Challenges for the Entrepreneurial Environment and the European Union During the Pandemic

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Abstract: In the last decade, it has come to the recognition and awareness that European states and the business environment have been constantly guided by the objectives set out in the strategies by the European Union. Due to the crises, that arose, the whole of contemporary society was in a constant struggle to maintain a balance between the economic, social and environmental. Thus, the trinomial of the interdependence between economic growth, resource use and environmental protection, now known as "sustainable development", creates a multitude of activities that succeed in promoting realistic strategies on how to manage the natural resource base. Currently, due to the new crisis in the European economy, a trinomial has formed between entrepreneurship - pandemic - sustainable development. The EU continues to play its role in protecting citizens and the business community by mobilizing financial resources to minimize the negative impact of the pandemic. The purpose of this article is to highlight the fact that awareness of the emergence of a new impending crisis is forcing EU states to consider the sustainable development of the entrepreneurial environment as the driving force of the late twentieth century.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship; pandemic; crisis; European Union; European funds.*

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Introduction

Throughout history, humanity has faced countless economic, social and environmental crises, which have played a key role in the future development of society as a whole. These crises, some of them called pandemics today, have been a source in the evolution of technological innovations, respectively technical and scientific progress. In the fight against global, regional or local crises, the entrepreneurial environment has been a way for the economy to overcome these problems, because economic agents based on creativity have innovated and shaped the whole society (Speakman et al., 2017).

Pandemic policies applied worldwide have led to disruptions in the activity of all areas of activity, but the impact is different from one country to another, respectively from one region to another. The economies of the world's states pursuing the well-being of society have developed thousands of creative responses to the multitude of emerging challenges related to global crises or the limited nature of resources (Meyer et al., 2020). Also, the achievement of a unitary whole between community and entrepreneurship can determine a set / set of rational actions from a social point of view. The creative actions of economic agents as a result of existing pressures have led to the emergence of new opportunities and the rediscovery of the ethical and civic spirit. Entrepreneurs show, in situations difficult to bear by the community, the civic and moral character, both to the community and to employees, not forgetting that this workforce will be the foundation for solving major challenges related to reorganizing or revitalizing the company then when the pandemic passes. Businesses that know how to discover the niches offered by the various crises that manifest themselves over time or that know how to adapt to new technologies become competent and will move strategically in relation to the economic agents that for them have had the quality of competitors in the economy of upstream of the pandemic.

The post-pandemic economy must be supported not only by the entrepreneurial environment, but also by the institutional-administrative environment that must decongest the economy. The actions of the administrative side must take shape quickly, determine a speed of response to the solutions that will be applied to rebuild the economy and demonstrate that they can be the pillars of support for society as a whole. The negative economic impacts that occur at European level can also be reduced with the help of European funds allocated by the European Union to be directed primarily to the most affected areas of activity. In a pandemic, these funds

must not be wasted on unimportant activities, but must be used wisely on those areas and start-ups that have become more vulnerable and cannot cope with extreme economic and social disruptions (Rosenthal, 2009). Start-ups, even if they act individually or in collaboration with other third-party companies, face wide-ranging challenges and a high degree of vulnerability, a situation which is generated, on the one hand, by the organizational structure adopted and, on the other hand, by the assigned administrative functions. Another factor that leads to increasing the degree of insecurity of these types of companies is given by the fact that they do not collect their income from several sources, because their activities are not so diversified. The survival of entrepreneurs, start-ups and businesses will be supported not only by their own efforts, but also by the protection measures and financial instruments offered by each state and the EU (Siddiqui, 2020).

The business environment is closely supported by technology and digital platforms that are considered the last strongholds of the world community and economy (Thorbecke, 2020). The pandemic has become a cliché, and the unprecedented situations facing humanity and concerns for survival have become a battlefield. Global communities are using digitalization to escape this battlefield, where extreme panic and fear are the daily bells of all mankind. Just as entrepreneurs are surrounded by qualities and skills, so society must reap perseverance from this chain of values.

The time has come to become aware of the negative effects that humans have on the natural environment and this ecosystem. Only through creativity and perseverance will humanity find a way out of this pandemic and regain its strength to continue. Cooperation and communication worldwide, in order to find solutions, can be the basis of survival, but as an entrepreneur, the greatest advantage is given by oneself. We must not forget that a global pandemic primarily affects health and well-being, thus becoming a humanitarian crisis (Toefy, 2020).

2. Resizing the role of the European Union and the business environment during the pandemic

Pandemics are hampering the role of the state in ensuring the health and safety of communities, and the activities of economic agents are experiencing periods of stagnation or even decline, while citizens' demands for social protection are constantly growing. The damage to the economic and social environment will be profound, and the stability of the world economy will be severely affected. As crises know no borders, Europe and the rest of the world must come up with rapid responses and coordinated

strategies to ensure the security of the economic, social and natural environment (European Commission, 2020c).

The European Union, an important pillar of support for the economies of the Member States, is able to take concrete and viable action to take over some of the problems on the shoulders of the Member States. The EU must show responsibility and solidarity at both European and global level (European Commission, 2020a). Cooperation and solidarity will be the ways that will have a strong global impact in maintaining the values, interests and well-being of economic agents. The Union's response to the economic and social consequences of the pandemic will continue to adapt to its evolution, providing financial support and investment tools to further ensure the same flows that lead to a nation's prosperity. Even in pandemic conditions, the European Union continues to promote the fundamental principles and values that characterize Member States' systems (Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania, 2020, March 31).

Also, the measures taken in these more special situations must not lead to a re-analysis or reassessment of the values and principles of the Member States, nor to effects that endanger biodiversity or cause climate change (European Commission, 2020b). The EU's communications and strategic actions must be transparent and aimed at stimulating partners to continue their commitment to reducing disparities between them and to a sustainable economy. In addition, European funds can be considered as external or outsourced resources, and part of this substantial funding will be allocated to activities that will reduce the impact of the pandemic on Europe, while achieving much more operational actions. Actions to combat the pandemic will integrate the EU's strategic environmental objectives and environmental requirements. In fact, the joint actions carried out by the European Union and the business environment during the pandemic have the role of supporting and strengthening ongoing efforts to meet the objectives and address the challenges of the pandemic. The experiences gained in the struggle for survival are of vital importance for future systemic crises.

Entrepreneurship and the EU, as a global player, form a team that manages to promote hope for society to return to normal. Supporting partner states in building social protection, protecting and stimulating the workforce, establishing optimal communication relations, opening up to not only European but also global initiatives, presence of operational programs, strengthening regional organizations, providing technical assistance, guidelines and protocols on how to manage crises, have led to an acceleration in the education of member countries on the need to know the

negative effects of the pandemic. The European Union and the Member States have come up with collective actions and operational plans to provide the most effective answers possible in combating the borderless pandemic, as it is not possible to isolate it.

The simultaneous actions of the European institutions may, to some extent, limit the pandemic effects of this crisis. The pandemic has come to fulfill the role of a nucleus around which the world economy is trying to carry out its activities, and moreover to establish them according to the evolution of this nucleus. The Union first seeks to provide answers to short-term needs, and then to analyze the structural impacts that will affect Member States' economies. In this context, it can delegate states to fulfilling the economic growth pact by redirecting their actions to combat the dangers posed by the pandemic (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2020).

3. Management of impending pandemics

The EU aims for Member States to succeed in managing the economic and health crisis on the basis of the principle of solidarity. With regard to health reports, it is well known that the Member States have the greatest responsibility for ensuring the protection of citizens' health, but the European Union is making its mark, much more, on other types of policies that offer partner states the means to combat the various ills crisis. Thus, if the authority is assigned at European level, but also the most efficient operational procedures are established, efficient pandemic management can be achieved. If, through cooperation at European level, the effective management of this crisis is achieved, we can still hope for a recovery of the European economy leading to a long-term sustainability of the less developed economies. In addition, all companies should avoid opening businesses that use fossil fuels for production or that do not have directions for action in accordance with the environmental strategies established at European level. The EU will continue to guide the activities of each state towards respecting biodiversity, ie eliminating unsustainable practices that may harm the environment. In this way, decision-makers will adapt to the EU's vision of creating only green industries (Khalid, 2020). Approaches at European level follow in depth climate change, thus ensuring that the best environmental solutions can be taken, both at regional and European level. Paying particular attention to these ecological requirements will stimulate sustainable production at regional level, opening up opportunities for the

revitalization of sustainable economic activities and for framing own production levels within the limits of ecological welfare.

During the crisis the most affected companies are those with limited capital and reduced access to finance. Among the most vulnerable categories are start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises, which face real challenges. For this reason, they are obliged to adapt quickly to deal with the dangers that have arisen and to identify as soon as possible the most appropriate methods, techniques, working tools and technologies to ensure the continued development of the activities proposed by the projects approached or through the business conducted (Kuckertz et al., 2020). The European Union, in these difficult times, must provide these economic agents / entrepreneurs with support and training programs and, last but not least, connect with them, thus providing them with support in maintaining their emotional health. With the help of these support pillars, entrepreneurs will be able to mobilize and fight for the continuation of entrepreneurial activities. Accepting the new reality and processing the information received will help entrepreneurs in the decision-making process. Focusing economic attention on new opportunities and developing new sustainable growth strategies will reduce or eliminate losses. The mentality of entrepreneurs, aimed at sustainability and sustainable development, offers them the most appropriate solutions in crisis situations. Mental and emotional training during a pandemic will help entrepreneurs cope with the current and future challenges facing humanity (Juan Carlos & Bettosini, 2020). The landscape offered by the partial blockade of economic activities was a challenge for the actors of economic life. The common problems facing the entire entrepreneurial ecosystem have highlighted the need for protection and security measures to protect startups and mitigate the negative effects of future economic, social and environmental crises. Start-ups that will use the funds in the most efficient / rational way possible during crises will have access in the future to economic growth and development. Therefore, the strategic decisions taken by them are of the utmost importance (for the activities carried out) and not the political measures. Start-ups can reduce the negative impact of a pandemic, reduce the turmoil of economic agents or reduce the pressures related to the lack of cash flow. In the future, the measures to be taken should be more aimed at supporting the natural and entrepreneurial ecosystem in order to reduce the time related to loss recovery and economic recovery. In this way, the blows that will be caused by pandemics will be of a lower intensity and will not cause irrecoverable damage. In addition, these crises highlight: the positive sides of employees

and entrepreneurs; values related to civic and ethical sense; the way they will look at each other.

Communities are not homogeneous, as there are states at European level that are more vulnerable during the pandemic due to their levels of development. In order to resolve these situations and ensure the right to life and health of these countries, the EU has made available a series of measures with a wider range of action to reduce the magnitude of the impact on the economies of these countries (European Commission, 2020a). Within these companies, business communities face financial difficulties and uncertainties related to the long-term evolution of their business. The adverse context in which entrepreneurs have to act has led government authorities to initiate proposals to reduce the financial problems they will face. The aim is to mobilize resources from the EU budget, as well as to redirect cohesion funds to support Member States. With the help of the structural funds, the partners will be able to reduce, in the short term, the financial shocks and the technical unemployment. Europe is learning on the go how to fight this pandemic, succeeding in developing financial measures and regulations to ensure solidarity between European states. The lack of immediate answers and concrete solutions generated stimuli for creativity from the institutions, but also from the economic agents. The work of the institutions was also supported by the flexibility of budgetary rules, which led to the possibility of increasing public spending to ensure community security.

Conclusions

Entrepreneurs and the European Union must act at a fast pace to break out of the state of chaos and thus reach a state of normalcy. Positivity and creativity can return economic agents from the state of discomfort they are in and can help them dribble problems and learn new things. Only by acting in this way will they be able to remain the main creators of performance. The pandemic led to a return to almost one hundred and eighty degrees of entrepreneurial activity, thus changing the daily routine of both entrepreneurs and consumers (Sweeney, 2020). The avalanche of damage to all economies could lead to a new recession that could have a much higher impact on the world economy. Financial resources can disappear in a relatively short time and for this reason they need to be monitored in order to establish fast and efficient solutions (Arvizu, 2020). Being an entrepreneur does not only mean physical presence, but also the focus on real problems. Indeed, economic agents cannot change their

behavior in a short time, but their desire for change can be a step towards relaunching the business. It is imperative that in times of crisis entrepreneurs build a culture of communication and collaboration, but also the development of a basis of self-confidence, respectively a reconfiguration of the list of values (Haddad, 2020). From the very beginning, entrepreneurs take risks and become aware of the dangers that may arise along the way, but they also know how to identify the opportunities around them. Also, just as they build a business plan from the beginning of the entrepreneurial activity, so during the crisis they have to plan their strategies to return to normal. The European Union, following this unpleasant experience that has caused many economic and human loss of life, will seek to ensure the permanent security of its partners by creating safety systems, financed through an investment fund, to support: the health of citizens, vulnerable parties and European economies.

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