PROCEDURE FOR THE CIRCULATION OF DOCUMENTS TO SUPPORT THE DIGITALIZATION PROCESS IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

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The digitization of public institutions in Romania is a crucial aspect of the country's global digital transformation efforts. Digitization involves the transition from traditional, paper-based processes to digital systems to increase efficiency, transparency and accessibility. There are many initiatives related to the digitization of public institutions in Romania, such as the E-government services. Romania aimed at the digitization of public services through various e-government initiatives. They usually involved providing online platforms and portals where citizens and organizations can access a wide range of government services and information. The main objective of the paper is to propose a unique document identification system (DIS) in a Romanian public institution (Directorate for Social Assistance and Child Protection - D.G.A.S.P.C.) and to introduce a specialized software program to implement this system. The proposed solutions offer significant benefits, particularly in terms of efficiency, accuracy, and security. Before the development of the software program, a new work procedure regarding the document circuit was created, using the principle of the unique registration number. The benefits include the simplification of internal work procedures of D.G.A.S.P.C., shorter time to complete the tasks, reflecting in shorter time to answer citizens' requests, better transparency and traceability of documents, and so on. The paper also advances recommendations for public institutions to implement more easily the new unique document identification system and the associated software program, such as training sessions for employees, to ensure that officials feel comfortable with the new digital tools.

Keywords: digitalization, public institutions, E-government.

INTRODUCTION

The impact of digitalization in Romania was significant, transforming various aspects of society, economy and government. Digitalization will lead us to increase the efficiency of business operations, improve access to information and fast services for citizens and improve connectivity and communication. It also created new opportunities for innovation, entrepreneurship and economic growth. However, digitalization has also brought challenges, such as the need to improve and reskill the workforce, address the issues of the digital gap, and ensure data privacy and cyber security. In general, digitalization in Romania has the potential to stimulate sustainable development and improve the quality of life for its citizens.

DIGITALIZATION IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

In general, the digitalization of public institutions in Romania remains a complex and continuous process, which requires collaboration, investment and commitment from government authorities, public sector employees and other interested parties. By adopting digital technologies and modernizing government operations, Romania can increase the efficiency, transparency, and involvement of citizens in the provision of public services.

The main objective of this paper is to create a procedure for introducing a unique document identification system (DIS) in a public institution in Romania (Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection – D.G.A.S.P.C.), which will be used to develop a specialized

software program for the implementation of this system. The proposed solutions provide significant benefits, especially with respect to efficiency, accuracy and security.

Before the development of the software program, the document circuit working procedure using the principle of the unique registration number was created. By implementing these strategies and promoting an environment proper to digitalization, Romania can accelerate its journey to becoming a digitally empowered nation.

Working Procedure for Introducing a Unique Document Identification System (DIS) in D.G.A.S.P.C.

The authors created the working procedure for implementing a unique number for the identification of each document, entitled document identification system (DIS). This procedure will then be used for the development of our software program that will digitalize the document circuit in this public institution. The procedure is described below:

A.1. Paper documents that enter the institution from outside by fax, post, courier or submitted directly by the applicant are scanned and registered at the Registry and then distributed, in a digital system.

Documents that enter the institution from the outside via official emails assigned to the domain office@dgaspc5.ro will be redirected by the designated official to the address of the Registry Service, which will register and distribute them on the circuit. In the case of documents submitted personally by the petitioners to the Registry, at the time of registration, the petitioner will be compulsorily issued a receipt with the document's unique registration number.

Documents in a language other than Romanian will be registered and distributed to the General Director, respectively to departmental directors, after their translation into Romanian by the department to which the document is intended, in no more than 72 hours after receipt.

Civil status documents, transcripts, school certificates, and medical certificates will not be registered, but the forwarding address that accompanies them.

The registration and circulation of documents in and from the Registry will be carried out considering one of the situations provided below:

A.2. After registration, the documents entered into the institution, which are responses to requests made to the functional structures of the D.G.A.S.P.C., are distributed directly to their designated department.

When registering the document, the department that receives it can connect the received document to the previously sent one and give it the same number, if the received document is the same as the previous version.

A.2.1. The documents entered into the institution that are not responses to requests from the functional structures of the D.G.A.S.P.C. and represent requests according to the law GEO 27/2002 (Romanian Government, 2002), are then distributed to the designated person by the Registry Department. along with the registration and monitoring of the petition resolution activity. After their registration in the Registry, the documents are sent by the Department's Director to the General Director.

A.2.2. The documents entered into the institution that are not responses to requests from the functional structures of D.G.A.S.P.C. and are not petitions according to the law GEO 27/2002 (Romanian Government, 2002), are distributed by the General Director's Registry.

A.2.3. The following documents constitute exceptions to point A.2.2.:

- Documents provided for in point A.1.;

- The subpoenas, communications, and court decisions (which are then scanned, recorded, and distributed directly to the Director of the Litigation Department).

- Utility bills (which are scanned, recorded and distributed directly to the receiving accountant or the Director of Administrative - Supply Department, as appropriate;

- Invoices submitted to the D.G.A.S.P.C. headquarters by third parties, other than utilities. These are scanned, recorded, and distributed directly to the accounting person as the recipient, and the Director of the Administrative - Supply Department. For invoices addressed to the internal departments, they will be also distributed to the Budget - Budget Execution Department. The same procedure applies to invoices with unknown recipients).

- The invoices that accompany the goods handed over in the centers/complexes. They are scanned, uploaded into the centralized system, and are then registered in the RXX - Registry Department. They must be registered within a maximum of 24 hours from receiving them, they are categorized in the group of administrative and accounting documents;

- Offers received for procurement procedures – they are scanned, recorded, and distributed directly to the head of the Public Procurement Department.

- Requests based on Law 544/2001 - they are scanned, recorded, and distributed directly to the person in charge of the respective law within the Communication and Public Relations Department;

- Requests based on Regulation (EU) 2016/679 regarding the transmission of documents containing personal data - they are scanned, recorded, and distributed directly to the Human Resources Department;

- Documents regarding persons sentenced to community service from the Probation Service or Prosecutor's Office – they are scanned, recorded and distributed directly to the person in charge.

A.2.4. If the document entered in the D.G.A.S.P.C. by fax, post, or courier refers to different annexes, which are missing at the time of registration, the staff at the Registry who received it mentions this aspect in the internal system, otherwise being responsible for their loss.

A.2.5. If the document entered in the D.G.A.S.P.C. by email refers to some annexes that are missing from the received email, the sender is requested to submit all the documents prior to the registration of the main document in the unique register. If, within 24 hours, the sender does not submit the requested documents, the registration will be made according to the notes in point A.2.4.

A.2.6. If the document entered in D.G.A.S.P.C. by submission by the petitioner refers to different annexes that are missing at the time of submission, the Registry staff requests the petitioner to complete it with all nominated documents. In the situation when the petitioner insists on registering the document in the absence of all annexes, the petitioner will have to cut the missing documents from the document and sign next to the cuts, prior to the registration of the document.

By registering the document submitted at the counter, without fulfilling the previously presented formality, the Registry staff will be responsible for the lack of unattached documents.

Here is an algorithm for implementing the document processing procedure presented in sections A.2. to A.2.6. This algorithm deals with the registration and distribution of different types of documents within the D.G.A.S.P.C.

Document processing algorithm:
- ➢ Document reception
- ➢ Input: document (with receipt method, type, timestamp and language)
- ➢ Document registration

➢ Register (document) call
➢ Determining document type

If document is response to request:

➢ Call Distribute-to designated department (document)

Otherwise, if document is request under law GEO 27/2002:

➢ Call Distribute-request to designated person

Otherwise:

➢ Call Distribute-other documents

Distribute to designated department:

➢ Connect to previous document if applicable, if is same as previous version (document): connect to previous document
➢ Distribute the document directly to the designated department – **Direct Distribution to department**

A.3. Documents coming from outside the institution will be distributed electronically in compliance with the following terms and conditions:

A.3.l. The documents will be distributed by the Registry Department, on the day of their receipt, as follows:

a) on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, all documents that enter the Registry will be scanned, registered and distributed until 4:30 p.m. Documents entered after this time will be scanned/registered and distributed, with speed, on the next working day, until 10.00 a.m. at the latest;

b) on Friday, all documents that enter the Registry will be scanned, registered and distributed by 2:00 p.m. Documents that enter the institution after this time will be scanned, registered and distributed quickly, on the next working day, until 10:00 a.m. at the latest.

A.3.2. The documents will be distributed by the directors to the heads of subordinate departments or their substitutes as follows:

a) Documents received by 15.30 on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday working days will, as a rule, be distributed on the same day. When this is not possible for objective reasons, the distribution of these documents, together with the distribution of documents received after 3:30 p.m., will be done, expeditiously, on the next working day, until 12:00 p.m. at the latest.

b) Documents received on working days from Friday, until 13.00, will be distributed, as a rule, on the same day. When this is not possible for objective reasons, the assignment of these documents, together with the assignment of documents received after 1:00 p.m., will be done, expeditiously, on the next working day, by 10:00 a.m. at the latest.

A.3.3. The documents reached at the level of the structures will be distributed by the heads of the structures, or their substitutes, to the subordinate staff as follows:

a) Documents received by 3:30 p.m., on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday working days, will be distributed, as a rule, on the same day. When this is not possible for objective reasons, the assignment of these documents, together with the assignment of documents received after 3:30 p.m., will be done, expeditiously, on the next working day, by 12:00 p.m. at the latest.

b) Documents received on working days from Friday, until 1:00 p.m., will be distributed, as a rule, on the same day. When this is not possible for objective reasons, the assignment of these documents, together with the assignment of documents received after 1:00 p.m., will be done, expeditiously, on the next working day, by 11:00 a.m. at the latest.

A.3.4. The documents in physical format are handed over by the persons from the Communication and Public Relations Department, which are designated for this purpose, on

document handover/receipt registers, to the structures that have already received them in electronic format, twice a week (Tuesday and Friday). The exceptions are the documents mentioned at point A.1., as well as those whose original written format is necessary for carrying out the activities (e.g. subpoenas, communications, court decisions, invoices, offers for procurement procedures, tender applications, files from Probation/Prosecution, etc.). These documents will be handed over daily, or whenever needed, to the relevant services.

A.3.5. The documents in physical format are handed over to the departments that have already received them in electronic format, using a document submission/receipt report, twice a week, except for those documents whose original format is necessary for carrying out the activities.

A.3.6. The Director of a department or the person who picks up documents from the Registry, must write in the Register his/her full name, signature, and the number of the documents he/she picked up.

Here is an algorithm for implementing the document distribution procedure described in sections A.3.1. to A.3.6. This algorithm will handle the scanning, registration and distribution of documents received by the registry service.

Document distribution algorithm:
  ➢ Document reception
    Input: document (with receipt method, timestamp and format)
  ➢ Determination of current day and time
  ➢ Current day = Get the current day (Monday, Tuesday, etc.)
  ➢ Current time = Get the current time
  ➢ Scan and register the document
  ➢ Call Scan and Register (document)
  ➢ Check distribution time
  ➢ If current day is in ["Monday", "Tuesday", "Wednesday", "Thursday"]:
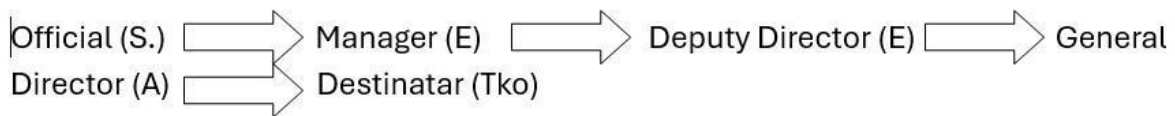 ➢ If current time <= "16:30":
    Distribute the document
 Otherwise:
    ➢ Schedule for the next day (10:00 a.m.)
    ➢ Else if current day ="Friday"= If current time <= "14:00":
    ➢ **Distribute document**
    ➢ Else: Schedule for next day (10:00 a.m.)

The route of an internal document within the public institution

The route of an internal document in the public institution D.G.A.S.P.C. is presented in Figure 1:

Legend: S – Sender, E - Endorsed, A-Approved, Tko - Taking over the task.

Figure 1. Route of an internal document in D.G.A.S.P.C.

The unique registration number will be issued for a document after all the signatures are obtained for that document. Only under these circumstances, the unique number will be visible to all the people involved.

The digital system will automatically record all requests and assign a unique identification number to each case. The employees of the institution working on solving a certain request receive notifications about new developments, while the applicant also receives notifications and confirmations as the work unfolds.

The beneficiary can monitor the progress and communicate with the public institution employee through the envisaged digital software. The platform will offer the public institution employee the possibility to connect both as a natural person and as a civil servant.

The digital system sends automatic notifications for periodic revisions of intervention plans and updates on the beneficiaries' situation. All records, reports, and documents are stored securely in the digital system and are accessible only to authorized personnel.

Reports and statistics required for internal and external reporting are automatically generated, reducing the time and effort required for documentation.

The digital platform is secured to protect the confidentiality of the beneficiaries' data, with policies and security measures in accordance with legal regulations. The access to information is restricted and controlled based on roles and permissions assigned to staff, and activities are audited to ensure compliance and transparency.

The staff is trained in the use of the digital platform through a customized training program and has access to online documentation and ongoing technical support. It is preferable to organize mandatory training sessions for all employees, focusing on the basics of the new system. These should cover how to create, retrieve, and manage documents using the new system. Also, customize training modules based on employee roles, providing advanced training for those who will use the system more intensively.

Feedback from users is collected to identify and fix possible problems or deficiencies in the digital system, contributing to continuous improvements and optimizing the user experience.

CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of this paper is to create a procedure for introducing a unique document identification system (DIS) in a public institution in Romania (Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection – D.G.A.S.P.C. Sector 5), which will be used to develop a specialized software program for the implementation of this system.

The authors created the aforementioned procedure, described it in detail for all types of documents available in the public institution, and provided clear instructions for dealing with them in an efficient and organized manner.

Implementing a new unique document identification system and associated software requires careful planning to ensure a smooth transition to digitalization in public institutions. The proposed solutions provide significant benefits, especially with respect to efficiency, accuracy and security.

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