initial estimates of respected politicians and experts were not confirmed (Coronavirus Called..., 2020). Moreover the EU as an integration group demonstrates the ability to learn quickly. Adaptation to coronaries’s going on here better than in other developed regions of the world.

In January, February and March, EU member states responded to the new dangerous biogenic threat in the traditional format. All major decisions were made in the capitals of states. At the same time there is a variety of models for responding to a new threat. The Swedish response model for COVID-19 with its mild restrictive measures has sparked debate around the world (FAZ: Did Sweden..., 2020).

However since April, there has been a process of redistribution of power. More and more important decisions on the COVID-19 pandemic have been made at the level of internal regions and local communities. This is not typical for emergencies, even in the EU, where the phenomenon of subsidiarity has a

long positive history. COVID-subsidiarity is distinguished by the transfer of extraordinary power to the subnational and local levels.

It is also atypical that COVID-subsidiarity has spread to countries with different types of government. Germany has a long tradition of regionalism. The authorities of Bundeslands are entering into a public debate with Berlin on the anti-coronavirus measures taken (COVID-19 v Germanii..., 2020). And Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel is forced to put up with the decisions of the authorities of the Bundeslands. Another matter - Spain, Italy and Greece. These are unitary states, although Spain has been moving towards decentralization for a long time and even had experience of a federal structure in its history.

Local community authorities have also become much more active. Suddenly, municipalities have dramatically increased their importance. This is true not only for countries where regions have more powers in time of coronaries. For Example, Spain and Italy (Three Other Municipalities..., 2020). However in Greece, the local community authorities imposed curfews (A Curfew has been Imposed..., 2020). Previously the ban on free movement for all categories of residents could only be imposed by the central authorities. Such decisions were made at the national level.

As we can see state's regions and local communities have received emergency powers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. And apparently, they are trying to fix them at the legislative level. This is what is happening now in Spain. And it is very likely that local and regional authorities in other EU member states will follow suit.

We can say that in 2020, a new scheme for managing the crisis situation has appeared. But why did the national authorities delegate emergency powers to the subnational and local levels? Possible to say that such a COVID-subsidiarity allows for greater control and to avoid extreme manifestations of mass discontent that are caused by social isolation and decline in the living standards of millions of people. The dialogue between the society and the regional authorities in whatever format it takes place is a feedback channel. Subnational and local authorities appeal to regional and local identity which acts as the cementing foundation of such communication, reflecting the willingness to act in solidarity and maintain the necessary level of trust. It also shows that the rapid development of telecommunications technologies has not changed the psychology of people who want to deal with local and regional authorities in crisis situations. Relatively speaking it is easier for residents of Italian Lombardy to take restrictive measures from Milan than from Rome.

Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a redistribution of power in the EU. The supranational level of management has not yet proved sufficiently effective in managing the biogenic crisis. This is a matter for the future, although some progress is already being recorded on this path. However, it is already clear that the pandemic has changed the range of competencies of regional and local authorities. Now their political functions include emergen-



cies of the most dangerous nature. We can talk about COVID-subsidiarity. It is likely that after the coronacrisis in the EU, a new structure of power distribution will be formed between the supranational, national, subnational and local levels of government. Devolution has gained new momentum thanks to COVID-19. This is one of the most important political implications of the pandemic for Europe and the world.

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# **Борьба с коронавирусом в постсоветских странах – соседях ЕС (на примере Беларуси, Украины и России) в контексте особенностей политических режимов**

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Кризисные ситуации представляют собой вызов для общественно-политической системы. Существуют разные мнения о том, какие политические режимы в целом более эффективны в кризисных ситуациях. На первый взгляд, китайский пример борьбы с коронавирусом демонстрирует эффективность жестких государственных мер, предпринятых авторитарным правительством. Итальянский же сценарий напротив, указывает на слабость демократических правительств, ограниченных в выборе инструментов для борьбы с пандемией.

В данной статье ставится цель оценить насколько эффективны действия России, Беларуси и Украины в борьбе с коронавирусом, как общественно-политических систем, относящихся к разным режимам. В индексе демократии на 2019 год Беларусь относится к авторитарным режимам и находится на 149 месте с 2,48 баллами (между Бахрейном и Ираном). Россия занимает 135 строчку, относясь к авторитарному режиму с 3,11 баллами (между Конго и Египтом). Украина относится к гибриднему режиму и находится на 78 месте с 5.90 баллами (между Македонией и Албанией) (Рейтинг стран мира..., 2020). Россия и Беларусь более сходны по методам осуществления и реализации властных полномочий и относятся к персоналистскому типу авторитаризма, с замыканием всех властных ключевых рычагов на политического лидера и выстраиванием вертикальной системы управления. Конкурентное политическое поле, сменяемость власти посредством выборов позволяет утверждать о том, что украинский политический режим относится к принципиально иному типу гибридных режимов, тяготеющих к демократии, нежели авторитаризму. Исследовательский вопрос: какие типы политических режимов наиболее успешны в борьбе с пандемией и почему в условиях общего этнокультурного кейса? Беларусь, Россия и Украина выбраны для анализа так же по причине их пограничного состояния с Европейским Союзом. Это наиболее крупные государства, граничащие с ЕС на востоке. Объединяет Украину, Россию и Беларусь схожие этнокультурные практики населения (славянские страны со схожими традициями, религиями и языком).

Власти Беларуси в борьбе с коронавирусной инфекцией избрали экстравагантный способ замалчивания данной проблемы и попросту ее игнорирования. СМИ Беларуси не акцентировали внимания на этой про-

блеме, так же власти не вводили никаких ограничительных мер в стране, опасаясь нанести вред экономике. Авторитарный лидер Беларуси А. Лукашенко публично высмеивал карантинные меры, называя ношение масок «несусветной глупостью» (Лукашенко назвал «несусветной глупостью»..., 2020) и призывая лечить коронавирус «водкой, банькой и трактором» (Крест-мощевик, водка и трактор..., 2020). По советской традиции скрывались истинные цифры заболевших, что вызывало недоверие населения к официальной статистике, согласно которой Беларусь была страной с одной из самых низких процентов смертности от коронавируса. На этом фоне А. Лукашенко заявил на одном из совещаний, что «от коронавируса в Беларуси никто не умер и не умрет» (Лукашенко заявил..., 2020). Данные ООН фиксировали существенней прирост смертности в Беларуси за 2 квартал 2020 года (во втором квартале 2020 года умерло на 5608 человек больше, чем в этот же период в 2019 году) (Статистика смертности в Беларуси..., 2020). Особо пострадавшей категорией населения Беларуси стали врачи, поскольку правительство не только не заботилось о предоставлении врачам средств защиты, но мешало это делать волонтерам, враждебно воспринимая любые действия гражданского общества, которые не были инициированы властями.

По данным ряда СМИ каждый десятый погибший от коронавируса в Беларуси — врач. По показателям смертности врачей в процентном отношении Беларусь в 15 раз опережала Италию, и в 30 раз США (Смертность от COVID-19..., 2020).

В отличие от замалчивания катастрофы на Чернобыльской АЭС (когда после произошедшей аварии СМИ долго молчали о катастрофе, произошедшей 26 апреля, а 1 мая в белорусских и других советских городах прошли многочисленные первомайские демонстрации, невзирая на опасность), данные независимой прессы как и очевидная переполненность больниц стали широко известны населению, снижая и без того низкий уровень доверия к власти. Потеря легитимности А. Лукашенко вследствие бездействия во время «коронакризиса» стала одним из факторов, стимулирующих массовые выступления граждан, недовольных итогами президентских выборов, прошедших 9 августа 2020 года.

Автору удалось взять интервью у белоруса на условиях анонимности, который так описывал события весны — лета 2020 года (интервьюер — мужчина 36 лет с высшим образованием). Вот как он описывает происходящие события: «Постепенно становилось всё более очевидным, что власти замалчивают масштабы вируса. Лукашенко публично обвинял заболевших и умерших, что они сами виноваты в своей смерти... По гоcТВ звучали издевательские сюжеты о надуманной опасности вируса... Шли дни, количество заболевших увеличивалось. Минздрав перестал проводить пресс-конференции, публиковал сведения о заболевших и умерших временами нерегулярно. Статистике перестали верить. Реально вокруг ощущалось, как много людей болеет, а от властей звучали

странные заявления, что детям в школе маски носить нельзя, к сожалению, часть населения оказалась к этим дикостям восприимчивой (что привело к росту смертей в стране -прим.авт)... очень долго, наверное более месяца, а то и два, ежедневно умирало 5 человек. Что, мягко говоря, более чем странно». На вопрос о связи протестов и реакции властей на пандемию интервьюер ответил: «Отношение властей к пандемии показало для многих жителей Беларуси истинное отношение властей к ним. Это одна из причин, которая обусловила протесты, начавшиеся в августе. А осознание того, что избежать заболевания можно, если только самому о себе заботиться, ибо властям плевать, побудило белорусов (часть из них) брать ответственность за свою жизнь и своё будущее на себя, стало школой, пусть и кратковременной, зрелого и ответственного отношения к жизни. Время пандемии — это также школа воспитания солидарности белорусов, когда некоторые стали изготавливать маски, защитные экраны, помогать врачам и так далее». Таким образом, замалчивание масштабов проблемы связанной с коронавирусом, ложь из государственных источников привели к самоорганизации белорусских граждан, которые в последующем стали более активно выражать свой протест против действий властей. В Беларуси динамика протеста лишь увеличивалась по мере нарастания пандемии. Если в марте -апреле у населения еще были убеждения о том, что власть будет действовать эффективно и защитит граждан, то к лету эти убеждения рассеялись. Об этом так же упоминает интервьюер: «В самом начале пандемии в Беларуси слышал такое мнение, что авторитарный режим, существующий у нас, имеет преимущество — может принимать более действенные, эффективные меры для борьбы с вирусом, в отличие от европейских демократий».

Украинский кейс борьбы с пандемией выглядит совершенно противоположно. Владимир Зеленский, придя к власти посредством конкурентных выборов провозгласил одной из целей своего пребывания на посту президента сделать власть более открытой для населения. Правительство предпринимало меры по предотвращению распространения пандемии и эвакуации граждан. Более активное (в сравнении с Беларусью) гражданское общество и наличие независимых СМИ не позволили бы скрыть масштабы пандемии. В этой связи статистические показатели заболеваемости в Украине выглядели более правдоподобно и давали сигналы населению, демонстрирующие нарастание опасности в связи с коронавирусной инфекцией. Население страны уже в первые месяцы пандемии было крайне обеспокоено происходящими событиями. Яркой иллюстрацией подобного рода являются враждебная реакция украинцев на эвакуацию украинских граждан из Китая и размещение их в медицинских учреждениях на территории Украины (автобус с эвакуированными забрасывали камнями, не давая проехать к местам изоляции) (Автобусы с эвакуированными..., 2020). Правительство Украины действовало относительно схоже с европейскими странами. Ввело

карантинные ограничения, обязательный масочный режим, в Киеве был закрыт метрополитен, проводилась широкая кампания в СМИ о информировании граждан относительно распространения коронавирусной инфекции. Эти меры нанесли удар слабой украинской экономике, но позволили замедлить распространение инфекции и сберечь жизни граждан. Согласно статистическим данным, большинство украинцев считает, что власть действовала успешно во время карантинных мер (Большинство украинцев считает..., 2020). Безусловно, что введенные в марте 2020 г. карантинные ограничения привели к остановке работы малого бизнеса, сферы услуг и развлечений, более того, в страну вернулись сотни тысяч трудовых мигрантов, работавших в Европе (Зеленский уже год..., 2020), что подогревает протестные настроения в стране. В месте с тем, более открытая политика и предпринятые меры в области борьбы с пандемией не привели к отчуждению власти и общества как в соседней Беларуси. В этих условиях важно отметить эффективность открытых политических инструментов (свойственных демократиям) даже в условиях кризисных ситуаций.

В сравнении с Беларусью и Украиной Россия пошла своим путем. Начиная с апреля 2020 года в стране действовали жесткие ограничительные меры, были закрыты развлекательные учреждения, школы, ВУЗы, непродуктовые магазины. Граждане не могли покидать свои дома без веских причин, а за отсутствие маски полиция налагала штраф. Вместе с тем, закрытость российской системы власти с ее региональной спецификой проявилась и в ходе введения карантинных мер. Журналисты, ученые и общественные активисты фиксировали занижение статистических данных о заболеваниях коронавирусной инфекцией, где врачи ставили иные диагнозы (ОРВИ, пневмонию и пр), а тесты на COVID-19 было сдать крайне затруднительно. Даже у тех, у кого официально подтверждался COVID-19 могли не вносить в статистику заболевших (Как я заболел COVID-19..., 2020). Занижение данных о заболевших коронавирусом и замалчивание масштабов пандемии в Дагестане привело к скандалу федерального уровня. Моноцентрическая система и выстроенная вертикаль власти в России привели к ситуации, при которой губернатор всецело зависим от расположения к нему со стороны Кремля и Администрации Президента (АП), при этом В. Путин делегировал борьбу с пандемией на плечи губернаторов. В этих условиях часть губернаторского корпуса спешит информировать Москву о мнимых «успехах» в борьбе с вирусом, что лишь усугубляет реальное положение дел. Подконтрольность ключевых статистических ведомств и ведущих СМИ позволяет власти осуществлять манипулирование статистическими показателями в угоду политической конъюнктуры. Белорусский кейс соизмерим с российским (белорусы были единственными в Европе, кто не приостановил футбольные матчи весной 2020 г., а также провели масштабный парад 9 мая 2020 года).

Проанализировав данные кейсы мы приходим к выводу о некой схожести реакции на пандемию персоналистских режимов, которые используют манипулятивные практики, усиливающие проблемы легитимности власти. Украинский кейс демонстрирует большую адаптированность власти к кризисным условиям в условиях открытой информационной политики. Если в Беларуси население ощущало себя обманутым и брошенным наедине с пандемией, то украинский опыт показывает наличие диалога между властью и населением. Российский вариант своего рода промежуточный, поскольку власти предприняли шаги по снижению распространения коронавируса весной 2020 года, вместе с тем есть явные сложности с информационной открытостью. События середины осени 2020 года демонстрируют движение России по белорусскому сценарию замалчивания масштабов распространения коронавируса на фоне повышения заболеваемости в стране и сбоев в системе здравоохранения, что уже вызывает нарекания со стороны общественных активистов и роста недовольства в стране политикой властей. На фоне этих процессов власти России и Беларуси используют пандемию как инструмент ограничений политической активности граждан (штрафы за одиночные пикеты в России под предлогом нарушения изоляции или обвинения протестующих в росте заболеваемости COVID-19 со стороны министра здравоохранения в Беларуси) (Постпандемический авторитаризм..., 2020), что еще более обостряет противостояние между властью и населением.

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# **COVID-19 Chance for Europe: How Chinese Trade and Investment Expansion Has Been Postponed**

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The leading economies of the European Union (EU), Germany and France, perceive the uncontrolled attraction of investment from China as a threat to European security, which gives them grounds for deliberately slowing down the process of Chinese capital penetration. From 2001 to 2017 EU imports from China increased from 88.7 billion euros to 402.4 billion euros. In the same period, exports increased from 30.2 billion euros to 195.3 billion euros (Nosov, 2018).

From year to year, China's economic activity in the European Union has been growing. The EU's technological base and consumer market are two reasons why People's Republic of China (PRC) ignores Brussels' politicized accusations against it and continues to build up bilateral trade and investment ties. In the Program document on cooperation with the European Union, PRC expresses the hope that the EU will support Chinese financial institutions that are trying to solidify in the region and expand opportunities for Chinese businesses to access the EU market. Beijing also recognizes that there are problems with the process of liberalization inside the country. To eliminate the accusations made by Brussels, the Chinese leadership expresses its readiness to significantly facilitate market access; promote a stable, honest, transparent, predictable business environment; protect vested priorities and interests of foreign companies investing in China.

China's investment activity is one of the most dynamically developing areas of PRC–European Union cooperation over the past decade. When China did not have sufficient economic potential to invest in European countries, the focus was turned toward EU investment in the domestic Chinese market. Annually European funds invest an average of 5.5 billion dollars in China, and the total amount of investments by 2006 had been 52 billion dollars (Vinogradov, 2017).

The situation started to transform as China's investment policy has become more active effected by significant economic growth. Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI) in Europe was dramatically increasing from 1.6 billion euros in 2010 to 35 billion euros in 2016, while EU FDI was declining slightly (Guseletov, 2018).

China's attempts to invade the European investment market are met with resistance from Brussels commonly representing the interests of highly-developed countries, steadily driving EU's economy – Germany and France. Aside from imbalance in investment quote, providing by PRC and the European Union, there are some unfavorable terms concerning entities involved in investment activities. Initially, investment equality was observed between public and private companies of the People's Republic of China participating



in the economic life of Europe. However, since 2010 state-owned companies have taken the lead: they account for nearly 70% of China's total foreign direct investment in the European Union (Guseletov, 2018). For this reason, European leaders suspected Beijing of implementing a state strategy to use the investment mechanism for obtaining geostrategic benefits.

The process of posing restrictions against Chinese investment activity in Europe was launched in February 2017, when Ministers of Economic Affairs from France, Germany and Italy addressed a joint letter to the European Commissioner for Trade S. Malmstrom containing a request to work out the necessary protection measures. In July 2018, former President of the European Commission J.-K. Juncker during a meeting with D. Trump said that it was necessary to combine European and American efforts and take joint measures against China's unfair trade policy. Former Chief Executive of the European Union also confirmed that a large number of illegal Chinese subsidies make the market unpredictable coming at the cost of European companies. Moreover, J.-K. Juncker put forward the idea of creating a pan-European Agency that would check foreign investment providing threats to national interests (DW, 2018). A similar mechanism exists in the United States – the Committee on Foreign Investment (CFI). On April 2019, the EU finalized an investment screening mechanism that marked a major step forward in forging a more coherent, common EU approach toward detecting and raising awareness around foreign direct investment from China in critical assets, technologies, and infrastructure. When the screening mechanism enters into force in late 2020, the commission will be able to request information and issue a nonbinding opinion on a specific foreign investment in an EU country (Brattberg, 2020).

However, despite the position of European politicians and their anti-Chinese orientation, the natural process of strengthening of economic interdependence was difficult to stop.

The key point in suspending Beijing's trade and investment expansion was the spread of coronavirus, which triggered a slowdown in the Chinese economy. According to the forecast of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), represented in the World Economic Outlook on October 2020, to the end of the year PRC's economic growth should reach 1.9%, seriously slowing down (compared to the indicator of 2019 — 6.1%). At the same time, statistics on the European countries indicate that they are seriously weakened — a drop in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is being expected to reach 8.3% in 2020 (compared to 1.3% growth in 2019) (IMF, 2020).

Nevertheless, Beijing does not seek to take advantage of the unstable situation in the European Union, understanding the priority of taking measures to recover the national economy using its own resources. President Xi Jinping's speech at the National People's Congress (NPC) meeting in May 2020 was dedicated to the only one idea and the only one way of China's development — “in the future domestic consumption will become the alpha and omega of economic development”. The focus of the politician's speech is on the need

to use domestic potential (the speaker provides the following statistics: China has more than 100 million market entities and more than 170 million highly qualified specialists in all industries; a strong middle class of more than 400 million people, which creates a strong domestic market) (“XI Jinping outlined China’s economic development priorities”, 2020), and foreign markets in the context of the spread of COVID-19 are considered as a brake on economic development. As a result, over-reliance on the world trade can endanger the national economic security system in the event of such unforeseen circumstances.

At the same time, the concept of “domestic consumption” used by the Chinese President in his speech to the NPC can be interpreted much more broadly than the development of trade and investment relations at the domestic level. The historical representation of China as a country located in the center of the Earth (“Middle State”) implies a frequent association of the concepts of “inner grounds” and “part of the Chinese cultural area”. Asian peoples were perceived by China not so much as barbaric as edging, but at the same time related, close to the Han — the titular nation of the “Middle State”. Henry Kissinger describes how Chinese citizens and their government perceived the outside world: many small countries that have absorbed Chinese culture and paid tribute to the greatness of China make up the natural order of the universe. The borders between China and the surrounding peoples were more about cultural differences than political and territorial divisions. Europe was located even further away and was, according to the views of the Chinese, in the region of the Western oceans, remaining inaccessible to Chinese culture (Kissinger, 2012).

All the historical aspects of China’s perception of the external and internal world correspond to the modern understanding of the concept of “domestic consumption” during the period of active spread of COVID-19. In the first quarter of 2020, trade with ASEAN countries registered 991.34 billion RMB (Renminbi, literally in Chinese “people’s money”), an increase of 6.1%, accounting for 15.1% of China’s total trade volume with the world, making ASEAN PRC’s biggest trading partner. Trade with the European Union arrived at 875.93 billion, down by 10.4% (“Review of China’s Foreign Trade...”, 2020). Strong industrial ties between enterprises in China and Southeast Asian countries allowed us to refocus on the accelerated development of trade and investment relations with neighboring, “related” states in the face of a dramatic decline in economic activity in “barbaric” Europe.

The line of China’s economic behavior outlined by XI Jinping gives Europe the opportunity to strengthen its own economic institutions and form more effective mechanisms to counter the penetration of Chinese goods, services and capital into European markets. The last two summits with European and Chinese representatives have shown that EU leading countries, mostly Germany, France and European supranational bodies, are determined to limit China’s investment activity, to oblige Beijing to expand access to the domestic

market in order to create healthy competition between foreign and Chinese companies. During a two-hour EU–China video conference, taking place instead of meeting in Leipzig, EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said: “The European market is open, and European companies must have fair and equal access to the Chinese market in return”.

Demands for China to lift restrictions must be supported by internal EU reinforcement. Europe has a limited amount of time: building a protectionist system and economic growth must be implemented before the Chinese economy fully recovers. Otherwise, the situation with the expansion of Chinese trade and investment policies may be much more dramatic: a weakened European Union will become even more dependent on Chinese capital, receiving it will be the only way of dealing with the crisis for most of the underdeveloped states of the Association.

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## Оценка последствий коронавирусной проблемы для экономики ЕС

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COVID-19, распространившийся по всему миру в апреле 2020 года, нанес и продолжает наносить серьезный ущерб мировой экономике. Экономический ущерб является последствием как прямого влияния вируса, которое проявляется в высоком проценте смертности, так и непрямого, которое проявляется в эффектах противовирусных мер. Так или иначе, согласно оценке Всемирного банка, мировой ВВП сократится на 5,2 % (COVID-19 to Plunge..., 2020). Это колоссальное падение аналитики Всемирного банка сравнивают с падением ВВП в период Второй Мировой войны. Серьезность экономической рецессии в общемировом масштабе обеспечивает также и то, что в кризис вовлечены практически все страны мира. Страны Европейского союза не являются исключением.

Европейский союз вступил в борьбу с коронавирусной инфекцией в конце марта, стараясь предотвратить распространение вируса закрывая границы и вводя карантин. Были, разумеется, и другие меры. Однако, именно закрытие границ, сопровождающееся прекращением международной торговли и сокращением доли торговли между странами-участниками ЕС и введение карантина, которое повлекло за собой закрытие крупных предприятий, ввели Европейский проект в так называемую экономическую гибернацию. Исходя из имеющихся данных, страны Европейского союза пострадали от экономических последствий COVID-19 серьезнее, чем другие страны мира, например, США. Так, по статистике, предоставленной Евростатом, экономика ЕС сократилась на 3,5 %. Для сравнения, экономика США сократилась на 1,2 % (GDP and Main Components, 2020). По результатам анализа журнала Bloomberg, годовые темпы падения экономики ЕС составят 13 % против 4,8 % в США (Martin, 2020).

К причинам стремительного падения экономики ЕС следует относить прежде всего влияние карантинных мер. Как и во всем мире, именно карантин стал причиной ухудшения экономической ситуации. В первую очередь, карантин снизил уровень потребления. В ЕС уровень потребления за первый квартал 2020 года снизился до -1,7 % в сравнении с 2 % в первом квартале 2019 года (Impact of COVID-19..., 2020). Наряду с падением уровня потребления, уровень накопления сбережений поднялся до рекордных 3,5 % в первом квартале 2020 года, тогда как в аналогичное время в 2019 году уровень накопления сбережений составил 2 % (там же). Подобная ситуация в ЕС не является уникальной, скорее мы можем говорить об общемировой практике, естественной реакции населения на различные угрозы экономического характера в рамках

пандемии. Тем не менее, потребление – это один из определяющих компонентов ВВП, наряду с ним обычно выделяются инвестиции, государственные расходы и чистый экспорт. Все эти компоненты ВВП оказались под ударом. Более того, предтечей падения потребления стал беспрецедентный рост уровня безработицы, который в ЕС составил 7,9 % (там же). В соответствии со статистикой, предоставленной Trading Economics, количество безработных увеличилось на 344 тыс. и достигло 12,793 млн. человек (European Union Long..., 2020). Так, например, по информации Европейского статистического офиса за июль 2020 года уровень безработицы в Испании составил 15,8 %, в Италии – 9,7 %, во Франции – 6,9 % и в Германии – 4,4 %. Таким образом, потеряв источник постоянного дохода, люди отказались от обычного потребления, стараясь тратить как можно меньше.

Из-за введения карантинных мер целый ряд отраслей пострадали. В данном контексте можно говорить о туристическом секторе, который оказался первой жертвой, на которую пришлось пойти странам ЕС для того, чтобы защитить свое население. По оценкам Европейской туристической комиссии, туризм в ЕС сократился до 0 % на момент начала пандемии и до 10 % на сегодняшний день (Handbook on COVID-19..., 2020). Закономерным последствием такого падения явились колоссальные убытки, которые понесли туроператоры, круизные линии, а также авиакомпании. Наиболее серьезно пострадали страны Южной Европы, такие как Португалия, Италия, Испания и Греция. На восстановление данной отрасли, по прогнозам ЕТС, Европейский союз затратит около 375 млрд. евро.

Другой отраслью, которая пострадала от введенных карантинных мер, является весь индустриальный сектор. По данным Евростата, наиболее сильное падение в данном секторе пришлось на середину апреля 2020 года. Производство потребительских товаров длительного пользования снизилось со 110 до 58. Производство капитальных товаров также снизилось со 105 до 64 (Development of Industrial Production..., 2020). Серьезное падение пережило производство промежуточных товаров, оно снизилось со 105 до 80. Наименее пострадало производство электроэнергии, оно пережило незначительное снижение с 95 до 86. Сфера производства потребительских товаров недлительного использования сократилась со 107 до 94. Общий спад индустрии заключается в падении со 106 до 77. Стоит отметить, что ни одна из сфер производства после падения не вернулась к изначальным показателям, зарегистрированным в январе-феврале 2020 года (там же).

Пандемия нарушила международную торговлю товарами между ЕС и его торговыми партнерами. Так в марте 2020 года общий объем торговли вне ЕС (импорт + экспорт) сократился с 252 млрд евро до 228 млрд евро по сравнению с январем 2020 года. Эта картина наблюдалась для экспорта со всеми пятью основными торговыми партнерами, причем наибольшее

сокращение торговли наблюдалось со Швейцарией (-8,5%) и Китаем (-7,1%), за которыми следовали Россия (-6,8%), Великобритания (-6,2%) и Соединенные Штаты (-4,2%). Импорт из этих пяти основных партнеров также сократился за этот период. Однако для Швейцарии (-1,2%) и США (-2,6%) снижение было заметно меньше, чем для России (-8,2%), Китая (-10,9%) и особенно Великобритании (-17,0%). Соответственно, общий объем торговли с Великобританией (-10,4%) и Китаем (-9,6%) сократился больше всего среди этих пяти торговых партнеров (в относительном выражении), в то время как меньшее снижение наблюдалось в торговле с Соединенными Штатами (-3,6%), Швейцарией (-5,3%) и Россией (-7,6%). Среди 11 основных торговых партнеров ЕС наибольшее падение общего объема торговли зафиксировали Турция (-13,0%), Индия (-11,8%) и Норвегия (-11,7%), в то время как торговля с Южной Кореей упала только на 1,9%. В марте 2020 года ЕС зафиксировал увеличение торгового баланса с 8 из 11 своих основных торговых партнеров по сравнению с январем 2020 года, причем наибольший рост наблюдался с Китаем (+2,1 млрд евро) и Великобританией (+1,2 млрд евро). Из 11 основных торговых партнеров ЕС торговый баланс сократился только у Турции (- 0,2 млрд евро), США (- 0,9 млрд евро) и Швейцарии (- 1,0 млрд евро) (там же).

Помимо прямых экономических потерь, вызванных введением карантинных мер, Европейский союз не был готов в полной мере противостоять распространению COVID-19. Это проявилось в несогласованности действий по закрытию границ и распределению необходимого медицинского оборудования и лекарств среди наиболее нуждающихся стран-членов ЕС. Ярким примером является нежелание стран-участниц ЕС прийти на помощь Италии, которая оказалась на «передовой» встретив коронавирусную инфекцию одной из первых среди стран европейского проекта. Стоит отметить, что подобное бездействие, как уточняет глава Европейской комиссии Урсула фон дер Ляйен, было допущено прежде всего из-за отсутствия у ЕК реальных рычагов влияния на страны ЕС. Резюмируя слова главы Европейской комиссии, данный орган может лишь призывать страны к определенным действиям и предлагать коллективную стратегию по решению той или иной проблемы, в то время как страны-члены ЕС, каждая на своем национальном уровне, самостоятельно решают применять ли предложенную стратегию или же отказаться от нее. В такой ситуации оказались страны Южной Европы. В условиях жесткой необходимости Европейская комиссия не смогла призвать других участников Европейского союза оказать материальную помощь этим стран. Вместо рационального использования имеющихся ресурсов, стран ЕС стремились защитить свои собственные интересы в условиях пандемии, забывая об обязательстве осуществлять взаимную поддержку в рамках данного европейского объединения. Именно этим обусловлен тот организационный хаос, который лишил ЕС возможности

выступить единым фронтом. Политическая неорганизованность привела к экономическим последствиям. В частности, ЕС мог бы избежать огромного количества жертв в Италии и Испании, если бы страны-участницы скоординировались и оказали гуманитарную помощь этим странам. По подсчетам американского университета Джонса Хопкинса, на ЕС пришлось около половины всех жертв коронавирусной инфекции в мире (Chang, Chakrabarti, 2020). Эти огромные потери, разумеется, повлияли на экономическое состояние Европейского союза. В защиту ЕС, стоит отметить, что после первых месяцев пандемии скоординированность действий ЕС повысилась, прошел шок первых месяцев. Тем не менее, совокупности всех неблагоприятных факторов хватило, чтобы вывести из строя «локомотив», ядро ЕС: Францию, Италию, Испанию и в меньшей степени Германию. По статистике, за март-апрель ВВП Франции, Италии и Испании упал на 5,8%, 4,7% и 5,2% соответственно (Gross Domestic Product..., 2020). По имеющимся прогнозам, Банка Франции, экономика Республики сократится на 8,7% (Update on Business..., 2020). Говоря о прогнозах относительно Германии, предсказания аналитиков все чаще варьируются в сторону уменьшения процента падения экономики. Например, по актуальным промежуточным прогнозам министерства экономики ФРГ экономика Германии в 2020 году сократится на 5,8% (Federal Ministry..., 2020). Примечательно то, что в апреле аналитики министерства оценивали сложившуюся экономическую ситуацию более негативно. По их оценкам экономика Федеративной Республики должна была пережить падение в 6,3%. Не исключено, что в будущем данные прогнозы будут скорректированы неоднократно. Это связано с тем, что экономика Германии восстанавливается быстрее, чем предполагалось. По словам Петера Альтмайера, министра экономики Германии, экономика страны находится в фазе роста, что внушает оптимизм крупному бизнесу и инвесторам (Germany's Economic Slump..., 2020).

Пандемия COVID-19 стала серьезным испытанием для ЕС и для всего мирового сообщества. Неизвестно, насколько необратимыми и долгоиграющими станут экономические последствия распространения коронавирусной инфекции. Ясно одно – Евросоюз должен быть как никогда консолидирован и максимально аккуратен в принятии решений касательно восстановления экономики. Экономические меры по восстановлению экономики ЕС или как их уже успели окрестить в СМИ «новый план Маршала» должны поддержать теперь уже минорные сектора экономики ЕС. Пандемия COVID-19 ознаменовала сильнейшее сокращение мировой экономики со времен экономического кризиса 2008 года, поэтому ЕС и всему миру следует готовиться встретиться с последствиями коронакризиса как можно эффективнее и как можно быстрее.



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## **Сфера образования в период пандемии COVID-19**

# **Russian Education Facing the Challenges of Coronavirus: Advantages and Shortcomings, Community Reaction and Future Prospects**

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The transition to online education has been widely discussed for many years. The outbreak of the COVID-19 coronavirus in early 2020 forced many countries to rapidly shift to distance education as a way to stop the spread of the virus. The shift to distance learning and wide use of online technologies in education became a necessary step amidst the pandemic to adjust the sphere of education to the new requirements of social distancing. However, the discussion around the advantages and risks of distance education didn't come to an end. The opponents and proponents of distance learning are still holding debates on its benefits and drawbacks.

Modern philosophers mention several challenges of COVID-19 for modern society. For instance, Giorgio Agamben claims that we are facing the normalization of the emergent in the paradigm of modern governance (Agamben, 2020). Philosopher Alain Badiou sees the coronacrisis as a threat to the rationality of modernity: the epidemic dissolves the internal activity of the mind, and therefore, casts doubt on rational knowledge. Yuval Noah Harari summarizes the essence of the discussion about the challenges of the coronacrisis: in this time of crisis, we are simultaneously facing the problems of expanding and sharply restricting rights, freedoms and opportunities (Harari, 2020).

Despite the rapid shift to distance education, the fears in the minds of people about the new format, that had been existing for years, did not disappear overnight. Two decades ago, Todd Oppenheimer alerted in his controversial book "The Flickering Mind" that the alliance between education policymakers and billionaire technologists could undermine the role of teachers and the public sphere (Oppenheimer, 2020). This idea has only become more relevant.

One of the problems that needs to be mentioned in the context of distance education is the issue of equality and of whether distance education promotes equality. David Deming, the director of the Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School, warned that on-campus learning and intensive interaction between teachers and students may eventually become unaffordable for all but the wealthiest institutions and, probably, the wealthiest families.

Russian political scientist Ekaterina Schulmann believes that we will see simultaneous processes of egalitarianization and segregation in the field of education. On the one hand, students, regardless of the material resources of their families, will have more chances to get equal access to the courses of the best universities, national or international. On the other hand, the difference in the quality of online and traditional education will still exist. The unfulfilled

hopes of distant students can subsequently lead to greater social tension (Discussion with the Participation..., 2020).

Another problem concerning the shift to distance learning is the inability of online technologies to effectively translate some non-material elements of the educational process. The transition of education to online is leaving out many important factors of its nature that have been traditionally accompanying the learning process. These elements include the academic environment; the spirit of university education; free flow of ideas; formation of strong and, which is especially important for further professional life, weak social connections; the overall experience of communication with the Others; intercultural communication; synergistic effect and teamwork skills; social approval of knowledge.

The shift to distance education began in Russia in March 2020. The Order of the Minister of Higher Education and Science recommended the universities to “organize training of students outside the location of universities” through distance technologies, from March 16, 2020. Another Order of the Minister recommended to send university students on vacation from March 28 to April 5 to prevent the spread of COVID19 (as a part of the non-working week announced by the President). This vacation presumably gave universities some time to adjust to the new format. As for the transition to distance learning for school students, at the end of March the parents of the students were required to hand in applications for free attendance (in fact, distance learning).

Overall, the Russian education managed to cope with the corona-crisis. As the Russian President Vladimir Putin stated at the end of May, the Russian education system “has adequately passed the challenges against the background of the coronavirus and the distance learning imposed in Russia has paid off” (Putin appreciated..., 2020). However, the situation was a bit different, firstly, in secondary and higher education, and secondly, in large cities of the European part of Russia and in more remote regions. In this sense, the availability of devices for Internet access and high-speed Internet connection in the families of the students became key factors.

The process of shifting to distance education was more operational for higher education institutions. Even prior to the pandemic, all universities in Russia were required to have functioning electronic environment, which means that the necessary infrastructure already existed at the time of the corona-outbreak, and students and teachers knew how to use it.

Though technically the shift to distance learning was made rather effectively, it illuminated all the drawbacks and difficulties of new educational models. Russian students, teachers and the academic community still holds debates and contemplates on the problems caused by the introduction of distance education and the possible ways to overcome them.

The RANEPa Laboratory for Social Research Methodology conducted a mass survey of university professors about the development of online educa-

tional environment under the coronavirus outbreak (Teachers Expressed..., 2020). In general, the survey showed that teachers are technically ready to switch to distance learning formats, but psychologically they do not accept the sharp gap with traditional full-time education. The survey showed a great degree of internal, latent rejection of distance education in all areas, regardless of gender, age, social and professional status of the lecturer.

As the RANEPA survey showed, the shift to distance learning and teaching online led to a number of problems and inconveniences for the teaching staff, including the demolition of the usual way of life and the current daily routine, stress and, as a result, rejection of distance education

Talking about the transfer to distance formats in education and wider economic sectors, Ivan Timofeev of Valdai Club wrote in March 2020, that the longer the quarantine and the need for isolation lasts, the more these long-known, but still not widely accepted methods of organization will become a habit. He talked about several problems, including the need to change the very relationship between personal and work space (Timofeev, 2020).

Elena Karpinskaya of the Russian International Affairs Council, analyzing the influence of the corona-crisis on higher education worldwide, emphasized in May 2020, that moving to effective online learning will require a lot of time and resources. In her opinion, distance learning could cause significant damage to the quality of education and, consequently, the reputation of universities. Some of the technical problems of switching to distance education, in her opinion, include lacking qualifications of university staff, lack of technical means and Internet connection for students from disadvantaged families. In this regard, not rich countries, foreign students and students from socially vulnerable segments of the population will suffer the most (Karpinskaya, 2020).

As the 2020-2021 academic year was approaching, universities had to consider facing the challenges of the upcoming admissions process. One of the basic solutions was switching regular exams to online tests. The effects of the new admission procedures are still to be examined, as one hypothesis could suggest that the introduction of the new format of testing could cause more frustration and stress for the applicants, thus causing poorer results. In the short term, the results of final exams showed no marks of deterioration, as stated by Minister Sergey Kravtsov (Let Them Teach Me..., 2020). The long-term effects of the pandemic, however, are yet to be observed.

The social distancing requirements are not the only way the pandemic affects education. In fact, the economic crisis caused by the pandemic may have a negative effect on the ability of students to pay for their education. The All-Russian Student Union mentioned in their appeal to the Russian government in May 2020, that the parents of many students were left without sources of income, and the students themselves lost their part-time jobs. This can become a social issue, as more than 53% of university students in Russia pay tuition fees, while in some subjects like Social Sciences this indicator reaches 83% (Kostenko, Sidorenko, 2020).

To sum up, online learning had a huge positive effect under the lockdown and social distancing requirements. However, under normal conditions, its drawbacks, primarily associated with emotional and psychological stress, can surpass its advantages. In addition, online education is not a solution to educational inequality and often only creates a false impression of equal access to quality education.

There are several conclusions that can be drawn from the observation of the current shift to distance learning in Russia. First of all, the rapid transfer to online learning formats muted the public debate for some time, but also revealed its shortcomings, aggravating the debate around its efficiency and appropriateness. The continuing use of online technologies in education will bring to new debates around the effectiveness and ethical aspects of it.

Second, the massive shift to distance learning activated the debates over equality in education. From one perspective, online education gives opportunity to students from any country or region get access to the best educational practices otherwise unavailable at the region where he lives. This could mean more opportunities for wider masses of students. Yet, from another perspective, online education means those without access to modern technologies will be left out of it.

Third, the shift to distance learning showed some of the main drawbacks of the format. One of them is the impossibility of transferring such important elements of university education, as academic environment or communication skills. Another one is the mounting level of stress for both the lecturers and the students, difficulties in assessing the results of the learning process, problems with the distribution of professional and personal life in time and space, as well as frightening tendencies towards depersonalization and formalization of education.

Fourth, the new educational formats may bring to uncertainties for the students and their families, possible negative effect on the quality of the content of education, additional risks caused by the indirect effects of the pandemic, like the financial crisis and the difficulty of passing national borders. The effects of these factors are yet to be seen.

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# **Кубанский государственный университет в период пандемии COVID-19: проблемы адаптации и пути их решения (опыт факультета истории, социологии и международных отношений)**

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Высшее образование является сферой деятельности далеко не жизнеобеспечивающей, однако — жизненно важной для общества и государства. Период пандемии Covid-19 поставил перед российским высшим образованием очень сложные вопросы. Сложившаяся обстановка и соответствующие решения правительства сделали невозможным продолжение образовательного процесса в традиционных формах. Приостановка образовательного процесса на неопределенный (и достаточно существенный) срок сказалась бы крайне негативно как на качестве образования, так и имела бы различные социально-организационные последствия.

Однако современные технологии в принципе позволяли перевести образовательный процесс в дистанционную форму, что и было выполнено. Хотя сами технологии дистанционного образования вполне существовали, но столь масштабная и столь экстренная миграция была совершенно новым опытом для подавляющего большинства учреждений российской высшей школы.

Кубанский государственный университет также перешел на дистанционную форму работы. Этот переход дался непросто, но дал значительный опыт в понимании реальной специфики массового применения дистантных технологий.

Для анализа полученного опыта, авторами было проведено прикладное социологическое исследование. Исследование более описательного плана, поскольку мы старались в первую очередь собрать непосредственную информацию. При анализе различных социальных процессов, приходится оперировать в основном уже устаревшей информацией, информацией о прошлом. Даже работа непосредственно с очевидцами и участниками зачастую включает в себя элемент (если не построена полностью) воспоминания респондента о прошлом. Здесь же, опрос проходил непосредственно во время анализируемого процесса. Таким образом, искажения «пост-осознания», влияние фактора сторонних оценок и мнений было минимизировано. Опрос проводился в июне-июле 2020 г. На момент проведения исследования режим дистанционного обучения (в условиях распространения коронавирусной инфекции) действовал порядка 4 месяцев. То есть все респонденты уже адаптировались к нему, первоначальные сложности были преодолены. И респонденты уже на собственном опыте осознали и прочувствовали различные аспекты этой формы работы.

По форме — это опрос (анкетирование). Анкета полностью анонимная, опрос проводился с привлечением административного ресурса (мотивация через старост и деканат), но без реального контроля заполнения. Генеральная совокупность — все студенты факультета истории, социологии и международных отношений КубГУ. Выборка сплошная (фактически — выборка доступных случаев). Итоговый охват порядка 75 %. Также был проведен аналогичный опрос и профессорско-преподавательского состава факультета с охватом 50 %.

По результатам данного исследования можно сделать некоторые выводы об особенностях, наиболее значительных сложностях этого перехода к дистанционной форме работы. Это выводы по факультету истории, социологии и международных отношений. Однако, авторам представляется, что общая картина весьма типична для любого гуманитарного факультета. В случае технических специальностей, тех, которые требуют несколько иной структуры материально-технического обеспечения практических и лабораторных занятий, это выводы менее типичны, но также, если не полностью, то как минимум частично применимы.

В первой части целесообразно рассмотреть сам процесс перехода к дистанционной форме работы. Здесь выводы специфичны именно для КубГУ, поскольку в этом процессе наибольшее значение представляла оперативная и слаженная работа руководства вуза.

Переход на дистанционное обучение в КубГУ проходил централизованно. Платформу Microsoft Teams использовали для занятий 96,2% опрошенных студентов. Альтернативно использовалась платформа Moodle — к ее использованию часто прибегали 9,8% обучающихся, Намного реже использовались такие сервисы как Zoom (активно использовалась 1,2% студентов) и Skype (активно использовалась 1,1% студентов). При этом альтернативные платформы использовались ранее либо индивидуально, либо в других (не вузовских или не плановых) занятиях, что показывает знакомство с ними аудитории. Так, доля тех студентов, которые смогли оценить работу платформ Zoom и Skype заметно выше, чем тех, кто их использовали в учебных занятиях. Платформа же Microsoft Teams не имела ранее известности среди студентов и преподавателей. Оценка используемых вузом платформ достаточно положительная, — порядка половины студентов и преподавате-

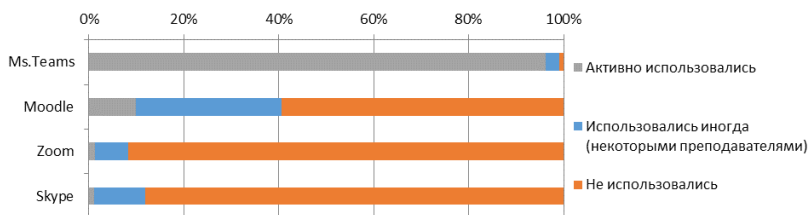


Рисунок 1 — Распределение ответов студентов на вопрос: «При переходе на дистанционное обучение, какие платформы Вы использовали непосредственно для учебных занятий?»



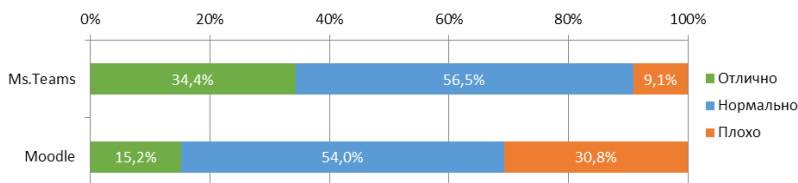


Рисунок 2 — Распределение ответов студентов на вопрос: «Оцените эти программы по удобству и надежности работы» (выборка только по основным используемым программам, исключены затруднившиеся ответить)

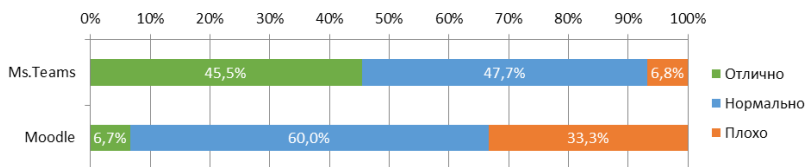


Рисунок 3 — Оценка преподавателями платформ для дистанционного обучения по удобству и надежности работы (выборка только по основным используемым программам, исключены затруднившиеся ответить)

лей оценивают как «нормально», То есть большинство запросов пользователей они удовлетворяют. В целом, более позитивно оценивается платформа Ms. Teams (доля позитивных оценок выше чем доля негативных).

Самым приоритетным для постоянного использования на дистанционном обучении у студентов был ноутбук. Смартфоны, при их распространенности, использовались совокупно большим количеством опрошенных, но не обладали достаточными возможностями для постоянного использования в процессе обучения, однако выступали дублирующим устройством. Возможность свободного использования таких разноплановых устройств значительно упростила процесс организации и вообще уровень надежности системы удаленного обучения. Значимым моментом здесь являлась именно надежность (посредством резервирования коммуникационного устройства и канала связи). В развернутых ответах часть респондентов (и преподавателей и студентов) указывала, что используют смартфон как резервный канал.

Вообще надежность именно технической составляющей (и техники, и канала связи) указывали как основную сложность значительная часть опрошенных.

Массовый и резкий переход на удаленную форму поставил перед преподавателями сложный вопрос об адаптации к такой форме их наработанного опыта преподавания своих курсов.

В целом, дистанционная форма воспринимается преподавателями критично. Как типичные можно привести такие высказывания: «В качестве временной меры или отдельных индивидуальных случаев — пойдет, но если образование останется только дистанционным, то это — подделка образования», «Это — смерть системы образования, выпуск пустышек», «Считаю переход на дист. режим профанацией идеи образования» и т.д.

Большинство преподавателей оценивает ситуацию умеренно критично — дистанционная форма как экстренное и временное решение вполне позволило заменить основную часть «живой» работы со студентами. Но при этом остались значимые пробелы, вопросы, задания, в рамках которых работать дистанционно невозможно. 1/3 преподавателей считает, что «многие» виды деятельности остались нереализованными, чуть менее 2/3, — что «некоторые». Только один человек указал, что дистанционная форма полностью заменила традиционные занятия (имея ввиду свой предмет). При этом, в вопросе был предложен вариант «появились новые формы работы» — его не выбрал ни один респондент.

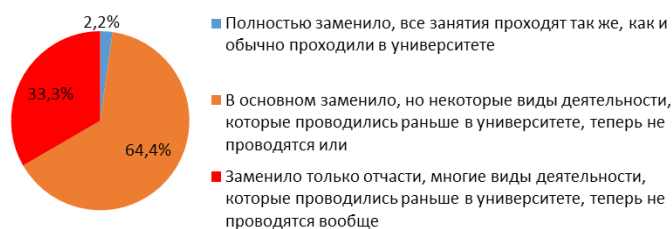


Рисунок 4 — Распределение ответов преподавателей на вопрос «В какой степени дистанционное обучение смогло заменить традиционные занятия в университете?»

В целом, по мнению опрошенных преподавателей, подстраивание большинства форм обучения под онлайн-формат вызвало неудобства, наносящие ущерб процессу обучения.

Студенческая оценка (что было ожидаемо) отличается от преподавательской. В целом, студенты также не считают дистанционную работу более удобной, чем обычные занятия в университете. Однако все же 16,1 % опрошенных считают, что дистанционные занятия удобнее занятий вживую. В то же время почти четверть (24,9 %) утверждают, что удаленное обучение очень неудобное.

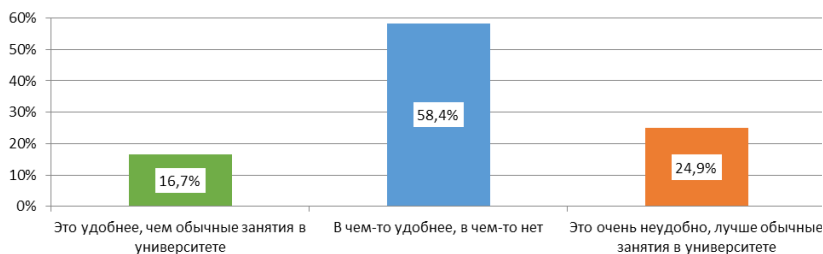


Рисунок 5 — Распределение ответов студентов на вопрос: «Оцените в целом Ваше отношение к системе дистанционного обучения, которая действует в КубГУ с марта 2020 г.»

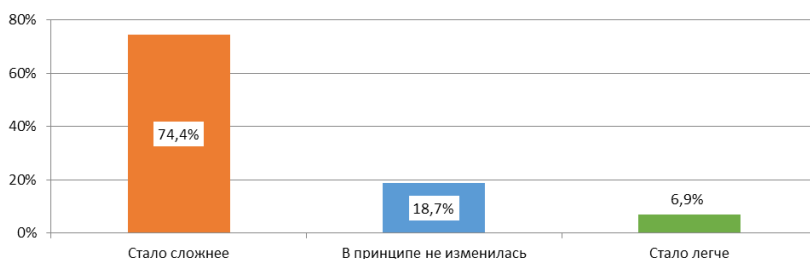


Рисунок 6 — Распределение ответов студентов на вопрос: «Как изменилась общая нагрузка, сложность обучения в дистанционном режиме?» (упрощенная оценка)

Значительная часть негативных (в том числе резко негативных) оценок базируется на том, что в дистанционном формате существенно увеличилась сложность, нагрузка на студента.

Оценки разнились от достаточно спокойных: «*Лучшие университет*» до весьма эмоциональных: «*Бесконечный ночной кошмар*», «*На мой взгляд, даже круги Данте намного привлекательнее и я охотнее пройду их, чем ещё раз вступаясь в дистанционное обучение*».

Хотя обучение ведется по утвержденным программам, в реальности преподаватели (как отмечено выше) были вынуждены проводить некоторые изменения в своих курсах, адаптируя их к реалиям дистанционного обучения. В таких экстремальных условиях (в которых происходил переход) эти изменения вполне отчетливо наблюдали студенты. Так, в субъективном восприятии студентов несколько изменился объем различных форм работы.

Достаточно естественно, что максимально выросла доля различных домашних заданий. 83,1 % опрошенных студентов указали увеличение ее объема, в том числе — 49,7 % утверждают, что домашней работы стало «намного больше».

Относительно оставшихся видов заданий приблизительно половина студентов (для лекций — 75,2 %) считают, что объем заданий остался приблизительно на прежнем уровне. Наибольшее снижение объема характерно для деловых игр и групповых заданий.

В целом, несмотря на то, что некоторая часть студентов высказывалась о том, что им стало легче и удобнее, практически все студенты отмечают, что удаленная форма обучения не принесла собственно в образовательный процесс ничего нового. Вариант «Появились новые формы занятий, которых не было раньше в университете» выбрало всего 7 человек (менее 1 % опрошенных). Основная часть студентов наоборот указала, что дистанционная форма не смогла заменить традиционную.

Почти 1/3 (30,1 %) опрошенных студентов указали, что «многие виды деятельности, которые проводились раньше в университете, теперь не



Рисунок 7 — Распределение ответов студентов на вопрос: «В какой степени дистанционное обучение смогло заменить традиционные занятия в университете?»

проводятся». 44,5% указало, что не проводятся «некоторые виды деятельности». Таким образом соотношение оценок составило 25% к 75%.

Для 1/4 опрошенных студентов дистанционное образование смогло заменить традиционное, в то время как 3/4 считают, что дистанционное образование не смогло заменить традиционное, при практически полностью отсутствующем мнении о том, что дистанционное образование стало лучше традиционного.



Рисунок 8 — Распределение ответов студентов на вопрос: «Как, в целом, изменилась требовательность, строгость преподавателей при переходе на дистанционный режим?»

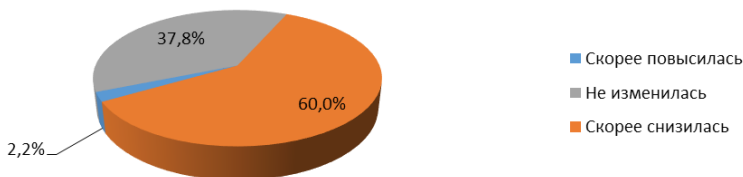


Рисунок 9 — Распределение ответов преподавателей на вопрос «Как, в целом, Вы оцениваете изменение уровня Вашей требовательности, строгости к студентам при переходе на дистанционный режим?»

Таким образом, при фактическом переходе в дистанционный режим работы, реальный образовательный процесс был существенно изменен. Современные технические средства и возможности, которые они дают, в принципе позволяют осуществлять образовательный процесс, однако он существенно отличается от «живого» очного обучения, с непосредственным контактом преподавателя и студента. Указанные выше проблемы так и не были полностью решены за практически семестр работы «на удаленке». В качестве экстремальной меры, внедрение дистанционной формы позволило не прерывать образовательный процесс, но не позволило его полноценно заменить.

Современный российский вуз, его форма работы (в том числе не только образовательная — но культурно-массовая, патриотическая, досуговая, воспитательная) построены в логике именно «живого взаимодействия». Дистанционное образование требует совершенно иной модели взаимодействия по линии студент – преподаватель. Оно предъявляет и к студенту, и к преподавателю, и к самому вузу существенно иные требования. Дистанционное обучение не в состоянии заменить традиционное очное образование, но при этом представляется важным включать некоторые элементы дистанционного обучения в классический повседневный образовательный процесс. Наверно, можно говорить лишь о принципиальной возможности построения дистанционной образовательной системы в масштабах государства, но эта система (в случае ее создания) будет кардинально отличаться от нынешнего высшего образования, и ее построение на порядки более сложное, чем только внедрение технических средств.

# Университеты против пандемии COVID-19

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Хотя коронавирус больно ударил по университетам всего мира, международное университетское сообщество даже в этой непростой ситуации стремится к сохранению, развитию и укреплению научно-образовательных и культурных связей. Вместе с тем многие аналитики отмечают, что «влияние, которое пандемия коронавируса оказала на систему высшего образования, различается от страны к стране, имеет свою специфику в разных регионах мира. Тем не менее можно проследить общий вектор этих изменений: пандемия поставила университеты в тяжелые условия, вынуждая в кратчайшие сроки адаптироваться к происходящим событиям, тратить значительные средства для ускоренной цифровизации, принимать решения часто без учета возможных последствий. Негативное влияние пандемия оказала на международное сотрудничество в области образования и науки: были отменены международные поездки, приостановлены программы обменов и академической мобильности студентов и научно-педагогических кадров, многие программы по линии научно-исследовательского сотрудничества поставлены на паузу» (Карминская, 2020).

Действительно, несколько месяцев назад казалось, что пандемия поставит университеты в состояние стагнации, способной привести к полному прекращению и образовательной, и научной, и международной деятельности в целом. Но сфера образования оказалась одной из немногих важнейших областей человеческой деятельности, способной продолжать эффективное функционирование в особых условиях. Для этого образовательные организации должны были перейти на новую — удаленную — организацию своей деятельности, обеспечивающую в первую очередь качественный образовательный процесс на основе дистанционных образовательных технологий.

Говоря о качестве дистанционного обучения, следует отметить, что на сегодняшний день в большинстве российских и зарубежных вузов оно определяется не столько уровнем подготовки преподавателей, сколько 1) технологическими и техническими стоп-факторами; 2) психологической атмосферой. Как известно, дистанционное обучение вводили ускоренными темпами, и ни у вузов, ни у студентов не было необходимого времени к нему подготовиться. За несколько дней университетам пришлось проанализировать свои технические возможности и восполнить существующие «бреши», обучить преподавателей онлайн технологиям, обеспечить студентов, в т. ч. иностранных, доступом к онлайн платформам, поменять учебные курсы и программы таким образом, чтобы ни один студент не «выпал» из учебного процесса. Однако самой большой проблемой, препятствующей эффективному обучению в ситуации пандемии, оказалось

отсутствие надежного подключения к интернету и доступа к цифровым устройствам.

Еще одним вызовом в условиях вынужденной изоляции и перехода к дистанционному обучению стало осложнение общей психологической обстановки в образовательной среде. И студенты, и преподаватели сетуют на увеличение учебной нагрузки, при этом знаний передается меньше, и они не такие качественные, как при непосредственной коммуникации студентов и преподавателей; обучающимся не хватает живого общения с преподавателями и однокурсниками, поскольку онлайн обучение не способно воспроизводить социальный опыт, получаемый в стенах университета; отсутствие зрительного контакта, физического взаимодействия, мимики и жестов нарушает привычную модель образовательного процесса, обостряя общую психологическую атмосферу.

Обратившись к примеру организации дистанционного и онлайн обучения в Кубанском государственном университете, можно констатировать, что в целом кризис перехода на полное дистанционное обучение был преодолен. Большую роль при решении этой проблемы сыграло то, что в вузе дистанционное взаимодействие преподавателей и студентов и без карантина было обычной практикой. Внеаудиторные консультации студентов по различным вопросам обучения через электронную почту, мессенджеры и социальные сети давно стали нормой университетской жизни. Эти формы общения во время всеобщей изоляции особенно активизировались в отношении иностранных студентов, которым психологически было намного сложнее, чем российским, которым оказывали поддержку в первую очередь их родители. В сложившейся ситуации очень важно было сохранить связь с каждым иностранным студентом, чтобы вовремя понять, есть ли у кого-то проблемы с доступом к образовательной платформе, с освоением материала и, конечно, со здоровьем.

Согласно статистике, на конец марта 2020 г. в КубГУ обучался 781 чел. из числа иностранных граждан, из них на родину во время изоляции уехали 5 чел., которые отчислились по собственному желанию; не закончив окончания весеннего семестра, уехали на родину 7 чел. мобильных студентов, остальные 15 — продолжили обучение до окончания учебного года; завершили обучение и получили дипломы 105 чел., из них 63 выпускника смогли выехать на родину, остальные остались ожидать открытия границ; 30 чел. иностранного контингента выехали домой на летние каникулы; заболевших — 0 чел. Таким образом, основная часть иностранного контингента осталась в России продолжать обучение. По состоянию на 1 октября 2020 г. в вузе практикуется смешанное обучение: находясь в стране своего гражданства, онлайн обучение проходят 170 чел. иностранных обучающихся, очно (офлайн) обучаются 638 чел., в т. ч. из вновь поступивших. Приведенные данные позволяют сделать вывод, что интерес к получению образования в КубГУ не ослабевает, несмотря на

продолжающуюся пандемию, следовательно, и качество обучения в связи с применением дистанционных технологий не пострадало.

Важным показателем международной деятельности является академическая мобильность студентов и НПП. Из 24 студентов КубГУ, успевших до начала карантина выехать по программам академической мобильности в зарубежный вуз-партнер, 9 чел. вернулись раньше срока, остальные 15 остались за рубежом, в основном в европейских вузах. В этой непростой ситуации коллеги вузов-партнеров активизировали свои усилия по информационному обеспечению мобильных студентов как в отношении учебного процесса, так и в отношении соблюдения карантинных мер и сохранения здоровья, регулярно обмениваясь сообщениями о текущей ситуации. Благодаря этому среди всех выехавших (24) и въехавших (22) мобильных студентов не зафиксировано ни одного случая заболевания COVID-19. Интересным опытом в области академической мобильности в рамках партнерского сотрудничества по программе двух дипломов “Economics and Management” стала онлайн защита магистерских диссертаций студентов — представителей сразу трех университетов: КубГУ, Чешского университета естественных наук Праги (CULS, Чешская Республика) и факультета бухгалтерского учета и бизнеса Политехнического института Порту (ISCAP, Португалия). Процедура государственной итоговой аттестации проходила на платформе Teams КубГУ на английском языке при участии двух Государственных аттестационных комиссий — КубГУ и ISCAP. Представленные на рассмотрение комиссии 7 магистерских работ были успешно защищены и признаны всеми партнерами. Таким образом информационные технологии, внедренные в учебный процесс КубГУ, позволили провести и облегчить процедуру защиты магистерских диссертаций, сократить расстояние между странами и минимизировать барьеры в межкультурной научной и образовательной коммуникации между специалистами России, Чехии и Португалии.

С переходом на дистанционное обучение университеты вынуждены наряду с физической мобильностью организовывать виртуальную мобильность, которая уже заняла свою нишу в межвузовском сотрудничестве. КубГУ и некоторые из университетов-партнеров выступили с инициативой проводить лекции, семинары, вебинары, летние школы в рамках входящей и исходящей мобильности научно-педагогических работников и студентов в онлайн формате. Можно привести множество таких примеров, среди которых:

- цикл онлайн лекций профессора ISCAP (Португалия) по экономическим наукам для студентов и преподавателей КубГУ в рамках Программы Эразмус+ на платформе Teams;
- вебинар на тему «Инструменты и технологии организации образовательного процесса в образовательных организациях высшего образования с применением дистанционных образовательных технологий»



в партнерстве с Международным университетом Киргизской Республики платформе сервиса Cisco Webex;

- научно-практический семинар «Социальная экономика: опыт России и Германии» в рамках сотрудничества КубГУ и Университета прикладных технических и экономических наук г. Берлина;

- курс онлайн-лекций и лабораторных работ по дисциплине: «Технологии и инструменты электронной коммерции и блокчейн» для магистрантов Университета прикладных наук Рейн-Майна (Германия) на английском языке, вуза–партнера КубГУ;

- Летняя онлайн школа педагогического мастерства, организованная КубГУ совместно с Русскоязычным клубом детского развития «Modellierton» (Германия) для педагогов России, Германии, Казахстана, Туниса, Македонии;

- Летняя онлайн школа по греческому языку для российских студентов в рамках сотрудничества между КубГУ и Университета им. Аристотеля (Греция).

Безусловно, большинство университетов стремятся к сохранению и развитию существующих международных связей, где мобильность всегда играла ключевую роль. Однако все больше исследователей задаются вопросом, может ли виртуальная мобильность заменить физическую? По мнению исследователей Католического университета Лёвена (Бельгия), виртуальная мобильность — это то, что по своей сути отличается от физической мобильности, хотя ее можно прекрасно использовать в качестве дополнения или альтернативы физической мобильности. В данном определении виртуальная мобильность рассматривается как набор таких поддерживаемых информационно-коммуникативными технологиями (ИКТ) видов деятельности, которые реализуют трансграничный совместный опыт в контексте преподавания и/или обучения. Эти мероприятия могут проводиться в полностью поддерживаемой ИКТ учебной среде или в качестве дополнения к физической мобильности. Ученые из бельгийского вуза (партнера КубГУ) уверены, что виртуальная мобильность может пересекать границы между регионами, странами, культурами и языками, а также между дисциплинами (Vriens, 2010).

Если, с одной стороны, физическая мобильность обеспечивает более широкий набор преимуществ, включая: развитие личных и профессиональных навыков и компетенций, повышенную адаптивность к новым и меняющимся условиям, погружение в иную культуру и расширение возможностей на рынке труда, то, с другой стороны, совершенно очевидно, что виртуальные форматы сокращают поездки и тем самым экономят транспортные расходы, энергию и время. Независимые эксперты Берт-Ян Буйскул и Мэри Худепол, выступая на брифинге Европейской парламентской комиссии по культуре и образованию (Buiskool, 2020), выразили мнение, что виртуальные форматы могут служить эффективным вариантом решения проблем, связанных с культурной осведомленностью,

межкультурным сотрудничеством и трансверсальными навыками. Тем не менее, виртуальные форматы не могут полностью обеспечить тот же самый опыт обучения по сравнению с физической мобильностью, например, в Erasmus+, где многие из преимуществ получены именно от погружения в другую культуру. Когда погружение в другую культуру не лежит в основе схемы (то есть краткосрочная мобильность), можно рассматривать виртуальные форматы. Эксперты приходят к выводу, что ни одна из форм обучения мобильности не является альтернативой для замены другой. Каждая форма вносит свой вклад в обогащение образования по-своему, в то же время предлагая студентам возможность развивать международные компетенции и навыки. И с этим, на наш взгляд, трудно не согласиться.

Что касается международных культурных обменов и обменов результатами научных исследований, КубГУ продолжает активно развивать партнерское сотрудничество и в этих, крайне важных областях международной деятельности. Свидетельством этому могут служить международные онлайн конференции и различные мероприятия культурного характера, например:

- Международная научно-теоретическая онлайн-конференция «Компетентностный подход в организации начального образования: теория и практика», организованная совместно с Нукусским государственным педагогическим институтом имени Ажинияза (НГПИ, Узбекистан), собравшая более 80 участников;
- Международная научно-практическая онлайн конференция «Подходы и приемы использования stem-технологий на уроках иностранного языка», на базе НГПИ (Узбекистан), при участии более 60 преподавателей из Узбекистана, Казахстана, Великобритании, России, Франции;
- Международная студенческая научно-практическая онлайн конференция «Великая Отечественная война в истории моей семьи», посвященная 75-летию Победы в Великой Отечественной войне, состоявшаяся по инициативе Международного университета Кыргызской Республики, объединившая более 80 представителей и студентов ведущих вузов Кыргызской Республики и КубГУ;
- Один из старейших университетов-партнеров КубГУ Университет им. Аристотеля в Салониках (Греция) провел ряд онлайн мероприятий, посвященных Международному Дню русского языка;
- Тестирование по русскому языку (ТРКИ) 22-х граждан Германии тестологами КубГУ на площадке Университета прикладных технических и экономических г. Берлина, и школы дополнительного образования «Теремок» г. Брауншвейга;
- Участие КубГУ в онлайн церемонии закрытия Российско-Германского Года научно-образовательных партнерств 2018–2020.

Проведенный анализ позволяет сделать вывод, что пандемия или другие кризисные ситуации не являются помехой для тесного межевзовского

взаимодействия, если стороны-партнеры готовы делиться ресурсами, знаниями, опытом и научными разработками, применяя различные модели сотрудничества, в т.ч. модель сетевой кооперации. Пандемия стала своеобразным тестом академического сообщества на ответственность и способность к совместным действиям, предоставив уникальный шанс вузам-партнерам проявить солидарность и выступить единым фронтом против COVID-19.

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## **Проблемы психологической помощи студентам в условиях пандемии**

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Психологическое сопровождение в вузе — это организованная, структурированная и постоянно выполняемая работа психологической службы, направленная на личностное и профессиональное развитие будущего выпускника в период обучения в высшей школе, раскрытие потенциальных способностей студента, а также коррекция различных трудностей в его личностном развитии (Ожигова, 2015).

Психологическая служба в вузе представляет собой интегральное образование, в котором выделяют три аспекта: научный, ориентированный на изучение закономерностей психического развития и формирование личности с целью разработки методов профессионального применения знаний в практике; научно-методический, обеспечивающий процессы обучения и воспитания посредством участия психологов в разработке методических материалов; практический аспект, направленный на непосредственную работу с клиентами разного возраста и оказание помощи в решении жизненных проблем. Единство трех аспектов образует предмет психологической службы (Романова, 2009).

Отсюда вытекают общие задачи психологического сопровождения: оказание психологической поддержки по вопросам профессионального и личностного самоопределения; передача студентам необходимых для эффективной профессиональной деятельности и достижения успеха психологических знаний и навыков; формирование у студентов позитивной жизненной позиции и ответственности за принятие собственных решений; повышение психологической компетентности преподавателей и использования инструментов психологии в практике преподавания (Пилюгина, 2012).

Так, Психологическая служба Кубанского государственного университета была создана в 2015 году как творческое волонтерское объединение преподавателей и студентов факультета управления и психологии. С ноября 2018 года Служба стала официальным структурным подразделением КубГУ. ПС выполняет систематическую психологическую поддержку студентов и работников КубГУ.

Психологическая служба КубГУ создана для оказания помощи студентам, магистрантам, аспирантам и сотрудниками их поддержки в решении различных психологических проблем и преодолении трудных жизненных ситуаций. Основные направления деятельности психологической службы: психологическое просвещение, психологическая диагностика, психологическая профилактика, психологическая коррекция, научно-исследовательская деятельность. Основные задачи Службы —

это оказание бесплатной психологической помощи, профессионально-личностная диагностика и карьерное консультирование.

Служба состоит из 5 сотрудников и отряда волонтеров. Большой вклад в работу службы вносят волонтеры — бакалавры, магистранты, аспиранты, выпускники и преподаватели, имеющие профессиональную психологическую подготовку преподаватели факультета управления и психологии и факультета педагогики, психологии и коммуникативистики.

Основные виды деятельности психологической службы — это индивидуальное консультирование и проведение практических занятий и лекций, повышающих психологическую компетентность студентов в вопросах саморегуляции эмоционального состояния, развития жизнестойкости и стрессоустойчивости, поддержка учебной и профессиональной мотивации. Так, наиболее часто встречаемые запросы от студентов на индивидуальных консультациях и запросы кураторов академических групп на тренинговые занятия со студентами связаны с темами: повышение уверенности в себе, формирование навыков публичной презентации, развитие коммуникабельности, умения планировать, развитие лидерских качеств. Студенты открыты и готовы консультироваться у психолога по вопросам межличностных отношений и семейного планирования. То есть студенты специальностей, которые сами по себе призваны обеспечить в дальнейшем поддержку личности в различных пространствах (семье, работе и т.д.), готовы быть и потребителями психологических услуг.

Однако в период пандемии COVID-19, психологическая служба КубГУ, столкнулась с целым рядом новых запросов от студентов и разрабатывала новые формы работы со студентами в условиях самоизоляции и дистанционного обучения.

Психологическая служба сделала «шаг» в цифровую реальность. Все сотрудники службы проводили психологические консультации в онлайн режиме через все интернет платформы: «Скайп», «WhatsApp», «Инстаграм», «Teams».

В период пандемии во время перехода вуза на режим дистанционного обучения появились специфические проблемы, с которыми стали обращаться студенты. Наиболее часто встречаемые запросы:

1. Из-за изменения формы и графика учебы, студенты негативно переживали неопределенность и запрашивали навыки тайм — менеджмента.

2. Так как обучение проходило в дистанционном режиме, но не у всех студентов были отдельные комнаты и кабинеты, студенты переживали агрессию и не знали, как справиться с раздражением, когда близкие мешали им заниматься.

3. Повысилась персональная ответственность за счет увеличения количества индивидуальных заданий по предметам, появилось больше

самостоятельной работы, которая занимала больше времени на выполнение, поэтому студенты начали переживать апатию и прокрастинацию.

4. Электронные программы и системы позволяют людям выходить на контакт в любое время, из-за этого произошло нарушение цикла сна и бодрствования за счет постоянного мониторинга учебных занятий в режиме он-лайн, поэтому студенты стали переживать растерянность, страх неуспеха в учебной деятельности, недифференцированную тревогу.

5. Произошло возрастание вредных привычек в питании студентов. В связи с увеличившимся стрессом и изоляцией студенты жаловались, что стали есть больше сладкого и еды быстрого приготовления, поэтому запрашивали навыки саморегуляции и самомотивации по отношению к здоровью.

6. Повысилась тревога за близких и родных, которые имеют ограничения по здоровью и находятся в группе риска по возрасту. Студенты переживали страх смерти близкого человека, чувство вины, что они молоды и могут быть «переносчиками» коронавируса.

7. Студенты говорили о страхе перед болезнью и собственной смертью, нуждались в разговоре о своих переживаниях на эту тему, так как не всегда получали поддержку от близких: сами боялись тревожить родных такими разговорами или получали игнорирование своим тревогам.

8. У некоторых студентов повышение тревоги или апатии носило крайне выраженный характер в виде панических атак или страха стигматизации в случае болезни.

За время пандемии с 1 апреля по 20 мая 2020 г. было проведено более 200 онлайн консультаций. Мы наблюдали увеличение количества обращений в службу в два раза от нашей обычной статистики за этот период в другие годы.

Сотрудники службы два раза в неделю проводили открытые эфиры в «Инстаграм», где отвечали на вопросы студентов о том, как справиться с тревогой и паникой в условиях пандемии, как поддержать себя и близких в условиях самоизоляции и карантина; как использовать время карантина для развития творческих идей и способностей, обучения новым образовательным технологиям.

Наши открытые просветительские лекции переведены в онлайн режим и на платформе «Инстаграм» идут открытые эфиры на различные актуальные для студентов темы: самоорганизация и зависимость от гаджетов; саморегуляция в условиях дистанционного обучения; рациональное использование времени при самоподготовке; плюсы и минусы онлайн и офлайн обучения.

Уникальный опыт получили участники постоянно действующих психологических групп «Группа встреч» и «Арт-класс». Еженедельные занятия для студентов возобновились в онлайн режиме.

Однако, отметим, что именно индивидуальное психологическое консультирование (его диалогический формат) стало той формой поддержки

личности студентов, которая позволила пережить кризис самоизоляции, связанный с кинестетической, эмоциональной и социальной депривацией.

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# **International Contacts Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic: the New Reality of Academic Exchanges and Their Perspectives**

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## **Introduction**

Academic and student exchange form a part of internationalization and globalization processes. They are included in the strategic plans of European universities, complementing the Bologna process, and are seen as a way to a global knowledge economy. Created in 1987, Erasmus Programme combined all the previous and existing mobility programs such as the LifeLong learning Programme, the Youth in Action programme, the Erasmus Mundus Programme, Alfa, Edulink, Tempus etc. According to the latest mid-term evaluation of the Erasmus+ Programme (2014–2020), it was expected to provide 4 million people the opportunity to gain competences and have a personal, socio-educational and professional development through studies, training, work experiences or volunteering abroad worldwide (Report from the commission to the European parliament, the Council, the European economic and social committee and the Committee of the regions mid-term evaluation of the Erasmus programme (2014-2020), 2018, p. 5). As a rule, students spend several months abroad studying at a host institution. Such short-term student exchange programs are expected to prepare students to live in a globalized environment, to act successfully in the international market, to develop the ability to interact with people from other cultures and backgrounds and to be ready to work in multicultural teams and speak other languages (Atalar, 2019, p. 63). Along with the general objectives mentioned, the Erasmus+ Programme has more specific ones, such as development of a significant group of European professionals with international experience who are open-minded as well as well-qualified in their fields, so that they can make a greater contribution to their professions and to the society, efficient use of the potential of Europe's human and social capital while confirming the principle of lifelong learning, achievement of the sustainable development of Partner Countries in the field of higher education, and promotion of European values in accordance with Article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union (Erasmus Programme Guide, 2020, p. 12). Students are believed to discover that they share a common culture, common values, and, despite a history of wars and conflicts, know that they have much to gain by building a cooperative future together.

In this regard, student mobility in Europe is sometimes considered as a powerful tool of European integration and consolidation of sense of European identity with some researchers concluding there is no effect (Llurda, 2016; Sigalas, 2008; Van Mol, 2018; Wilson, 2011) and some stating students become more European through their exchange (Mitchell, 2014; Stoeckel, 2016).



## **Impact of COVID-19 on student mobility in Europe**

The COVID-19 pandemic caused major disruption in the implementation of student mobility programs and literally paralyzed them. In these unprecedented conditions, the participants of the class of 2020 were deprived of the main component of the international experience – mobility, immersion into foreign society through daily life and communication with representatives of other cultures. However, in uncertainty, responsible European institutions managed to take drastic measures in responding to the challenges the participants were facing, which resulted in two-thirds mobility programs finished. Students' decisions were influenced by a wide range of circumstances, such as inability to return home due to loss of transportation, cancellation of accommodation or grant, problems with access to food and even national discrimination. As for academic experience, students experienced a radical transformation of their class schedule. Thus, about a half (51%) reported classes cancellation at their host universities with full online offer available, for 34% only half of classes continued online with another half postponed, 9% of students suffered full class cancellation or postponement and 5% of students continued attending “physical” classes as normal (Student Exchanges in Times of Crisis - Research report on the impact of COVID-19 on student exchanges in Europe, 2020, p. 16).

The use of digital resources in education and student mobility has long been a disputable topic among researchers. Though there had been much discussion about distant learning before the pandemic the reality revealed gaps and problems that were difficult to foresee: technical issues (university servers crashed; poor internet connection in dormitories; not every student had a suitable laptop), time difference, methodological issues (online teaching limited students' abilities to perform their best; such format is not suitable for some subjects), failure in implementing some forms of classes (joint projects, presentations), lack of library and other university sources access (not every book could be found online) etc.

Taking all the deprivations into account, a considerable drop in applications for Erasmus+ exchanges was expected in 2020 only. A new cycle of ERASMUS+ exchanges started in September. Nevertheless, the epidemiological situation has not changed dramatically. Given the past experience, HSEs along with student exchange funds had to review their work programs counting with restrictions and lockdowns, putting more emphasis on reinforcing digital dimension.

### **Virtual student mobility as a new reality: positive and negative consequences**

At the time of writing, more than 38.5 million cases of COVID-19 have been reported worldwide, 3 874 181 of which account for the EU (Coronavirus cases, 2020). Though the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education recently issued a statement that made the importance of physical

mobility very evident, stressing why it can and should not be replaced, virtual exchange seems to remain the only possible option in the coming months, based on the epidemiological situation.

On the one hand, such forced move to digital dimension may lead to advancement of distant learning technologies at European HEIs and foster exchange of good practice and peer-learning among the institutions hosting virtual students in the coming months. At the same time, simplification of application procedures and lower cost of participation (student do not need to pay their living) may lead to greater inclusiveness and attract more participants. And, finally, less physical mobility leads to emission reduction and contributes to a greener Erasmus+ and sustainable development.

On the other hand, long-term virtual mobility may have negative impact on internationalization process and lead to alienation as students are deprived of the main component of the exchange program – immersion into a foreign society through residence and communication. Basically, online classes turn into ordinary foreign language classes dedicated to a specific subject. In this regard, it is worth mentioning cross-cultural communication skills that cannot be developed to the full extent only through online communication. Without staying in a host country students may also risk to stay limited by a single set of values and views accepted in their home country, which will prevent them from developing global mindset. This may lead to bias and narrowness when discussing political and global issues. Moreover, students fail to develop such essential skills such as problem solving and autonomous decision-making staying in their “comfort zones”.

## Conclusion

To sum up, increased attention to virtual exchange may significantly accelerate reformation, update of digital teaching and learning, and bring us closer to the digital era. At the same time, one should keep in mind that all the measures taken are mandatory and are here just to keep the student exchanges on the go. Online classes cannot substitute real mobility and provide all the benefits of a true international experience. However, HSIs are doing their best to adapt to the ever-changing situation, providing international students with their educational practices and alternative, multi-faceted approaches to learning, promoting virtual mobility that would certainly be an investment in the future, also in terms of intra-European exchanges.

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**Социальная солидарность, гражданское  
общество и публичный дискурс в условиях  
пандемии**

# **EU Policy in Times of COVID-19: How the Pandemic Has Changed the Public's Worldview**

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## **Introduction**

The Covid-19 crisis is not the first – and certainly won't be the last – crisis faced by the EU. However, if one analyses in detail the speeches on earlier national, European or global crises since the EU or EEC came into existence, such as during the Cold War, or in relation to the consequences of 9/11, the bank crash and the financial crisis of 2008 or the global refugee movement in 2015/2016, it becomes clear that the perspectives of individual nation states dominate, and that even traditional ideological struggles were put aside (Wodak, 2020).

The Covid crisis is perhaps the greatest social experiment of our lives. We do not know when or how it will end. It is still too early to predict how completely it will change the way Europeans see their own societies. But we can already see that the pandemic has changed the way Europeans look at the world beyond Europe and, as a consequence, the role of the European Union in their lives.

To find out how the pandemic has affected European citizens' views on politics, society, and Europe's place in the world, the European Council on Foreign Relations commissioned a poll of over 11,000 citizens in nine Countries across Europe (Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden).

## **The study**

The study "Europe's Pandemic Policy: How the Virus Changed the Public's Worldview" (Krastev, Leonard, 2020), based on the survey conducted by "Datapraxis", questions some of the commentators' initial conclusions. The authors, Ivan Krastev and Mark Leonard, analyze the impact of the Covid crisis on Countries' domestic politics and foreign policy perspectives and question the theory that covid-19 would have strengthened support for national governments, improved the public reputation of experts and institutions, given oxygen to the forces of both nationalist Euroscepticism and pro-European federalism.

The illusions that are demystified by the pan-European ECFR poll are three:

- illusion one: the crisis has produced a new consensus in Europe, persuading most of the public to support a greater role for the State;
- illusion two: the crisis has led to a surge in support for experts;
- illusion three: the crisis has led to a surge in both nationalist Euroscepticism and pro-European federalism.

## **Illusion one**

The reappearance of ‘big government’ is a fact. But, in many places, it is not back by popular request but rather because elites seized new powers to deal with the pandemic.

Across all nine European countries, only 29 per cent say they have greater confidence in the government and, at the same time, believe that their own government has done well in the crisis. In contrast, 33 per cent have lost confidence in the power of government while also holding a dim view of how their own government has achieved. The survey shows that, overall, those who are losing confidence in the management capacity of governments are more numerous than those who, as a result of the crisis, are more inclined to state intervention.

## **Illusion two**

Millions of people have faithfully followed the advice of medical experts during the lockdown, but the poll suggests that the return of public faith in expertise is an illusion. The polling showed that a majority of citizens in most member States do not trust experts and the authorities. Indeed, it is a key finding of the survey that many citizens view experts as bound up in the political process, subject to manipulation and instrumentalisation, rather than as independent, standing apart from the political dispute and providing objective truth. Among those who expressed an opinion on the issue, only 35 per cent of respondents believe experts’ work can be beneficial to them, while 38 per cent believe politicians have instrumentalised experts and hidden information from the public, and 27 per cent profess little belief in experts in general.

## **Illusion three**

When the crisis first struck, many people worried that it would unleash a Eurosceptic moment. The first reaction of many governments in the EU was to close their countries’ borders and introduce export controls (sometimes, even in contradiction to the rules governing the single market). On the one hand, we can see that people in all surveyed member States believe the EU responded poorly to the crisis, and with majorities in all Countries saying that the EU did not rise to the challenge. In a separate question, we asked whether respondents’ attitudes towards EU institutions had worsened during the crisis. On the other hand, large majorities of people in all surveyed Countries say that they are now more firmly persuaded of the necessity for further EU cooperation than they were before the crisis.

## **Conclusion**

While the pandemic has not yet transformed Europeans’ domestic political preferences, ECFR’s new data prove that it has dramatically changed how they see the world beyond Europe. Covid-19 follows the global financial crisis, the refugee crisis, and the climate emergency. These global events that change

how Europeans see the world are, in turn, leading citizens to drastically reconsider the aim and role of the EU in their lives.

European governments and the EU institutions have understood that the coronavirus crisis has produced an opening for collective European action. The “Franco-German recovery plan” presented in May 2020 could be the beginning of a vital new stage of the European story. But, for leaders to bring a more powerful and unified Europe into being, they must make the right policy choices and tailor their arguments in a way that connects with European voters.

The present crisis urgently calls for visions for the EU and, indeed, the world post-Covid-19. Borders have been closed, but viruses do not respect borders. The economic effects of measures to combat the crisis call for a new ‘Marshall Plan’ for EU member States.

Transnational solidarity is therefore the order of the day - not the narrow, backward-looking thinking of nation states. Many political scientists and sociologists have expressed similar views.

The Covid-19 crisis has made it plentifully clear that expert knowledge and expertise are in demand again today. Hopefully, European politicians will not quickly dismiss the lessons of the crisis, but will be forced to develop and agree on sustainable solidarity with the vulnerable and social programs in order to be prepared for new, cross-border crises - which will surely come (Wodak, 2020).

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# Crisis-Driven Innovation in Cultural and Creative Industries

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Creative economy, namely the cultural and creative industries (CCI), is one of the fastest growing sectors of the world economy. In 2002-2015 the size of the global CCI market has more than doubled, rising from \$208 billion in 2002 to \$509 billion in 2015 (UNCTAD, 2019, p. 9). Globally, CCI generate more than \$2,250 billion revenue annually and provide more than 30 million jobs (EY, 2015, p. 5).

The COVID-19 pandemic posed a serious threat to the global creative economy, challenging its flexibility and resilience. CCIs are among the sectors that were hit hardest by the crisis. While publicly funded cultural institutions, such as state museums, libraries and archives, enjoyed a certain degree of stability, the CCI, the bulk of which are self-employed, freelancers and SMEs, suffered much more. In Germany, according to a study by the European Creative Business Network (ECBN) and the Saxon Agency for the support of the creative economy Kreatives Sachsen, almost all respondents from the local SMEs expect serious losses in 2020. Almost two thirds of respondents expect 1/3 fall in sales in the short term, a third of respondents predicted a fall of 40-50 per cent, and the rest expect a fall of 75 per cent or more (Kreatives Sachsen 2020). In the USA, CCI lost almost a third (!) of jobs in just four months (Florida, Seman 2020). In Russia, losses of the creative economy are estimated at \$1,6-1,9 billion (Istomina 2020).

As many creatives are driven out of the industry, numerous projects are postponed or cancelled; as a result, diversity in the cultural output suffers considerably. However, the pandemic also proved to be a source of positive transformations in the sector.

Fundamentally, the pandemic reminded the mankind of the *special role of culture in harmonizing relations between human and the world*. CCI content served as a lifeline during the pandemic, making it for hundreds of thousands of people easier to overcome the psycho-emotional difficulties of quarantine or self-isolation. During this period, many CCI products turned out to be essential commodities, serving both recreational and educational purposes; many people tried online lectures and exhibitions for the first time in their life. This experience may become the driver of development of a whole series of *innovative products created at the intersection of CCI and other industries, for example art and healthcare*, such as solutions that use cultural content to alleviate difficult emotional states.

The coronavirus crisis served as a catalyst for the transition of many cultural institutions (museums, galleries, exhibitions, etc.) to the digital space, diversification of content delivery formats, tools and methods of communication

with their audience. It can be argued that the crisis accelerated the deployment of the already established trend – *transformation of cultural institutions into “new media”* that interact with visitors not only offline, but also through various online tools and channels. Thus, interaction of individual with culture will ever more often begin by visiting not the physical, but the virtual space of the cultural institution, and continue in it. For example, by scrolling the museum’s Instagram or Facebook feed and participating in its challenges, such as #GettyMuseumChallenge, where everyone was invited to reproduce well-known plots of fine art using household items.

The pandemic has fostered a range of experimental creative forms, many of which emerged at the intersection of different industries and through the application of technology in areas where it wasn’t used before. The emergence of such innovative products creates *new growth points*, which allows to expect *new investments* in the CCI. For instance, theatres developed a fundamentally new online content (interactive digital plays) which substantially democratizes the concept of theatre itself and the relationship between actor and viewer. While in traditional theaters there is still a “fourth wall” and the viewer is still a “visitor”, the digital theater actually visits the viewer at home. Such plays often involve direct contact between the viewer and the actor – as, for example, in the Russian play “Hello”, which is based on a telephone conversation between the viewer and the actor, in which the viewer has his own remarks. Despite a number of difficulties in the perception of digital content by audience, many theaters plan to retain interactive formats in their repertoire in the future, since the number of viewers will inevitably decrease due to the need to comply with sanitary restrictions.

The growth of digitalization in the sphere of culture has led to the weakening or even removal of a number of barriers that stood between a cultural object and a person, primarily physical, geographical and financial ones. Many people (especially those who couldn’t afford it) for the first time in their life got the opportunity to see the masterpieces of world culture, as they appeared in the format of free virtual exhibitions, such as the one provided by Vatican Museums. New experience of interacting with cultural products and creative industries from other countries has appeared, which was facilitated by their visualization on national and international online platforms.

Most importantly, the coronavirus crisis *highlighted the fragility of CCI*, their serious lack of funding and precarity of this segment of the job market. Therefore, in many countries, federal and local governments for the first time initiated expert discussions and research projects, established expert councils in order to develop a profound understanding of the state of affairs in the sector, and to work out tailored support measures to increase the sector’s resilience. This is especially important for countries like Russia, where the state and CCI still experience serious lack of communication and dialogue, as well as of PPPs, many of which are still symbolic and ineffective.

An important step towards solving this problem was the creation in many countries of anti-crisis funds to support the creative sector, as well as introduction of flexible financial instruments such as subsidies and grants. Another type of initiatives both provided the sector with immediate support and *involved its participants in the development of cities and territories*, such as the “Creatives for Vienna” ideas competition. Launched by the Vienna Business Agency. The goal of the contest was to find the best innovative and creative concepts to improve the quality of life of Vienna citizens, strengthen their sense of solidarity, and make the city more resilient in the face of the crisis by answering such questions as “how can the city become a modern space of action for all residents” and “which sustainable solutions can be developed for the future of our city in regard to infrastructure, distribution and organization” (Creatives for Vienna, 2020). More than 700 ideas have been submitted, including concepts for the use of public space, collaborative work, local production and sustainable management, with 240 of them awarded by the jury (ibidem).

Another type of tool introduced during the crisis by a number of state and local administrations, which is quite important for the preservation and development of CCI, is *web portals with free cultural content and a mechanism for supporting the content creators*. For instance, in Berlin, the city department of culture in cooperation with digital agency “3pc” launched the digital platform Berlin (a)live for online broadcasting of concerts, operas and other types of CCI content. The platform provides users with the possibility to support artists and projects of their choosing by clicking on the relevant links on all the event pages, including links to donation platforms, which allows to choose individual support formats (Berlin (a)live, 2020). Such portals are important not only because they help the creatives in need, but also because they help *enrich the cultural space* by disseminating diverse cultural content, including the one generated by little-known creatives, which is a necessary (in terms of public good) counterweight to the large-scale commercial digital platforms that promote mostly the mainstream content.

Finally, but quite importantly, the coronavirus crisis contributed to the growth of solidarity and the emergence of new forms of cooperation among the CCI actors. The joint discussion of common problems and the development of anti-crisis solutions became the reason for the intensification of cooperation, both at the national and international levels. The crisis has brought together the creative community and has led to the emergence of a number of initiatives for mutual support. Interesting example of such initiative in the “Creatives Unite”, a platform for exchanging the best practices and ideas for overcoming the crisis by European cultural institutions and creative industries. Another example is “Cultural Gems”, a platform that allows to map CCI of European cities, including the ones previously little known to a wide audience, which should contribute to their greater recognition and create new opportunities for financial support, including through the growth of tourism.

In the Russian Internet space, the Facebook-group “Sphere and Cross” quickly gained popularity – a community of mutual assistance of participants in the art market.

To sum it up, the coronavirus crisis has brought people closer to the culture – even those, who had little interest in it or did not have such an opportunity due to financial and other restrictions. In this regard, one can expect a further expansion of the audience and an increase in interest in cultural products, as well as increase in the popularity of education and employment in the CCI. The crisis has become an impetus for the consolidation of the creative sphere and improvement of its dialogue with the state, for the emergence of innovative products and cross-industry collaborations. All these factors should improve resilience of CCI in the face of future crises.

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# COVID-19 and European Identity Crisis

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The outbreak of the pandemic linked to the Covid-19 virus has further highlighted the chronic difficulties on the part of the European Union in terms of a single and shared response: once again, that is, the EU stands out, at least in the first place, for an absence of unitary policies in the face of the management of a crisis, in this direction thus revealing an endemic fragmentation far from the federalist enclaves abstractly attributable to the project of a united Europe. And all this, moreover, following the first and only case of withdrawal from the EU by one of its own member states (Brexit), an event that is certainly not reassuring from a federalist perspective.

In particular, what is disconcerting is that even in the face of a world cataclysm Europe is unable to find harmony, albeit superficial, nor is it able to agree on exceptional measures and the timing of implementation in the interest, not only of European citizens, but of institutions same. A couple of regulatory changes would be enough to make decisions dictated by events urgently enforceable, averting a crisis with unpredictable outcomes in the European framework that proved unsuitable, in its current form, to deal with emergencies of this magnitude.

Delays, fears, selfishness. If words were needed to describe Europe under the test of COVID-19, perhaps these would be the most appropriate.

In the beginning were the delays; the European Union limited itself to observing Italy, the first member state to be affected by the coronavirus. Only on 2 March Ursula Von Der Leyen, president of the European Commission, announced in a press conference the creation of a working group to deal with the health emergency. On the same day, the European Council, currently led by Croatia, activated the “Integrated Political Crisis Response Mechanism” (IPCR), the highest instrument of cooperation between member states.

Then came the fear. On 11 March, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic. In close cooperation and at the request of the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control (an independent European agency), the Union has decided to follow the Italian model. The Member States, starting with France, have begun to replicate the measures of social distancing, the closure of schools and public places, the prohibition of gatherings<sup>1</sup>.

Finally, the selfishness. Jacques Delors, former president of the European Commission, socialist and convinced pro-European, in the aftermath of the European Council on March 26, where a deep rift was created between the member states of southern and northern Europe on the coronabond hypoth-

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<sup>1</sup> Then there are those who took advantage of the climate of fear. On March 30, Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orban took advantage of the health emergency to expand the government's powers. With a favorable vote of Parliament, a law was passed which provided, among other things, for the possibility of passing laws without prior parliamentary control and suspended the calling of new elections without indicating a final deadline.

esis, issued a warning from the pages of *Le Figaro*, judging the lack of solidarity a “mortal danger” for the European Union. Jérôme Vignon, director of the research institute founded by Jacques Delors himself, stressed that Europe is “too tied to automatic mechanisms and legal obligations and too little to solidarity between nations”.

The economic crisis caused by COVID-19 requires a compact response from Europe, on pain of its dissolution.

However, the fact remains that the initiatives put in place by the EU to combat the pandemic - the importance of which cannot be doubted - nevertheless do not seem sufficient to change the conclusion that solidarity understood in a rebalancing and emergency sense, in the light of the Treaties, is not (yet) an absolute right for States in difficulty and a correlated obligation for other States and for the EU itself. In other words, the Union can only show the solidarity that the Treaties allow it to show and under the conditions provided, despite the high references to solidarity that are made in the latter: any hope or “forcing” of the scientific and public debate, yes justified by the exceptional nature of the moment, it risks clashing with the narrow regulatory data. Here, therefore, only the full awareness on the part of all States of the need – and, why not, of the even “selfish” utility – of a modification of the Treaties and / or of the more generous use of the art. 352 TFEU could allow the Union to overcome the limits of its current solidarity action and escape that “mortal danger” to its own survival, sharply highlighted by former Commission President Jacques Delors.

In general, “solidarity” can be defined as mutual assistance between associates which presupposes and nourishes a bond of cohesion in society. Especially when declined in its social dimension, it differs from simple welfare: if this plays a role in primary social networks (family, neighborhood, religious associations, etc.) and does not involve an obligation to help, social solidarity is the expression of a policy based on mutual support, contemplating the right of members of the group (usually citizens) to take advantage, as needed, of the benefits deriving from the fiscal and although variously declined, is found in some Constitutions approved after the Second World War, which refer to social solidarity as the foundation of the democratic state: with the recognition of social rights, we undertake to ensure the equal participation of citizens in public life to achieve the objectives of the welfare state.

Despite the alternating fortunes depending on the historical eras, it can be considered that at the base of the concept of solidarity there are at least two elements: the belonging of a subject to a specific social group and the idea that the well-being of the group is part of the well-being individual, so that each gives up something to help others so that everyone benefits from it. To this is sometimes added an “egoistic” component that strengthens the second element: the individual “sacrifice”, that is, it can also be based on the belief that, in the future, anyone who finds himself in a prejudicial situation will be helped by the group. The two elements indicated above can be found since the origins

of the European integration process. Solidarity is, in fact, a central element of the declaration of the French Foreign Minister Schuman of 9 May 1950, which initiated that process. In it, as is well known, it was recognized that Europe “se fera par des réalisations concrètes créant d’abord une solidarité de fait”.

The importance of the concept under consideration is also derived from the TFEU: on the one hand, the Preamble recalls the solidarity that binds Europe to overseas countries; on the other hand, it assumes importance in the area of freedom, security and justice (Article 67, paragraph 2), with the clarification relating to policies on border control, asylum and immigration (Article 80), in economic policy (art. 122) and energy (art. 194), as well as in the event of a terrorist attack or calamity (art. 222, containing an explicit solidarity clause). Finally, title IV of the latter entitled to solidarity is confirmed and made legally binding, like the entire Charter of Nice, which contains, as mentioned, rights of a social nature; but the Preamble of the Charter already makes a reference to solidarity as an indivisible and universal value.

From this short list, there is a use of the concept of solidarity in the most disparate sectors, with very different presuppositions and meanings. It is convenient, for classification purposes, to group the relevant provisions into four types. The first is that of intergenerational solidarity, provided for in art. 3, par. 3, co. 2, TEU and whose main expression can be found in environmental policy. The second is that of solidarity between Member States and individuals, which emerges in the relationship between each State and citizens also of other Member States (e.g. in the field of social benefits) or of third countries (e.g. in the protection of asylum seekers). The third works horizontally between individuals, as in the case of cross-border volunteering and the European Solidarity Corps.

Solidarity between the Union and the Member States in their mutual relations is, on the other hand, the most significant but also the least organic type. It is first of all indicated among the objectives of art. 3, par. 3, co. 3, TEU, alongside that of promoting economic, social and territorial cohesion, a form of economic solidarity implemented through the structural funds to reduce the regional gap to the advantage of less favored areas. The exceptions to the prohibition of state aid for regional purposes (Article 107, paragraph 3, letter a), TFEU) must be brought back to the same purpose. One area in which mutual solidarity is enhanced by the Lisbon Treaty is that of the EU’s external projection, especially in the framework of the CFSP. Of particular importance is the mutual defense clause of art. 42, par. 7, TEU, which establishes a duty of solidarity between States to be exercised in accordance with art. 51 of the United Nations Charter and, where applicable, the obligations deriving from membership of NATO. The provisions aimed at providing support and assistance for natural or man-made disasters and terrorist attacks should also be traced back to the same need: I refer to art. 196 TFEU on civil protection and the related mechanism of decision 1313/2013; to the EU Solidarity Fund; emergency support within the EU; and the solidarity clause of art. 222 TFEU.



All this considered, I believe that solidarity understood in the traditional sense - that is, of mutual support to those in difficulty – is far from having reached a level of “maturity” in the EU system that would allow it to play a role of a truly general, that is, not limited to the areas in which it is relevant and under the conditions provided therein. While considering the increase in references in the Lisbon Treaty and the EU jurisprudence on European and national social solidarity relevant, while appreciating the hermeneutic efforts of doctrine and the Advocates General, the lack of maturity advocated here is quite evident. The impossibility of qualifying solidarity as a value in the strict sense, its limited tracing back to written principles, the difficult classification between unwritten principles and, even before that, the absence of a univocal definition, all this in my opinion depends on two circumstances : on the one hand, from the difficulty of transferring *sic et simpliciter* on the level of the *sui generis* EU legal system a concept born and traditionally operating in small communities or, at most, in a national context; on the other hand, from the complexity of harmonizing the different types of solidarity present in the Treaties and the sometimes conflicting expectations of the States.

Europe is in the middle of the ford. According to a survey conducted by eu-pinions in March 2020, 53% of young Europeans would rely on authoritarian (and undemocratic) governments to tackle the climate emergency. Certainly not a reassuring fact that comes from Europe’s future leverage on an issue that poses great challenges to States, now and in the years to come. The failure of the Union could fuel the Eurosceptic climate already above the risk level (Brexit docet). A further “pandemic” certainly not desirable.

The great financial crisis of 2008 and the subsequent public debt crisis have highlighted how the institutional architecture of the euro is still incomplete, and how urgently its strengthening is needed. As you know, the European Union responded “too little and too late” to the first crisis, in 2008, opening the door to the second, in 2010. Overall, the response focused on strengthening the role and tools to provision of the ECB, which has launched very expansionary monetary policy measures, expanding its balance sheet to an extent not yet reabsorbed at the outbreak of today’s crisis. The space for fiscal policies was much more limited and, above all, there was a substantial lack of coordination between Member States and between them and the European institutions. All countries have adopted or have been forced to adopt the same policies to contain spending and increase revenues, rather than coordinating an expansion in some countries that would alleviate the impact of containing others. Moreover, this has led to the worsening of territorial and macroeconomic imbalances and has accentuated the competitive rather than cooperative nature of national economic policies.

In this regard, it seems appropriate to remember that while economic theory recognizes the positive effects of competition between firms, there is no similar basis for arguing that competition between countries is preferable to their cooperation. At the European level, the double crisis – which we can



consider spanning at least the years from 2008 to 2013 - has made it clear that there are two major strategy alternatives for growth and prosperity. On the one hand, we have the strategy competitive inspired by neoliberal principles (with the theory of expansive austerity) or ordoliberal (with the emphasis on international competitiveness); on the other, the strategy based on investments and growth in demand. So far, the first path has been chosen at European level, but the experience of recent years has shown that the heavy social consequences of austerity policies and the so-called “structural reforms” have generated a centrifugal thrust based on nationalist sentiments and distrust of European institutions, which today acts as a brake on the agreement towards common and shared solutions.

It is time to start a discussion that looks beyond the immediate emergency, to the recovery and to what kind of economy and society we want to create in the medium term. In the immediate future, the economic and social emergency requires collective solutions based on common financing and spending instruments; but once the emergency has passed, it will be necessary to recognize the need for a new amendment to the Treaties, to increase the democracy and functionality of the EU institutions.

It is necessary to positively overcome, and not by renouncing the principle of solidarity, the perplexities raised even recently (in a way that still perplexes) by constitutional courts of member states on the legitimacy of cooperative political choices adopted by European institutions, such as the ECB.

# The Old 'New Alien' in Mass Perceptions: Pandemic Dimensions

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The image of the Other plays an important role in the processes of political identity formation. The image of the Other can be realized in two patterns. The first of them, the model of political tolerance, can be described by the formula "Self – the Other – Another". The second, intolerant model, is represented by the formula "Self- the Other – the Alien – the Enemy" (Semenenko, 2012). The transition from the first balanced model to the second is due to a complex set of factors. But, as a rule, the trigger is a change in the human representational system caused by relative deprivation and based on the mismatch between expectations and the real possibilities of their implementation.

The Other is sometimes positioned in terms of threats, which may lead to a conflict between them and, accordingly, legitimize the use of violence against the Other. Although the opposition of Self and the Other is a sine qua non for the construction of identity, it does not have to take the form of antagonism. In practice, there is a wide range of variations. During periods of socio-political crises, the acquisition of one's own identity is observed by postulating the negative Other. The basis of social solidarity can be a negative identity, which helps to adapt to the crisis through its routine and partly maintenance of the "victim's complex". In this case, negative identity can become the basis of social solidarity, which helps to adapt to the crisis through its routinization and through partly maintaining a "victim complex".

One of the most widespread technologies for shaping the image of the Alien in politics is dehumanization – a set of ideas and actions that make it possible to present political opponents as actors deprived of the human fundamentals, and, therefore, to justify almost any action in relation to them. The role of dehumanization technology in the system of power interaction is determined by the purposes for which it is used.

**In previous epidemics, who was the Alien?** "The spleen is worse than cholera" – wrote A.S. Pushkin to one of his friends during the cholera epidemic. Fear and uncertainty cause a person no less damage to the human being than the disease itself. Scientists have approached the phenomenon of pandemics and epidemics from different angles. M. Honigsbaum believes fear of disease "aggravates / exacerbates racial, religious and ethnic tensions" (Honigsbaum, 2019). The scientists from Astrakhan State University have recently published a review of bibliography, considers different social aspects of previous epidemics (Romanova, 2020).

History has seen more than one example of urban uprisings and pogroms reacting to epidemics. During the plague epidemic in the 14th century, Jewish pogroms began throughout Europe. The Jews were accused of deliberately spreading the plague through contamination of water in the wells. Anyone

who showed signs of a disease on the body – the buboes – was declared a magician or a witch (Delumeau, 1994).

**How the pandemic has affected perception processes.** Real experience of being in self-isolation has shown that extraordinary global critical situations, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, produce their own digital information virtual subspaces, both purposeful (official sites like coronavirus.ru.), and, in most cases, quite spontaneous. The nature of this information is varied – from conspiracy theories (universal chipping of society, an artificially grown virus, etc.) to laughable psychological defense (memes, game videos, fragments from films with comments, etc.). A person begins to get lost in this flow, and in self-isolation mode, absorbing this information becomes the main form of leisure. Contradictory information, the disrupted habitual rhythm of life, unpredictable economic problems dissolve the sense of stability, of ontological and social security, and the person enters a state of psychological conflict with the surrounding world and himself. Instantly the character of the perception of the Alien changes, the former Ours become Aliens and Enemies. This is not the last world-wide crisis in human history, but the first to develop in a digital society.

**Images of the Alien: Corona Crisis Perspectives.** Street riots across the United States against the backdrop of the far-reaching Corona Virus pandemic may give rise to bring along well-known condemnation: rioters and peaceful demonstrators, of course, violate every possible quarantine measure. The reasons for the explosion of street protests are likely to be examined by various experts for a long time to come, but even today the current riots can be traced back to into the history of the riots and uprisings that took place against the backdrop of epidemics in different parts of the world and in different eras.

Fear of the invisible source of death, disruption of the usual course of life and constraint give rise to many reasons for mass anxiety, irritation and despair, which can find solutions, including through collective outbursts of anger and violence. In a situation where people are faced with a common mortal threat or just something that has never happened before, and do not know how to defend themselves against danger at least at the level of soothing rituals, the response can be monstrous. The fact that, in the 21st century, frightened people prefer to burn iron cell towers, and not other people is only partly reassuring (Gerasyukova, 2020).

I called my speech “the old new Alien”, because there are images of the Alien that in fact repeat those observed during the epidemics of the past. First of all, these are victims of the disease and people belonging to other ethnic or racial groups, as well as people from other regions.

A) Sick as the Alien. Those around them, aware that the patient is not guilty and feeling sorry for him, seek to minimize all contacts, even after a complete recovery. A particularly acute reaction is caused by the facts of the disease of celebrities: “you shouldn’t travel across the Americas”. Not surprisingly, many patients tend to hide the fact that they are infected.

B) A foreigner as the Alien. In India, where the Government had imposed one of the toughest nationwide quarantines in the world with almost no warning, hundreds of millions of people were in dire straits. Among them were tens of thousands of foreigners, tourists or permanent residents of the country. Among them are at least 2,000 Russians. On the Internet, foreigners in India reported that they had encountered sudden hostility, had been harassed, threatened and even beaten – street crowds considered them to be carriers of infection. Foreigners had been evicted from hotels and rented accommodation were forced to spend the night anywhere, which caused problems with the quarantine police. It was a real shock for tourists, because in peacetime everything is exactly the opposite – people with light skin are considered very beautiful in India and enjoy sympathy mixed with superstition. White has become synonymous with the spread of a deadly infection.

C) A resident of another region as the Alien. The regions bordering Moscow complained about the invasion of the capital's guests, fearing the spread of the epidemic. From the discussions on the web: "People are barging. The dachas are overcrowded! And our hospital in Pereslavl is completely understaffed, and the doctors have no curative protection. If they start to get sick and spread the disease here – no one will get help". For the first time in the history of the hospitable city-resort of Sochi, the locals were not pleased with the tourists. "The Government has announced a week off, and the people have rushed into our "clean city", have brought the disease infection". Similar comments could be found in Italy about the inhabitants of Lombardy rushing south.

But in the era of globalization and digitization, new Aliens have emerged, first of all, the foreign-policy Alien and the One who conceived the idea of chipping.

D) Foreign Policy Alien. We can observe the evolution of this image by analyzing the rhetoric of Donald Trump.

"The United Nations needs to hold China accountable for the spread of the Corona Virus", US President Trump said in his speech during the general policy debate of the UN General Assembly." We must bring to justice the country that unleashed this plague into the world, – China!" – he pointed out. US President Donald Trump stated on his Twitter that he harbors increasing grudge against China over the worldwide spread of Corona Virus. The general logic of using the Alien's image in politics is based on technologies such as discrediting, attributing anti-values. A special role in this process is played by branding (tagging or clicking) or anonymization (Alien does not have his own name). Political mobilization; the defamation of a political competitor; the removal of responsibility for political failures; and psychological compensation can be used to exploit the image of the Alien. The purposes of using the image of the Alien can be political mobilization; discrediting a political competitor; removal of responsibility for political failures, as well as psychological compensation.

E) And finally, the Alien is the one who conceived the idea of chipping. The conspiracy theory that the distribution of Corona Virus COVID-19 is a special

operation for “chipping people” has become quite widespread / widespread enough. COVID-19 is a show directed by “mega-international companies”. According to the author, small electronic devices will be sewn into a human body, and “officials will be recycled”, since in the future everything will be controlled by computers. The Alien in this dashing twisted plot is just like Voldemort in “Harry Potter”; true, sometimes he is personified in Bill Gates.

**Instead of a Conclusion.** There are objective reasons for the search for the Alien: fear, uncertainty, confusion. There are causes of “the frozen” – ethnic or racial prejudices, and imbalances of regional development. There are also reasons associated with the shortcomings of the information policy of states. According to a recent Pew Research Center poll, nearly a third (29%) of Americans believe in the artificial origin of the SARS-CoV-2 Corona Virus. There are no such statistics in Russia, but a quarter (24%) of Russians, according to a survey by the Levada Center on March 25, do not trust the official information about the Corona Virus disseminated in the media, while 35% trust only partially. According to VTsIOM 47% of Russians believe that the media hold back some facts about the pandemic, “that is, they are talking about something and hiding something”; and there are 16% of those who do not trust the media in principle. There are deep-seated reasons related to the growing functional illiteracy of the population.

The line between the Alien and the Enemy is very thin (and this has once again been shown by the street unrest in the USA); it is extremely important to prevent the initiation of the intolerant model in which any actions against the Aliens are justified by the fact that their existence and existential essence are different from “our”.

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# **The Communication Between Civil Society Activists and Authorities in the Development of Information and Communication Technologies (by Example of Yaroslavl Region)**

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There are about 4.3 billion Internet users in the modern world. Today, 82% of Russians are connected to the Internet, and 71% use the Network daily (Network as salvation, 2020). The development of information and communication technologies (ICT) changes the public space, forms and channels of communication of public actors in it. ICTs provide significant benefits for social and political activism. In this regard, modern researchers demonstrate the significant potential of the Internet and social network sites in organizing civic activism and various forms of communication (Merle, 2019). At the same time, it is noted that these activities are based on network principles, which increase its life cycle and the ability to interact with authorities or counteract them as antagonists (Brantly, 2019, p. 366). One of the consequences of this is the transformation of communication between civic activists and the authorities in the context of the ICT development.

With the aim of research of the changes in communication between civil society activists and authorities in the Yaroslavl region in terms of the ICT development an expert survey was conducted, which was attended by the regional civil society activists, representatives of government agencies and the education sector. A total of 21 experts participated in the survey.

The research is based on the method of expert interviews. The survey was conducted among representatives of state and municipal authorities, the media, the scientific and expert community, civil society activists who are registered as a legal entity and do not have registration status. Remote interviews were conducted and a special questionnaire was prepared to collect expert opinions. Due to the fact that the survey of experts coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic in Russia, it was decided to use cellular communication, as well as ZOOM and Skype as mechanisms for collecting expert opinions. It should be noted that the remote expert interview format, despite the lack of direct contact with the interviewee, provided a number of advantages: ease of coordinating interview time, interest in new forms of interviewing by experts, and direct immersion in the ICT environment when using software. The combination of these factors allowed us to obtain a sufficient array of information, the results of processing of which are presented below.

Most of the survey participants noted the establishment of an easier way for the authorities and civic activists to interact on social media sites. The speed and mobility of communication has increased, and communication itself is gradually becoming more equal, based on horizontal relationships. The

presence of state and municipal authorities on social network sites is becoming a necessary element rather than a trend.

In general, the interaction between the government and civic activists has become faster, which can be seen when considering the institution of citizens' appeals as a form of civic activity. So, due to the development of the Internet and the creation of special applications and services, the procedure for submitting an appeal on any issue has become simpler and faster. Social network sites also allow posting requests in comments on the pages of the authorities and getting feedback. However, some experts pointed out that only the form of communication has changed, it has become more convenient and faster, less bureaucratic in terms of contacting the authorities, but the content of this communication has not changed.

If we consider changes in communication from the authorities in relation to civil activism, they are manifested in three directions: monitoring, strengthening control and interaction. In the first case, the authorities began actively use tools for collecting information from appeals to the media and authorities, monitoring publications on social network sites. The activists themselves began to pay more attention to the activities of the authorities and discuss them more actively. According to many experts, the reaction of the authorities, in most cases, to civil activity on the Internet is positive. Many authorities respond to information that is discussed on the Internet by entering into a discussion with citizens. The authorities talk about the current/real situation on the issue, answer questions from citizens on behalf of the authorities. The monitoring system introduced at the state level is designed to improve and speed up interaction, resolve problems at the initial stage of their occurrence, and prevent the problem from being widely publicized on social network sites.

In order to form and broadcast the positions of power in the Internet space and retain the audience, officials are forced to use new digital technologies in their activities-to create new channels for broadcasting information, for example, "Russia today", etc. One of the last successful communication projects of the government, according to experts, was the Stop coronavirus platform – a Federal project that operates in all regions and is characterized by an interesting, bright form of submission.

The reaction of the authorities is largely determined by modern trends. Currently, the vector of development in public administration is the openness of power. Power at all levels should be characterized by openness and accessibility to the public, meet the needs of the main consumers, that is, users – be customer-oriented. To improve the efficiency of work with the population in a number of regions, for example, in the Yaroslavl region, regulations for communication in social network sites are being created (decree of the government of the Yaroslavl region No. 553-p of 30.06.2020).

At the same time, experts speak only about the formal nature of the authorities' work in social network sites. Although the authorities are present on the Internet, their positions are represented by the press service or other



authorized persons. Officials who run social network sites by themselves are mostly young people who are interested in this area; usually they actively conducted social network sites even before entering the official position. Social network sites do not cause any discomfort for high-ranking officials, since social network sites are run by authorized persons. There is also a tendency to make social network sites mandatory at the municipal level (including the authority to maintain pages on social network sites in the professional duties of the authorities).

Some experts expressed diametrically opposite opinions, drawing attention to the unwillingness of government structures to interact in the open Internet space, which leads to numerous blocking of sites, Internet platforms, and the development of documents that clearly regulate activities on social network sites. At the same time, the Internet and social network sites are mainly used by individuals to increase personal awareness, rather than quality work with the population. At the same time, the increasing immersion of activists in social network sites, and the increasing study of social network sites by the authorities, make the activists more understandable and predictable for the authorities. If a few years ago, officials in the region did not know how to respond to protest activity on the Internet, today the government itself uses various tools of SMM and PR in order not only to respond to activists, but also to change the informational focus to a more convenient and predictable direction. In addition, the authorities are actively developing communication channels that were previously presented as exclusively opposition platforms, such as the Telegram. This makes it possible to prevent and control protest agenda by manipulating of information agenda, collecting statistics, conducting user surveys, and creating information agenda that displace real problematic topics from the information agenda in social network sites and messengers.

Thus, initially, the government's response on the active development of civic activism on the Internet was limited to control, restriction, and an attempt at clear regulation. At present, it is becoming obvious that there is a need for constructive interaction and communication between different actors. From the population simplifies the mechanism for filing appeals and complaints, accelerates the process of solving social problems through global, viral spread of problematic records that also become the reason for the traditional media (television, newspapers, radio). On the part of the authorities, Internet platforms serve as one of the tools for monitoring public tension, a means of quickly resolving problems, and a platform for presenting and promoting their positions and interests.

There is a consensus among experts who are current officials: state and local authorities monitor social network sites, respond to negative posts and comments in order to ensure the greatest interaction with the population and speed up the solution of problems. Representatives of non-profit organizations give a positive assessment of the actions of the authorities, saying that communication with officials has really become easier and faster, as well as that



there is a real opportunity to conduct a dialogue directly with a person using personal messages, rather than using official appeals and reception days. Media representatives also note positive changes in the work of the authorities, pointing more to the ongoing monitoring and analysis of social network sites in the process of making political and managerial decisions. Civic activists who operate without forming a legal entity hold different point of views. They note that currently the state does not conduct an effective information and communication policy, and officials are in social network sites for visibility of activity, using them to form a positive agenda, but not to interact with activists to solve any problems.

Political scientists, who, due to their professional activities, can perceive the situation from both sides, took a neutral position. So, they note that officials and authorities really began to pay more attention to social network sites and messengers, however, their active activity in them is hindered by their official status and the need to go through a number of bureaucratic procedures before publishing information or responding to a user's post or comment. In addition, the experts drew attention to the fact that representatives of elected bodies are more likely to use social network sites for personal PR, and executive authorities see social network sites as a mechanism for "promoting the brand of the state", covering the official agenda.

This work was supported by the RFBR as part of the research project No. 19-011-00268 "Transformation of civic activity in the context of information and communication technologies development (on the example of the Yaroslavl region)".

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# Depicting Coronavirus Lockdown Routine in Social Networks

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The pandemic of Covid-19 caused numerous deep changes in social life all over the world and huge health threat besides. Social distancing as well as lockdown is a small part of a big turn in contemporary routine. Economical breakdown, unemployment crisis, political contradictions in medical sphere and multiple shifts in cultural life were, inter alia, the main challenges modern society faced under the coronavirus pandemic.

Such a splash of social threats immediately attracted attention of the scholars in different countries. The researches that have been conducted by this day, as well as the administrative reports, attempted to penetrate into numerous aspects of this problematic situation. Pretty soon several fields of study formed, that showed the differentiation of scholars interest between few main subjects following.

1. The overall effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown measures (Haleem, Javaid, Vashya, 2020).

2. The mental health effects of lockdown and social distancing during the Covid-19 pandemic (Banks, Xu, 2020, Singh, Roy, Singha..., 2020), unhappiness, loneliness, boredom (Brodeur, Clark, Flèche, Powdthavee, 2020), and some similar subjects.

3. The impact of lockdown on economics and business, unemployment (Kong, Prinz, 2020), other economic effects of the pandemic (Wu, 2020).

4. The impact of the pandemic on different aspects of urban life such as urban mobility (Aloi, Alonso, Benavente..., 2020), perspectives of urban development under restrictions, analysis of the measures undertaken in different cities for their future improving.

5. Different aspects of the pandemic and lockdown impact on the environment (Mandal, Pal, 2020).

The analysis of articles and scientific and administrative reports helped to estimate the actual research field concerning the circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic and its consequences nowadays. Moreover, due to such a review current lacunas can be highlighted in surveys followed the pandemic events. For example, the people's attitude to the different measures undertaken by the authorities to prevent the spread of coronavirus still stays poorly explored. How do the people perceive the lockdown and other restrictions? What is their attitude? How do they evaluate their mental and physical health and routine themselves? How do they express their attitude? What innovations brought coronavirus threats and lockdown into everyday life?

Attempting to answer these questions, first of all we need to consider the restrictions and other challenges people faced under the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown followed. Surveys and reports in different countries reveal very

similar anti-pandemic measures taken to avoid the Covid-19 spread. Here the variety of actions traced by several researches and reports can be considered: staying at home, refraining from any outdoor activities, public or not, promenading and jogging included, refusing public transport usage, distancing from relatives and peers. Of course, there were exceptions of that rule in case of extreme necessity such as taking care of sick or disabled relatives, employment in life support industries etc. At this rate, the mandatory constant face protection comes into force (Household Impacts..., 2020).

How do all these steps result in everyday life of common people? Multiple serious changes in lifestyle and routine were discovered during the lockdown turning to merely a curfew. They resulted in some challenges which can be combined in several categories.

1. Health. First of all it is a threat of being infected by a very risky virus Covid-19. But moreover, the lockdown brought extra challenges. On the one hand, it was the lack of movement. What is a daily quantity of steps an individual can make staying at home, particularly in a flat? On the other hand, most people experienced a reluctant change of diet caused by different limitations (Sharp, 2020).

2. Spatial. The lack of movement was not the only consequence of the pandemic lockdown. Being caged up in effect in small flats increases the different types of anxiety. While the inhabitants of suburbs disposed even an outdoor space as a part of their properties that could be used for different kinds of outdoor leisure, lots of people was to stay accompanied by family members or even alone day by day within limited space.

3. Economical and unemployment. Even if we leave aside the unemployment growth problem, nevertheless we should take into account the per capita income decline. It was the result of slowdown in manufacturing of essential goods and service sector, closure of the restaurants and hotels as well as places of entertainment and trade centers (Haleem, Javaid, Vashya, 2020). These were the reasons of decreasing profits of small and medium-sized businesses and, at the same time, caused the unemployment level growth. The reluctant remote work instead of common work process or unemployment cannot be surely estimated as a pure advantage too.

4. Information. In fact, the lockdown deprived people of probably most part of their common activities and leisure. One of the easiest available ways to feel out this space was the elevated attention to mass media providing at that moment multiple cultural and entertainment issues. But otherwise they experienced the huge flow information on coronavirus situation, such as daily statistics on number of new cases and lethal cases, different reports, recommendations from the officials, as well as the stories of eyewitnesses and even fake information. All those led to the growth of anxiety level.

5. Leisure and recreation. Current anti-pandemic measures extremely diminished the opportunities for habitual forms of leisure and recreation including travelling directions and possibilities. If each year of hard working usually

can be finalized by a recreation trip to the resort, travelling or other vacation activity, in year 2020 a significant part of vacations faced the risk of failure. Furthermore, most part of sport, cultural and other public activities was to be refused for a long period of time.

6. Educational. The covid-19 pandemic lockdown determined several changes on most levels of educational sphere. The main transformation concerned the teaching process and examinations mostly conducted in remote mode since that time. Moreover, the all the offline sources became unavailable. The aftermath stay-at-home study for different aspects of health and educational process are the subject for discussion too.

7. Relatives and kids. In this case, the social distancing can be considered ambiguously resulting. On the one hand, the lockdown was to prevent any social contacts excepting those who constantly live together. It means that everyone should refuse all the visits to relatives, peers etc. On the other hand, the individual with permission to work faced a necessity to settle anyway the need to leave their kids home alone.

All the challenges regarded have in total a strong impact on the daily life of the people because of their long duration. The subject matter of thus research is the people's perception of this period of their life and the way they express and share their opinion. Obviously, the most useful way to discuss anything during the lockdown in the era of Internet is provided by social networks. The rising role of social media in modern world determined mostly by user generated content (Kaplan, Haenlein, 2010: p. 61) described by Goldkind and McNutt (Goldkind, McNutt, 2015: p. 14) multiplies in this case by the lack of other channels for communication. Moreover, by media richness and social presence (Kaplan, Haenlein, 2010, p. 62) modern networking sites are the second level high in the social media categorization after life-simulating virtual games and social worlds which allow face-to-face interactions in virtual reality (Qiao, 2019). The secret of attractiveness of social networks is that any person with smartphone can become an influencer. But otherwise, social networks are the proper means for sharing feelings, emotions and opinions for anyone who stays online.

Emotionally charged communication in this particular case and modern technologies in general together with such cultural fact as visual turn in modern arts and humanities strengthen the visual component of social networking sites content. Being easier to perceive on the first glance, images pieces for interaction grow to the means of creating concepts (Tuominen, 2015).

One of the most relevant cases for visual communication study is a social networking application Instagram. It was run in 2010 as an exclusive network for image sharing and simultaneously succeeded. In 2012 it was affiliated by Facebook and increased some features after that to follow the shape of social network. But still the cross-sharing of visual content is a determinant of Instagram development nowadays. As McCoy states, Instagram brought into life the online communities due to a special feature "Geotagged Photo Maps"

(McCoy, 2017). Tagging a location allowed to place pictures right on the map. It helped, in its turn, to find depicted places and, moreover, to gather the users of cultural or administrative area in communities. Sharing opinions, actions or even stories in images concerned to a particular territory being its resident became the new feature of social network communication again.

For the further research two Instagram local community accounts belonging to the city of Krasnodar were selected. Both examined accounts' names can be referred to as Typical Krasnodar ("Typodar" and "tipich\_krd"). As a rule, these accounts share mostly user generated content among probably 230 and 450 thousand followers respectively.

The analyzed period of 2,5 months included a totality of photographs provided mostly by common users that can be differentiated between several categories by its subject as follows.

1. Deserted city space. This group gathers the images of streets, squares, playgrounds and parks and represents an unusual picture of desolation.

2. Lockdown or social distancing violation. Here the improper distancing in public transport, crowded markets, or different outdoor activities during the curfew are shown. Such subjects occurred quite often on the images as well as in real life.

3. Measures taken by the authorities and business. This category depicts different anti coronavirus spread actions, such as sanitizing public areas, application of warning 1,5 meter markup and police patrolling the streets.

4. Supporting each other. These pictures state the fact of different kinds of volunteer activity and indicate interest of the society to it. Actually the images show the actions of initiative individual that helped persons of high-risk group with essential goods and food supply.

The following two categories can be considered as the most interesting as they discover different ways of people's creativity under the pandemic threat and lockdown.

5. New ways of entertainment. This subject gathers a certain amount of images depicting how people can mobilize their ingenuity and creativeness to invent the new forms of leisure and entertainment relevant more or less to the conditions of lockdown and social distancing.

6. Humor. This special category of lockdown humor includes an impressive image array. Here different jokes and ironies are collected. These pictures make fun of human vice, poor performance of the officials, and of course highlight different fun activities under anti-pandemic restrictions. A vivid example of such an image represents costume play of an imaginary situation of arrival at the airport and checking luggage where sound effects and jogging track are used.

Speaking in brief on the results achieved in this research four main points should be considered. As it can be seen from above, during the pandemic of Covid-19 and following lockdown people faced various challenges which changed their routine seriously. They can be optionally combined in several

groups such as health, spatial, economical and unemployment, information, educational, leisure and recreation, relatives and kids. Obviously, actualizing of each type leads to anxiety growth.

At the same time the analysis of images depicting the coronavirus lockdown routine and people's attitude to its events were conducted. All the pictures examined were shared in user generated content social network Instagram. And the results discovered the following main subjects of users' photographs: deserted city space, lockdown violation, measures taken, supporting each other, new ways of amusement, humor and more. And the fact is, that there is no strict correspondence of main subjects of the pictures mentioned and challenges people faced under pandemic lockdown.

All the subjects can be differentiated as "inside" depicting things and activities that can be referred to approximately allowed by / reached within restrictions of lockdown, and "outside" – everything that cannot be reached under lockdown. And moreover we can consider a greater number of movies (videos) in comparison with other cases studied.

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М о р о з о в а Елена Васильевна

Е в т у ш е н к о Александр Сергеевич

ПАНДЕМИЯ COVID-19:  
НОВАЯ ПОВЕСТКА БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ ДЛЯ ЕВРОПЕЙСКИХ СТРАН

Материалы Международного научного семинара

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Статьи приведены в авторской редакции

Подписано в печать 11.11.2021. Выход в свет  
Печать цифровая. Формат 60×84 1/16. Уч.-изд. л. 7,0. Тираж 500 экз.  
Бумага офсетная. Заказ №

Кубанский государственный университет  
350040, г. Краснодар, ул. Ставропольская, 149

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Кубанского государственного университета  
350040, г. Краснодар, ул. Ставропольская, 149