

# **The Role of Local Governments in Control the Pandemic in Hungary**

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## The role of Local Governments in Control the Pandemic in Hungary

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### Introduction

The empirical research on which this study is based was a joint venture of the CERS's Institute for Regional Studies' staff and was conducted in the period April-May 2020.

At the core of the empirical research was a telephone survey conducted among mayors and other local government leaders in about 44 settlements. (Table 1)

Table 1 The number of selected settlements by legal status, type of self-government and size

		0 - 1000 inhabitants	1000 - 2000 inhabitants	more than 2000 inhabitants
Municipalities (21)	independent mayor's office (3)	–	–	3
	joint local government office headquarter municipality (13)	4	5	4
	joint local government office member settlement (5)	4	1	–
Towns (23)		0 - 10 000	10 000 - 100 000	100 000 +
	Towns with county rank (5)	–	3	2
	district seats (13)	3	10	–
	towns that are not district seats (5)	3	2	–

We formulated 19 questions for the surveyed cities and municipalities with varying populations and different territorial roles, which were selected to represent the settlement structure of the country. The compilation of the questions followed two objectives: first, to analyse the role of Hungarian local governments, the content and instruments of their action and their established relationships, and second, to draw broader conclusions where the information gathered allowed.

The COVID 19 epidemic inspired the world's social scientific communities too. Besides understanding and coping with the socio-economic consequences of the corona crisis, the governance characteristics of crisis management became the focus of attention. For our analysis an obvious theoretical framework was the concept of resilience (Welsh, 2014), which has long been known, used, debated and renewed and which is being increasingly measured with quantitative methods and various special and complex indices (Sebestyénné et al., 2020, Jülich, 2017).

International organizations also seek to create some kind of standards, and under the motto of "resilience" both the European Union and the United Nations have announced programs that link disasters with climate protection and sustainability (Welsh, 2014). The World Bank's definition published in 2014 (Sebestyénné, 2020: 355) describes the phenomenon as the capacity of systems and individuals to adapt to external conditions and resist shocks.

Resilience has been (and is) a popular scientific topic of the past decade also in regional research, as the possible actors may vary from regions and cities to the smallest settlements. The evolutionary approach (Boschma, 2015) attempts to understand how shocks affect regions, what capacity the region must have to develop new growth paths, and what long-term adaptation capacity means. However, it is also crucial to analyse the quality of governance. Christopherson et al. (2010) points out that one should not make the mistake repeatedly which was identified in the literature on competitiveness, unilaterally proposing the introduction of the same institutional models under different circumstances or in regions with differing endowments. Other experts point out that resilience became the focus of attention primarily at the global, national, and regional levels, while the local level tends to receive low attention in this respect, although adaptation to emergencies is locally differentiated and local society can play a prominent role in coping with emergencies (Jülich, 2017).

The first wave of the epidemic in the world had barely subsided, but the terminology for the governance model of the epidemic was already created. Bouckaert and co-authors (2020) called the phenomenon "coronationalism," which wittily reflects the role of the different

levels of governments, namely the strong dominance of national governments over both international and local involvement.

An OECD flash analysis about responses of towns to the coronavirus (OECD, 2020a) underlines the need for collaborative governance between the two government levels and presents innovative urban initiatives targeting the most vulnerable social groups through introducing public service allowances and new forms of care. At the same time, many cities have already started rethinking economic development opportunities in the post-crisis time.

An another OECD report (OECD, 2020b) and a British study summarize the outcomes of a flash analysis focusing on local economy in rural areas (Phillipson et al., 2020) pointing to the specific disadvantages and vulnerabilities of rural areas: they find that these regions can't mobilise available resources, have no savings or marketable assets, due to the poor local transport, demographic characteristics, poorer internet access and lesser education and also to the lack of critical mass. Both studies underline that it would be therefore mistaken to apply concentrated solutions to tackle the crisis, as recovery from the crisis can only be achieved through spatially differentiated solutions.

In Germany, a national questionnaire survey (Pöhler et al., 2020) concluded that German municipalities performed well during the previous refugee and migrant crisis, because of their stable model suitable for working with experts, other authorities and volunteers and thanks to their knowledge. During the refugee crisis the functioning of self-governments became more open, they introduced various innovations, through which external and internal organizational networked learning became characteristic.

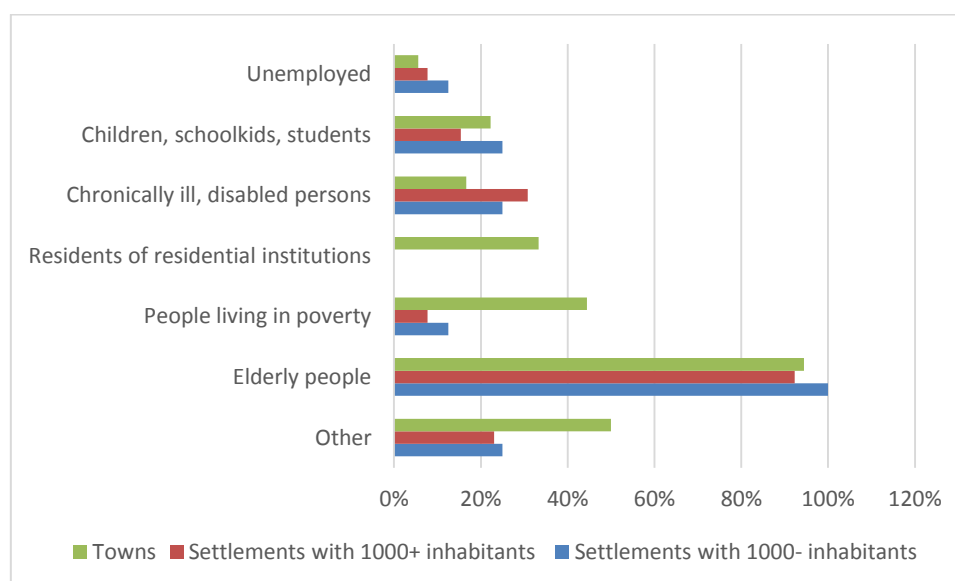
The message of the above scientific and public policy works and empirical experience is that institutions and governance are of great importance, and experience shows that only those open, cooperative decision-making mechanisms are viable that embody the possibility of learning and rapid reaction, the capacity to cope with change and the need for longer-term adaptation strategies.

## Experiences of the municipal survey conducted by CERS

### *Who were particularly at risk?*

First, we asked mayors which population groups they considered most at risk. The coincidence of answers was enormous high in the cities and the villages, almost one hundred percent of the elderly people were assigned to this category. However, this consensus regarding the population groups at higher risk for COVID-19 was not found in the case of any other population group: about one-fifth of the surveyed settlements (slightly more respondents in the villages than in the cities) identified the chronically ill and the disabled as well as children, especially schoolchildren (here conversely, more respondents in the cities than in the villages) as high risk groups. The homeless and people living in residential institutions (like elderly homes, homes for disabled people) were understandably classified as being at risk only by urban self-governments. It is not self-evident in the case of the "poor people", where the mentions by urban self-governments was also dominantly high - since the majority of homeless care and shelter facilities are concentrated in cities - while rural poverty is particularly prevalent in regions lagging behind and especially in zones with a high number of tiny villages.

Figure 1. Who are most at risk? Number of mentions per settlement (%) N=44



Source: Telephone questionnaire survey April-May 2020

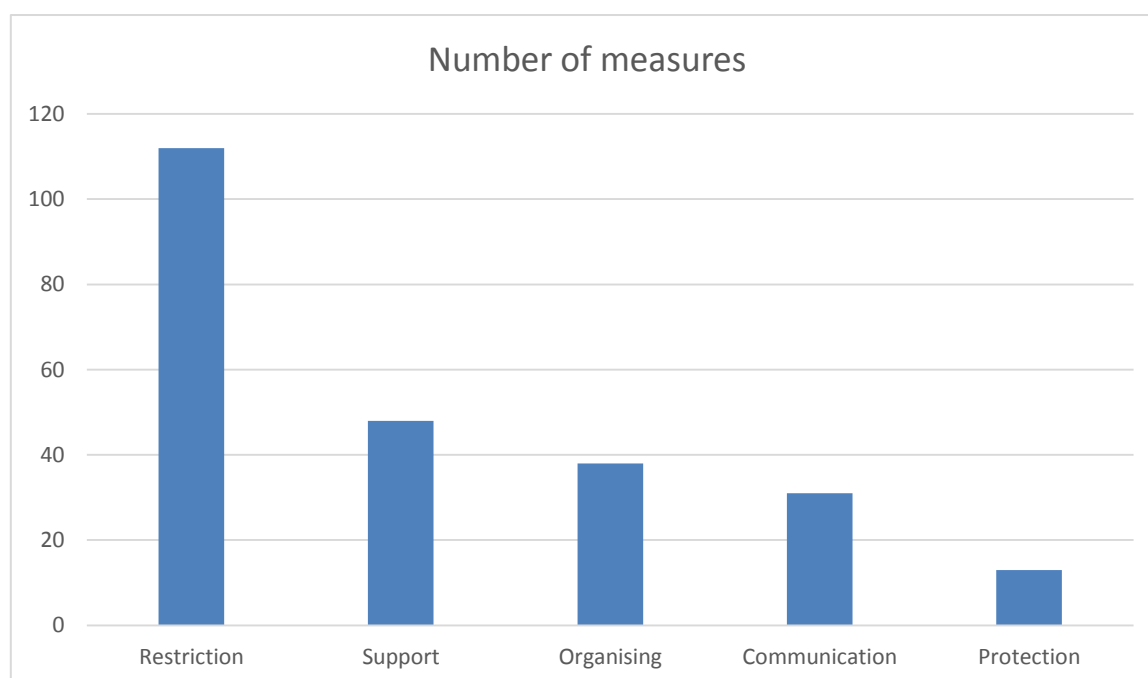
### *Centrally stipulated mandatory and locally initiated measures*

What has happened in protecting vulnerable groups in the fight against the pandemic can be deduced from the answers to the questions about the implementation of the mandatory tasks imposed by the government and the tasks voluntarily managed by local governments. However, the differentiation between the two groups of measures was not always self-evident for the respondents. Although the majority of local measures related to the pandemic were the mere implementation of central provisions, and there was a consensus among respondents on this issue, many interpreted also a part of the mandatory measures as local initiatives, for example because some self-governments introduced the given measures earlier or more widely than it was justified by the national provisions or did not introduce some of them or lifted certain restrictions earlier. Such and similar responses were received, for example, on compulsory wearing of face masks, the shopping timeframe for 65+ or 70+ age groups (the duration and exact timing of which were also not uniform) or the (non-) closure of markets, etc.

Based on the responses related to the performance of the mandatory tasks of local governments we found that, according to the respondents, fewer interventions were necessary in the smaller settlements: overall, an average of 3.5 measures were introduced in settlements with less than 1000 inhabitants, while 6.8 measures in towns with county rank. The prohibiting, limiting provisions most often occurred in the category of the cities with county rank, while settlements with less than a thousand inhabitants considered it the least important to mention this type of measures. Social assistance and service measures were the most frequently mentioned in settlements with less than thousand inhabitants, and the least frequently in the larger towns with county rank, although we assume that this difference reflects the priorities of the respondents rather than the actual activity of this settlement type. Tasks related to reorganization appeared in a relatively balanced way in the case of different settlement types, while information and publicity activities occurred most often in the category of smaller cities. Figure 2 and Table 2 show the distribution of the 242 measures mentioned by the respondents by type. Table 2 illustrates the percentage share of

the distribution of the measures according to village-town distribution. The measures mentioned were largely similar in the two groups.

Figure 2: Distribution of local policy actions mentioned in the survey



Source: Telephone questionnaire survey April-May 2020

Table 2: Distribution of the mandatory central measures implemented by local governments mentioned in the survey by settlement type (%)

	restrictions	support	organisation	information	health defence	Total
villages	42,7	18,8	19,8	17,7	1,0	100,0
towns	48,6	20,5	13,0	9,6	8,2	100,0
total	46,3	19,8	15,7	12,8	5,4	100,0

Source: Telephone questionnaire survey April-May 2020

Our data on the compulsory tasks mandated centrally for local governments show that the central regulation did not consider the local governments' room to manoeuvre and capacities in terms of content, wording, and timing. Nevertheless, the municipalities performed well overall according to their own assessment.

Despite their limited room to manoeuvre, they tried to adapt the interventions to the local particularities. Table 3 illustrates the social sensitivity of local governments, and the fact that

they cannot play a decisive role in health measures having no control over institutional capacities. There was no significant difference between the settlement types in terms of the evaluation of the individual measures' importance, which also points to the general scarcity of room for manoeuvre resulting from the distribution of competences, tools, and resources between the state and local government actors.

Table 4 Order of importance of municipal tasks (on a scale of 1 to 5)

	<b>in all settlements</b>	<b>in cities</b>	<b>in municipalities</b>
<b>social care</b>	4,7	4,8	4,7
<b>preventive measures</b>	4,5	4,3	4,7
<b>purchasing protective equipment</b>	4,3	4,5	4,1
<b>disinfection</b>	4,1	4,3	3,8
<b>employment</b>	3,8	3,7	3,9
<b>public space restrictions</b>	3,6	3,6	3,6
<b>mental health support</b>	3,6	3,9	3,3
<b>support to local businesses</b>	3,4	3,5	3,3
<b>testing for COVID-19</b>	3,0	2,9	3,1

*Source: Telephone questionnaire survey April-May 2020*

Respondents also emphasized that the centralized responsibilities and the prohibitive regulations are often counterproductive, especially if they are not well communicated locally.

At the same time, the communication and co-operation of the central government with local governments was poor, therefore the local governments could not at all, or at least not everywhere strengthen the local implementation of the central provisions.

Not all the measures listed in table 3 fall within the scope of municipal tasks. Their implementation varied according to the differences in the mostly incomplete competencies, availability of resources and/or willingness of the local management to take action. According to most mayors, the duties voluntarily assumed include the provision of protective equipment and masks as well as disinfection, especially if this was carried out in non-municipal facilities or in non-public spaces. Many local governments changed the prescribed way of implementation to adapt them to the emergency, often in completely

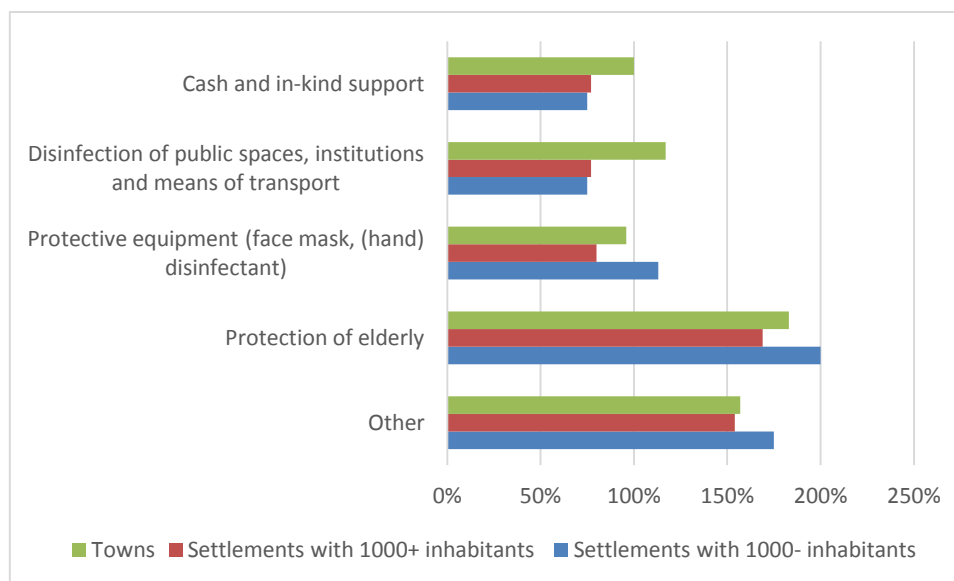
opposite ways. Small settlements excluded cleaning and yard care from home help in order to minimize the number of contacts or began to offer this help in protection of the elderly. Many reported similar examples of the use of so-called "village buses" (the buses of the local governments): some settlements stopped this function, while others allowed an increasing density and frequency of service and delivered grocery and certain other products from the nearby town to a wider range of public institutions and the population.

Although the number of people applying for social assistance did not increase significantly, applications became more frequent, their nature changed, and the reasons for applying were more related to the epidemic, such as job loss, lack of spring seasonal work opportunities whether in the business sphere or at private persons or the impossibility of selling at vegetable markets and fairs and the latter all affected the poorest sections of society. Several mayors mentioned the Roma as a population group that requires special attention. *"A certain layer of the population has been living in extreme poverty also in the past, so that they had to be helped even before. (...) The problem of deep poverty cannot be solved with three kilos of flour,"* explained the mayor of a village with Roma majority population.

In addition to the financial support, several municipalities favoured in-kind support mainly in the form of food. A small town amended its municipal decree on social benefits provided by the municipality so to be able to provide food aid of up to six thousand forints a week to families in need. Elsewhere a local food bank was set up. *"We saw people are isolating themselves, that they cannot go to work, and among them many live on casual labour, (...) and they began to apply for help, for extraordinary financial support (...) we knew that if we continued the old method, these people here, would starve before the help would reach them. Until now people submitted the application and the committee met at some point, made the decision, the applicant was notified that he could come in at certain time ... this usually took two weeks. In this situation this was not appropriate, so we set up a so-called local food bank, which meant we bought durable food, stocked it in one of the rooms of the town hall, and whoever came in and asked for it was granted immediately. People called that they had run*

out of reserves and that they had nothing to eat. Ok, come in! They told us how many they were in the family, 5 people, OK, then we gave them durable foodstuff for a week..." Neither here nor elsewhere was there any abuse: only those who really needed help asked for the canned food, and only those in need applied for financial aid. All local governments were able to cover the additional costs through transfers between budget lines.

Figure 3. Number of voluntary local measures per municipality (N = 44) (%)



Source: Telephone questionnaire survey April-May 2020

Figure 3 illustrates well the significant support that was provided during the epidemic to the population group considered most at risk from COVID-19. Moreover small settlements have taken the palm with two measures per municipality, which is understandable if we consider that they introduced ways of assistance like staying in frequent touch with seniors, shopping, medication, food-delivery or measures like prohibition of visits in nursing homes. Only the latter measure has a rather urban character, all other activities are easier to carry out in smaller settlements and villages, as the advantage in this category is, that the local government employees know the local seniors personally, do not have to travel long distances, and intermediaries are also available, such as volunteers, village or homestead caretakers or public employees. Similarly, villages with less than thousand inhabitants were the most active in the production of protective equipment. Usually the supply of masks was mentioned, sewn by volunteers from materials purchased by the community, although the

quantities express the absurdity of the situation: some settlements could only provide one mask and one pair of gloves per household (and not even these everywhere). A special type of relational capital benefited those living in small villages, as small settlements were at an advantage in terms of the different types of measures falling into the category "other". Also in these cases, the direct knowledge of those affected and the recognition of the problem itself was a real advantage when it came to providing Internet access to pupils and students having had no available internet at home, printing and delivering teaching materials to them or providing care for patients discharged from hospital.

In larger municipalities, quite different activities fell into the category of "other", such as reducing the frequency of public transport connections, caring for the homeless, fee reductions or rent deferrals for residents of social rental housing, etc. We noticed a clear superiority of the cities in terms of their ability to pay subsidies and grants or to disinfect public spaces, means of transport and staircases.

#### *The relationship between central and local governments during the pandemic*

An important element of our research was to examine how relations *between the different levels of government evolve*, assuming, that the degree of centralization and the administrative culture play an important role also in crisis management. As mentioned, the municipalities were generally successful in fulfilling the tasks assigned to them by the central government. The answers of the community leaders interviewed implied a peculiar attitude: Although they considered their own performance to be appropriate, many were dissatisfied with the level of state aid or its absence.

They indicated serious obstacles (in about half of the cities and in 25 % of the municipalities surveyed). In both settlement types, the lack of money proved to be the main limiting factor (Kovács, 2020).

On the one hand, the resources of local governments were cut because of the epidemic, and on the other hand no supplementary funds were provided for the additional tasks. In

addition to budget cuts, a further problem was that the vast majority of municipalities had no mobilizable own reserves.

The settlements identified as the other major problem the lack of information and trust, which was more evident in the cities (Table 5).

Table 5 The basic limits of municipal defence work (rated on a scale of 1 to 5).

	in all settlements	in towns	in municipalities
shortage of money	3,1	3,4	2,9
lack of information	2,7	3,1	2,2
lack of trust	2,0	2,3	1,8
lack of expertise	1,8	1,9	1,7
shortage of human capacity	1,7	1,7	1,8
lack of legal authorization	1,6	1,8	1,5

*Source: Telephone questionnaire survey April-May 2020*

### *The horizontal relationships*

Relatively few respondents indicated that social discipline and the efforts of different organizations and groups would have contributed to the implementation of government measures.

Although the help offered by civil organizations was welcomed, several local governments expressed that they had considered cooperation with civilians and volunteers as a complementary or secondary solution because - in their opinion - with them the implementation, coordination and control were less guaranteed. Most of the responding municipalities considered their own mobilizable capacities to be sufficient overall, primarily due to the reorganization of several functions or the temporary closure of institutions, so that they had the necessary internal human resources at their disposal. There were settlements where a "resource map" was drawn up already at the beginning of the pandemic to map local capacities including all potential actors. But only in exceptional cases

did we encounter conscious preparation, for example in determining the type of partnership that might be necessary in crisis situations. In this sense, it seems as if municipal leaders would have been acting in a vacuum during the first wave of pandemic.

Unfortunately, it must be concluded from this behaviour that a more conscious defence is not to be expected when dealing with the second wave, which has already begun.

### *Changes in operation and communication*

The change in terms of the functioning and relationships of the self-governments is obvious (Table 6). The data show that even in smaller settlements internet was the predominant means of communication and information, which can be explained with the nature of the epidemic, although this experience cannot be generalized as it is a statistical fact that the availability of internet access and IT equipment is generally poorer in rural areas.

Table 6 Which instruments were used to inform the population?

	in all settlements %	in the towns %	in municipalities %
internet	88,6	91,3	85,7
local newspaper, local media	54,5	82,6	23,8
Flyer, poster, letter	77,3	78,3	76,2

*Source: Telephone questionnaire survey April-May 2020*

We assumed that the willingness of local governments to cooperate with each other in overcoming the crisis would be extraordinarily high, or at least noticeable, since certain organizational frameworks for cooperation go back several decades.

Within the framework of the questionnaire survey, 40 local governments commented on the issue of municipal cooperation in one form or another. Only five of them, of varying size, stated that they do not cooperate at all with other local governments on issues related to COVID-19. The intensity of the relations did not show significant differences by settlement size either.

At the same time, there was a perceptible national cooperation, so the activity of the larger cities, which kept in touch with each other without exception with the help of the Association of Cities with County Rights. The National Association of Municipalities was also active according to a report published in its journal (Kolin, 2020), although the answers to our questionnaires do not reflect this.

However, the cooperation of cities and larger settlements with neighbouring settlements were much less typical, and usually the smaller settlements addressed the larger ones with requests or questions. In some cases the communities of a particular district organized themselves; or where something remained of the once very active, but in recent years almost completely disbanded micro-regional organization, it became a platform for cooperation. As one mayor put it: *"We have created a group for district mayors. There has never been such thing before. When we have no idea, what to do we ask each other: "For example, kindergarten inspection: How did you manage that? Or the question of masks. We got an offer - is the prize too high or realistic? Do you have additional resources? That works well. I feel that it strengthened me a little bit."* Nevertheless, a real common problem solving was not typical.

#### *Local decision making, organizational innovations*

In our questionnaire we also addressed the questions of what changes have occurred in the organization and functioning of local governments, whether the pandemic has led to organizational innovation or organizational learning. The responses showed that while it was admitted having made mistakes and been unprepared, only one-third of the responding local governments were willing to commit to certain change in the future (Table 7).

Table 7. Were you unprepared in any area? Are there any changes or measures planned?

	In all settlements %	in towns %	in municipalities %
Yes, we were unprepared	50,0	56,5	42,9
Yes, we are planning	31,8	34,8	28,6

changes			
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Source: Telephone questionnaire survey April-May 2020

The general opinion was that it was not possible to prepare for such an emergency. They explained that although they had an evacuation plan, pandemic preparedness was not a requirement so far and that this must change in any case. A mayor of a large city admitted that him or his team had no knowledge in the field of crisis management. Several others also pointed out that the reactions of the population have not at all been foreseeable.

Another mayor considered it crucial to call a meeting right at the beginning of the crisis and to adopt an action plan, which later proved to be very helpful. And a single mayor reported that he kept a diary what he wanted to study later but did not yet have time to draw lessons from it.

Only few mayors sought to assess his own position and role within the process of coping with the pandemic, as a learning process. The mayor of a small town attributed the success of adaptation largely to the "crisis resilience" of the city's economy and considered it essential to accumulate reserves in the budget. The mayor of another small town, on the other hand, remarked that one cannot really rely on the strength of the community, as it is the case, for example, in Austria, where *"it is not the government that has villages, but the villages themselves have real self-governments. You can only prepare for a crisis with secure, predictable local capacities,"* he said. Almost everywhere the adjustment of a new budget was considered necessary. In some settlements a local economic development program was drawn up, but there were others where only acute actions were implemented like the immediate convening of strawberry growers. And only few mentioned that they are counting also with a second wave.

We asked about the transformation of *local decision-making mechanisms*. The fact that, in accordance with the government's decision, the mayor was empowered to substitute the body's decisions proved to be a challenge to which local governments responded in different ways. The first reflection following the entry into force were rather negative, media reported general mistrust and uncertainty. Some mayors found this responsibility

depressing, as they had to take decisions alone, while others considered this mandate appropriate and necessary for rapid action. Some mayors of smaller settlements described the possibility of suspending the activities of the local body as explicitly harmful, and felt that it was not lifelike anyway because of the small board size, besides it contributed to the growth of mistrust. So, there was also a risk that mayors would feel without support because they had not received any real support from either the centre or the municipality. With regard to the authorisation allowing to introduce special measures for weekends, respondents stated that the population did certainly not understand why the mayor was the "boss" only at weekends and why can't (s)he do anything during week.

From the outset, some city mayors created a collective decision-making mechanism by setting up a local operational body composed of elected leaders and representatives of local government and the heads of local institutions. In eight of the cities surveyed these bodies of varying composition worked regularly, not always in person, but in the form of circulars or video conferences. There were settlements where the "Operative Board" originally did not just consist of representatives of the municipal sphere (e.g. the police chief or the director of the hospital was also a member), but in the end it did not work because - as the mayor put it - *"there was no need for such kind of body"*.

Several mayors stated to have tried to involve all political parties in the political preparation of decisions, consulted with the political groups and that most representatives have been active. In larger settlements, the self-government committees continued to work in various remote forms. Several mayors declared that they did not want to (mis)use the authorisation they have received, as one of them formulated, because it "could backfire later". In line with the limited civil participation mentioned before, most mayors did not report that NGOs would have been regularly involved in the decision-making; and there was rarely an example of a local entrepreneur having been represented on the operational board.

Nevertheless, some forms of consultation functioned regularly, often even the formal collective decision making and voting, although the decisions in the legal sense were made by the mayor alone. Overall, the nature of decisions has not changed, only their speed. The

opinion was in minority that collective functioning had become empty and that online forms were not suitable for real discussion and debate. It is however certain that local governments have become familiar with the idea and the reality of e-government and e-governance, and most of them plan to continue using them.

## Conclusions

As mentioned, the main purpose of the survey was to describe local government responses to the COVID 19 epidemic, however some general lessons can be also drawn from the experiences gained.

- The mayors have experienced and recognized the advantages of digital administration; therefore, it is possible that the e-administration will be modernized considerably in the long term, both in terms of office operations and communication with the public. For this to happen, it is certain that IT infrastructure and training measures will be necessary at the government level.
- Most respondents did not feel that it is time to radical changes in their functioning or organization. Overall, they are concentrating on the short-term financial consequences of the crisis, and in their opinion the only way to compensate for the deficit that has arisen is to receive aid and compensation from the government.
- The reactions hardly reflected an awareness of the advantages of involving civil and other external partners; on the contrary, efforts were made to solve the tasks with their own capacities.
- Similarly, and in lack of institutional background, there was understandably hardly any co-operation of self-governments, "*everyone had an own agenda to deal with*".
- As we have seen in the brief presentation of the literature and international experience, crisis situations particularly valorise the role of cooperation between the levels.

In general, the survey did not at all reflect the opinion prevailing especially in the opposition media, that the epidemic had exacerbated the centralised system of relations between the government and local governments. Although many

complained about the lack of information and the serious consequences of the budget cuts, yet we cannot speak about the (further) deterioration of relations with the government, at least according to our data. The expressed opinions were also quite homogeneous regardless of the political background, the differentiating factor much was more the different endangerment of small and larger settlements.

- It can be deduced from the answers that, that apart from national regulations, local governments were not guided by either the governmental nor the regional level and therefore carried out local tasks on their own on the basis of written or online regulations, taking the local situation into account. This resulted in a differentiated system of solutions which was able to fill the gaps of the central regulations insensitive to local specialties and to increase the efficiency of the measures. Most administrations at the county level and the county self-governments remained inactive in cooperating with and supporting the local self-governments.
- Small settlements have proven the most successful in identifying the often individual problems of different population groups and in providing them with appropriate help based on their "relationship" and "knowledge" capital.
- However, the management and control of the epidemic did not come up with a rich set of locally tailored tools, which is naturally related to the fact that the course and effects of the epidemic were relatively similar everywhere, the only difference was its intensity. Nevertheless, the question remains open as to how local governments will cope with a possible second wave of the epidemic, due to lack of more conscious preparation based on the experience gained so far.
- It is likely that treatment of the consequences and impacts will be the challenge that will activate local governments. Indeed, the maintenance of the local economy is the fundamental task of local governments. Nevertheless, most respondents expect central government assistance in this regard, but the different degrees to which settlements are affected by the pandemic, the resources available to them and their different situations naturally require different approaches and strategies from them. It would therefore be important that the government's crisis management and

employment promotion programs consider territorial differences, specifics and the aspects of long-term sustainability and resilience.

By the time our manuscript closes, we are already in the second wave of the pandemic. In this phase, the management of the epidemic and that of its consequences and impacts have "slipped together" in terms of public policy, and therefore the joint management of the economic and social impacts and of the pandemic itself is increasingly present. Turning back to what we have written at the beginning of our study about resilience, it is clear, that the use of a longer-term and more complex mindset and tools has greater opportunities in the current context. Unfortunately, neither organizational learning, or the search for longer-term solutions nor vertical and horizontal cooperation became commonplace in the first wave. In the light of the steps taken so far, neither the empowerment of local governments nor partnership with them will replace the current strong centralization. It appears that the resilience of local governments will not increase, as this requires mobilizable resources, more room for manoeuvre and at least a peaceful system of central-local relations.

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