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## **THE E-GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTATION CONCEPTS WITHIN THE CONTINENTAL-EUROPEAN APPROACH**

Within the Continental-European approach to the formation of e-democracy there were considered and analyzed two forms: the Swedish one, in which the emphasis is made on the services providing, on the social component, and where the liberalization of telecommunications is no longer relevant; and the French one, where the strong state role remains with a focus on technical support, network construction and domestic production equipment, with the orientation of the production to the needs of home users. There were showed their advantages and disadvantages.

Generally, it may be noted that during implementation of e-government within the Continental-European approach there were achieved some positive results as well as there were some shortcomings. However, this process has no feedback and the twenty-first century is a century of accelerating of the movement of Europe to the information society and digital economy, the optimal correlation of connections between regional and national schools in the EU, the spreading of the European educational techniques using Internet, which has tremendous benefits those bring with itself the development and dissemination of the informational-communication technologies.

**Key words:** e-government, the Continental-European approach, telecommunications, information space, Internet, Informational-Communicational Technologies.

The e-democracy in European states is based on the balance between the public control and the market, on the dynamic combination of state and market forces. It is characterized by the following features:

- by the presence of supranational institutions (European Parliament, European Commission, European Court), the recommendations of which are binding upon all EU countries;
- by the high degree of integration of European nations and countries, that is shown in the single currency, in the single pan-European informational space, in the preparation of a new unit constitution, in the free movement of capital, energy, information;
- by the solid legislation that regulates informational relations and informational flows which are circulating in the European informational space, and also the personal initiative;
- by the provision of universal service.

Thus, the state control in such a case is manifested in the constant monitoring and recovering of the legislation, related to building of the information society, and also in that the issue of public access to the informational legislation is solved by the state, not by the private organizations. In this approach, management and operation of the national governments and supranational structures due to the usage of high technologies with focus on the needs of citizens-users of information networks and systems. This type of control allows the consumers (voter, citizen, public representative) to obtain the government information in real time and successfully perform their civic duty by using of the electronic voting system or government services of payment for taxes and penalties. In the everyday life, the European approaches are focused on the functional and practical informing of the residents. The implementations of this approach serve the projects “European information network on international relations and regional studies” (EINIR) and “e-Europe”.

Within the Continental-European approach to the formation of e-democracy can be provided the following two forms:

- the Swedish, in which the emphasis is made on the services providing, on the social component, and where the liberalization of telecommunications is no longer relevant;
- the French, where the strong state role remains with a focus on technical support, network construction and domestic production equipment, with the orientation of the production to the needs of home users.

Sweden is one of the leading countries in the world in the Information Technology sector. Policy of information society formation in this country is based on the fact that information technologies affect on everyone and change the life of people in every area<sup>1</sup>. In this regard, the Swedish Government has allocated the central areas of informational technology in the country:

- confidentiality in the information technology: everyone has a right of privacy while using information technologies;
- competence in the usage of the information technologies;
- the availability of the information society services: identification and usage of the information and the communication through the information technologies.

In March of 1994 the Swedish government formed the National Commission of Information Technologies. The task of the commission was to promote the information technologies for improving the living standards and for the increasing of the international competitiveness of the country. There were named seven areas in which Sweden planned to build the information society: education, legislation, public sector, healthcare and medical care, communication system, industry and trade, informational-technology researches. In 1998 the state government makes a request to IT infrastructure with high transmission capacity, which later became known as bandwidth. In 1999 the work about the information technology law has started, which was presented to the Swedish Parliament in March of 2000. Thus, the basis for policy information technology was initiated. The law is one of the cornerstones of the disciplined and organized society. The Swedish government has decided that the legal framework would be created in the Internet where every citizen could have the free access to the laws and regulations. The Swedish parliament marked the policy frameworks of IT: Sweden should become the first country with the informational society for everyone. This means that everyone gets the access to the informational technologies, will trust them and use the advantages of the benefits that they bring<sup>2</sup>.

The Swedish government has identified the main goals of informational technologies in the country: a secure financial position and stable prices; the growth of workplaces and reduce of unemployment; Sweden transformation into the leading country in the field of knowledge and researches; enhance of the senses of the security, fairness, justice and also the well-being of citizens; Sweden transformation into the country where the main environmental issues are solved.

The Development of Democracy in Sweden contributes to the fact that the information about the most politicians is supplied on the state and the municipal sites. There are biographies, emails and even phone numbers, allowing citizens to access the politician directly with issues those are interest to them. Some government websites held virtual conferences that enable people to converse with each other or with the selected representatives. In 1999 the Swedish Government decided that exactly the governmental bodies should become an example for the effective usage of the information technologies.

The e-administration now is developing in governmental bodies under the supervision of the Swedish Agency for Public Management (Statskontoret) for achieving of the main aims: efficiency of ruling, achieving of the set tasks and security. The agency with the goal of the democracy protection and the public service works improving cooperate with a variety of researches and evaluations of the public bodies' activity to ensure the documentation necessary for decision-making. It also manages the development of the projects in the informational technologies and telecommunications area. The E-address of the Agency is [www.statskontoret.se](http://www.statskontoret.se). For several years, the site «VirtualSweden» was the main source of information about the state institutions for the citizens through the Internet. The purpose of «VirtualSweden» is to serve to the population more effectively through the single source for all the municipalities, county councils, ministries, Parliament and the European Council. The network address is «VirtualSweden» - [www.virtualsweden.com](http://www.virtualsweden.com).

There can be given the examples of state bodies' websites where the citizens can express their views and get direct information: government ([www.regeringen.se](http://www.regeringen.se)), National Board of the labor market ([www.ams.se](http://www.ams.se)), National Board of student support ([www.csn.se](http://www.csn.se)) national tax Board ([www.rsv.se](http://www.rsv.se)).

The chairman of the Commission of Information Technologies of Social-Democratic Party, the vice president and co-founder of the Swedish company "Votia Empowerment" – Nicolas Nordstrom believes

<sup>1</sup> Нордстром, Н. Швеция. Демократия нуждается в подпитке свежими силами. *Государство в XXI веке / Информационные бюллетени. Материалы конференции Microsoft для государственных деятелей, вып. 18.* <<http://www.microsoft.com/Rus/Government/newsletters/issucl8/22.mspx>>.

<sup>2</sup> Информационное общество для всех. Шведская ИТ политика. *REGERINGSKANSLIET. SE-103 33 Stockholm, 2002.* <[www.industry.ministry.se](http://www.industry.ministry.se)>.

that the universal principle which is applied today in democracy and politics, “DAD - Decide, Announce and Defend” is hopelessly outdated. He proposes a more effective scheme of “three D” – Dialog, Discussion, Decision. The most important thing here is to begin a process from the dialogue which eventually turns into an open discussion for the participation in which the wide masses of citizens attract. And after that there should be the decision. N. Nordstrom believes that the main focus of e-democracy in Sweden is made on the democratic principles and broad political participation: “It is not enough if the state authorities only launched these or other technical means and waited when the people would take part in the democratic process. However, the new technologies greatly simplify such participation... People will wait for the manifestation of interest to their opinion and will be ready to express it by the means of e-democracy, but only on the condition that this idea will be considered in the next decision”<sup>1</sup>.

Thus, there can be identified the main priorities for Sweden in a spear of an information society building for everyone and the creation of e-democracy: trust to the information technologies; competence in the usage of the information technologies; availability of information society services.

The development of e-democracy in France is recognized a priority task in the state policy of the country. This is particularly contributed to the fact that France, beginning the research and studying of Internet in the 1990s, has dropped the initiative and allowed some lag in this area in comparison with the other European countries. France, like any other European country, is strongly influenced by the European Union. The development of e-democracy is supported by the European institutions, creating a kind of competition between the European countries. The “e-Europe” program expresses the goals and objectives of the European policy in the e-democracy building. The place of France in “electronic” Europe is estimated as average, even though at the beginning of the twenty-first century there were created about 5399 public sites, existed 1,328 “on-line” forms (which is more than 84% of all existing).

One of the most important sectors of information technology development in France is their usage in the management and the public environment. The main role is given to the tele-procedures (electronic procedures). Tele-procedures are the informational exchange between authorities, their partners and the users. Each ministry in France develops the electronic procedures in their separate area on their own. Thanks to the Decree from the 2d of February 1999 “On the allocation of the administrative forms on line” the following years there were launched more than 20 kinds of electronic procedures those encouraged the active participation of citizens in the public life. These procedures have been established: for individuals (monthly income taxes, scholarships for higher education, enrolls for competitions and so on); for the enterprises (declaration on the exchange of property, social returns); for associations (subventions for urban policy)<sup>2</sup>.

One of the main directions of information technologies development in France, necessary for the e-democracy building, is the democratization of access to the law. According to French researcher J. Poulin, the access to the documentation, to the official information on the Internet is the access to the law. It is important to note that the access to the law in France is recognized as the most important right of a citizen in the administrative area. In the early beginning of the information technologies development, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January 1978 in France, there were accepted the Law “On informatics, card index and the free usage of information” in which a separate chapter was devoted to the implementation of the right of the access to the information, processed automatically. The law from the 12<sup>th</sup> of April 2000 “On the rights of citizens in their relations with the administrations” put the access to the right norms on the first place. The State Council has included the right of access to the administrative documents in a number of the fundamental safeguards according to the 34<sup>th</sup> article of the Constitution of France. Today in France operates the decree from the 7<sup>th</sup> of August 2002 “On the public service of law spread over the Internet”, which aims to provide the more free access to the legal texts and jurisprudence. The basic data, which explains what kind of information should be provided to the public free of charge, is placed at [www.legifrance.gouv.fr](http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr). It should be noted, that while creating the sites of the state bodies on Internet there should be used the prefix «gouv.fr», allowing unifying and accurately identifying of the public authorities in France. Circular of the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 1999 “On Internet sites of the public services and the state institutions” is issued on the basis of the governmental program “Preparing of France information society integration” for facilitating of the citizens access to the Internet, dematerialization of administrative procedures, development of websites of administration.

<sup>1</sup> Нордстром, Н. Швеция. Демократия нуждается в подпитке свежими силами. *Государство в XXI веке* / Информационные бюллетени. Материалы конференции Microsoft для государственных деятелей, вып. 18. <<http://www.microsoft.com/Rus/Government/newsletters/issucl8/22.mspx>>.

<sup>2</sup> Стрелец, И.А. (2003). Новая экономика и информационные технологии. Москва: Экзамен.

Among the main principles those determine the content of the French governmental sites are the following:

- the reliability – creator of the site is responsible for connectivity, accuracy and consistency of the information; the user should not doubt in the likelihood of constantly updated information;
- the accessibility – easiness and speed of the access, gratis, calculation of all access methods and users formats;
- the interactivity – the electronic communication of administration and users (opening of mails and discussion forums); electronic circulation of the citizen should give an opportunity to receive a personal response within one week maximum;
- the presence of the links with the main sites of the public administration, i.e. the site of any ministry should be with the access portal to the French administration and information [www.admitVapss.gouv.fr](http://www.admitVapss.gouv.fr), with the juridical site Legifrance and with the site [www.internct.gouv.fr](http://www.internct.gouv.fr), which explains the governmental efforts of creating of the information society; the sites of local (regional) services should be linked to the other local public bodies, as well as with central (ministries) on their own profile;
- the placing of the administrative forms on the line, because all the administrative forms in France are registered by the Commission of administrative simplifications, that is why the electronic forms must be identical registered and printed, on Internet the forms are equal to those available in the public authorities;
- the official reports (accounts) – E-Library of reports (accounts) is available in free mode at the site Admifrance.

The security of informational systems of the government sites is coordinated by the Central Service of the Information Systems Security. In the circular it is specified that the confidentiality of the personal information provided by users must also be complied.

It should be noted that unlike the United States, now there is no specific law in France devoted to the electronic public authorities. There are plans for creating of such a law, but now the electronic administration is mentioned in policy documents as a strategic objective. That is why there are quite a number of plans and projects for creation of electronic administration adopted by the French government. The main of these projects can be called the plan “RE / SO – 2007” “For the e-republic in the information society”. The aim of the plan was in that everybody could use the Internet both at educational establishment and at home.

EU policy in the implementing of the concept of e-government was announced in March of 2003 by the European Compete in Enterprise and Information Society (European Commissioner for Enterprise and the Information Society) at the conference on “National Electronic Governments in the Information Society” in Barcelona. He said that for the EU e-government is a tool, not a goal. Its task: to make the functioning of the real government more efficient in these three areas:

- e-government will make the information about how the government (central, regional and local) works available, where is spent the public fund money, and also allows the citizens to participate in decision-making at the initial stage of the discussions. I.e., e-government is a means for implementation of the concept of “open government”;
- e-government will allow the citizens to focus the attention of the public bodies on the specific problems of their regions;
- e-government will help the public bodies to operate more effectively and qualitative.

For the European Union the concept of e-government is a part of the so-called “European plan”, coordinated by the Chief Management of information technologies of the European Commission. There are made the special programs IDA (Interchange of Data between Administrations) and the IST (Information Society Technologies) which finance the researches in the field of information technologies. IDA Portal is a system that helps to overcome the linguistic barriers for the European users of government websites<sup>1</sup>.

The process of e-government formation is controlled by the European Union by the regular polls «Benchmarking eEurope», covering 10000 providers of general purpose services in 20 sectors of all EU members states and also Iceland, Norway and Switzerland.

The researches of «Cap Gemini and Ernst & Young» company, conducted in 2011 showed that the most popular online service in Europe are connected with finding work and paying taxes, and the least popular are the health services and also services associated with the issuance of building permits and safety of environment. Those studies also showed that business companies are the most active users of public

<sup>1</sup> eGovernment Research in Europe / European Commission. 2004. *EU-site*. <[http://europa.eu.int/information\\_society/programmes/egov\\_rd/text\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/information_society/programmes/egov_rd/text_en.html)>.

services through the e-government.

In each country of the European Union the e-government implements as a part of the above structure. For example, in Sweden, the responsibility for the implementation of the first service to citizens – paying for taxes – lies on the government and on the Swedish National Council for taxation questions

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2006 the Swedish e-government was combined with “Agency of State development” with aim of more effective reforming and modernization of public administration in Sweden.

The creation of e-government in France was proclaimed as one of the priority directions of the “Program of governmental actions for the organization of public information» (PAGSI), adopted on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January 1998. The French strategy of e-government development is set in the program ADELE, presented on the 9<sup>th</sup> of February 2004. The program ADELE (ADministration ELEctronique) provides the detailed network traffic (detailed roadmap) for the consistent and coordinated development and implementation of the electronic services.

Currently, among the 12 e-government services for the citizens in France, the only one is not implemented - the issue of assistance to large families. For all other services the specialized sites already exist, on which, at least, the relevant information is present. As for the e-government for business, in France, as in Sweden, the services are available in all 8 directions.

Much attention is paid in France to the increase of computer literacy of both the population and government officials. The government has organized the special programs for trainings for the officials how to work with personal computers and Internet. In addition, the ownership of the new information technologies had to be included into the curriculum while training the officials in the high schools. France also implemented the program “The usage of information and communication technologies by the government - the basis for the governmental reforms”. At the beginning of the twenty-first century the French governmental sites were recognized as the best in Europe.

Generally, it may be noted that during the implementation of e-government within the Continental-European approach there were achieved some positive results as well as there were some shortcomings. However, this process has no feedback and the twenty-first century is a century of accelerating of the movement of Europe to the information society and the digital economy, the optimal correlation of connections between regional and national schools in the EU, the spreading of the European educational techniques using Internet, which has tremendous benefits those bring with itself the development and dissemination of the informational-communication technologies.

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