
A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Many pandemics have been recorded in the history of the world. Although these pandemics had different causes, duration and consequences, they were all accompanied by a deep human concern for one's own and social survival, search for the meaning of our existence, a re-examination of the value system, consideration of the need, possibilities and effectiveness of human solidarity, and research into the prevention of the further spread of the pandemics and their final suppression. That is also the case with the Covid-19 pandemic, which is, unfortunately, our present and will undoubtedly mark the lives of our generations. However, unlike other pandemics throughout history, the Covid-19 pandemic occurred at a time of highly developed social life and global interdependence, which not only contributed to its rapid spread but also threatened to make it one of the turning points in the development of humanity. There is no doubt that the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus has a significant impact on all aspects of our daily lives. It is also very likely that major changes in social reality will mark the time after this pandemic: international order, understanding and realisation of human rights and freedoms, the functioning of political life and political institutions, the use of modern technologies in business, economic trends and preferences of people, the manner of performing various jobs and activities within public services, etc. Part of these changes will undoubtedly be the subject of interest and research in philosophy and various scientific disciplines in social sciences, from historiography, sociology and political science, to economics and the science of administration.

Meanwhile, as the pandemic lasts and as we feel its consequences in everyday life, we also face the challenges it has already brought in many areas of social life. Some of these challenges relate to the regulation of social relations by legal norms and the application of legal norms in the conditions of the new social reality. Precisely because of that, the Institute for Comparative Law decided to dedicate a special collection of papers to legal challenges and responses to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Even though we were aware of the risks inherent to the decision to publish such a collection of papers amid the Covid-19 surge - the risks arising from the potential variability of the research subject which could have important implications for the validity of the research conclusions - we decided to take such a step with two aims in mind. First, to point out the current trends in comparative and national law and, hopefully, offer a relevant starting point for the future research of this subject in legal science.

These aims have determined the physiognomy of the collection of papers and the systematics of the works contained in it. The collection begins with papers dedicated to EU law but from two very different perspectives. Readers are first offered a paper that considers the broader context, more precisely the legal and institutional aspects that have determined the EU's approach towards the pandemic, while the second paper in this field is dedicated to the changes in the EU competition law during the pandemic.

After the EU law, the collection contains papers dedicated to public law, which also discuss various specific issues, both from domestic and comparative law. Firstly, readers are offered a paper dedicated to the constitutional and legal aspects of declaring a state of emergency in the Republic of Serbia due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This paper is followed by a paper analysing the management of the pandemic in Italy in the context of protecting the rights of individuals, the use of technology and sovereignty issues and addressing the implications of introducing a virus surveillance application in that country in light of the right to privacy and possible misuse of so collected data. Finally, the last paper from the field of public law considers the admissibility of measures to combat the Covid-19 pandemic in the context of freedom of religion.

A special part of the collection is dedicated to labour law, the field of law in which the challenges brought by the pandemic are particularly intensive. This section encompasses papers that analyse the consequences that the introduction of the state of emergency and the measures taken during the state of emergency had on the basic labour rights of different categories of workers. The legal position of essential workers during the state of emergency and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on work from home have been specially addressed.

The last part of the collection consists of papers in the fields of bankruptcy law and insurance law, which also identify some challenges imposed by the pandemic in comparative law, especially in terms of the impact it has on initiating and conducting bankruptcy proceedings, as well as the fate of the contract that offers business interruption insurance coverage.