

# THE ROLE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN DRAWING, MANAGEING AND STORING PUBLIC DOCUMENTATION

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## **Abstract**

*Written documents, photographs, audio documents, electronically or otherwise are evidence of the time they were created. They eternally preserve the human memory, namely the cultural treasure, the cultural heritage of a people, region or country. The debate on the role of the public administrator in the management and storage of documentation is complex and continues to this day. The purpose of this paper aims to explore the role that public administration has in the management, storage and archiving of public documentation. The development of technology has also brought about a change in the way and administration of documentation. In this perspective, the specific purpose of this paper is the treatment and analysis of the concept of traditional and modern systematization of public documentation in state institutions. The use of historical methods, analysis, comparison will enable the finding of results and recommendations regarding the role of public administration in the management, storage and archiving of public documentation.*

**Keywords:** Administration, archive, management, implementation, storage, organization.

**JEL Classification:** K33, K34

## **1. Introduction**

The issue of the concept of public administration in historical development implies the necessity of the existence of a state apparatus for the implementation of policies formulated by the government or otherwise the executive branch. Facing a need to seek, state structures today are not imaginable without an administration, the work to do, over the years, has encountered reorganization, reform and evolutionary development making it an essential element to protect and defend government and in making necessary structural reforms, due to the standard of living of the society, in which it is very easy to get involved in preserving the national memory. National memory is preserved through numerous documents which in themselves contain evidence that serves to prove the state of various issues.<sup>2</sup> It is explicitly clear that administrations, in different countries, some possess elements of traditionalism and some others of modernization, creating prevailing variable balances depending on the state. When we talk about the public administration in which the traditional system prevails, we single out characteristics such as: lack of integration and lack of a unified communication system, emphasizing the provision of public and official documents to the general public. In traditional systems, public administration is also characterized by the appointment of civil servants by the superior himself, thus making public administrators more powerful against the popular factor, because the only and main accountability on their part is estimated to be to the superior who at the same time develops disabling communication with the public. Whereas, in cases when modernity prevails in the administration, the characteristics that distinguish it are: digitalization, communication, faster provision of services and, of course, transparency and accountability.

## **2. Drawing public documents and official documents**

Public documents represent a special field, a field which provides solutions to many problems, although their search always aims to ensure effective communication between institutions and citizens, always taking into account all organizational and legal circumstances and the impact of various internal and external factors. Drafting public documents is a complex process, always keeping in mind that many participants have to be satisfied and the subject matter is often difficult so there is also a risk of overload.

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<sup>2</sup> Bajram Pollozhani, et. al., *Administrative Law - Comparative Aspects*, ASDRENI, Skopje 2010 p.130.

Public documents according to the law on access to Public Documents<sup>3</sup> in the Republic of Kosovo are equal to official documents and explicitly everywhere in public institutions the requirements for access to public or official documents are the same. It follows that no institution, ie public administrator based on legislation makes the initial classification of documents which of them belong to public or official documents to then move on to the classification of information contained in these documents, this because these two types of documents are not one but are two parts of a common trunk, which complement each other.

The official documents as the main bearer of their drafting have the legal person, state or public body, and at the same time it is known as a contractual agreement, through which some obligations are expressed, the rights and obligations of the parties are shared. These documents include invoices, acts, laws, licenses, work permits, identification documents, written agreements, indictments, convictions - an official document that accuses a public official of misconduct, etc.

Public documents as the main bearer of their drafting have the public administrator himself, whose job is to provide public services in accordance with applicable legislation. This makes it clear that these documents themselves contain informative information for citizens or even internal staff, thus not providing in content the obligatory part vis-tjetër-vis the other party, a special feature of public documents. These documents include school registers, birth and death registers at the municipal or even country level, speech payments, central bank registers, confessions recorded by the judge, testimony of witnesses registered by a court official, medical reports. legal, documents certified by a notary public that the copy has been duly certified by the legal holder.

Public documents are of great importance for any institution, as they show the results and facts of their work, being in a great complexity the writing of public documents, can not be done by a linguist, author or even literary writer. Their writing implies a wider knowledge in different genres including concrete organizational knowledge such as work, place, culture then cooperation with a considerable number of other stakeholders such as stakeholders, institutional leaders or even internal experts and external. Professional writing is not just a matter of writing texts, but a more complex process that in itself contains comparable research, and as such these texts unlike other texts themselves contain long and passive sentences in which the use of finite verbs and adverbs are fewer. The final verbs themselves reflect the main verbs of a sentence and have a direct relation to the subject that must be joined in accordance with the corresponding tense, while adverbs are called the immutable words that first of all complement the verb. Public administrators themselves and their superiors explicitly use bureaucratic language when drafting official documents, a language that according to the author Renkema specifies four characteristics: it is impersonal, complex, diffuse and traditional.<sup>4</sup> These characteristics explain why official, public documents incorporate these elements in order to provide the public with information, communication that in the foreground provides state-citizen connectivity and then does not provide the required information, always leaving circumstances and vague texts. The tendency nowadays is to remove bureaucratic frameworks in the drafting of public documents, so that they are as informal as possible in terms of language and are more acceptable to the public. And as a result of this event, public administrators are constantly attending trainings on how to draft public documents. This strategy is very popular in Kosovo, where not only funds are collected from the state treasury to achieve this goal, but also various grants are obtained for a better functioning of the public administration in communication with citizens. Being high investments, the expectations for improving the quality of drafting public documents are high, but little is known about their effect, because after the trainings there are no assessments of how much the performance has improved or even identification by the superior on quality improvement from these trainings. "Alarming estimates show that only 10-20% of all training efforts in the enterprise

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<sup>3</sup> Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, Law No. 03/L-215 on Access to Public Documents, Official Gazette 88/2010, 2010 Article 3, paragraph 1.2.

<sup>4</sup> Renkema, Jan, *De taal van Den Haag: Een kwantitatief onderzoek naar aanleiding van oordelen over taalgebruik. (The language of The Hague: A quantitative study as a result of judgements about language use) 's-Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1981.*

have a lasting effect on employee performance."<sup>5-6</sup>. Given such results presented by studies conducted in countries such as the Netherlands and the US there is no reason to think that the quality gained in the case of drafting public documents after training or courses for public administrators may be better in the other states. On the contrary, by encountering public documents not only in Kosovo but also in other countries we can clearly say that they are even worse, and their drafters never care about the way they write them, the language they use, simply the interest of expressed in the content of it, and this follows as a result of the request of their superior who always seeks the content and not the way of writing. This clearly implies that it is also complemented to train those who need to be trained in advance are the superiors and then work. Because in the circumstances that are found while talking to civil servants, none of them is ready for revolution within the organization or institution, but silently knowing often about the mistake they make, they adapt to the continuous work and institutional norms liked by the superior.

Other reasons for the under-performance of drafters of public documents are also considered:

1. Hierarchical structures of all bureaucracies - institutions, when the written document itself goes through a long recycling period in several working groups within the organization that gives it the epithet "public property" and none of the drafters is responsible for its writing.

2. Public writers do not consider themselves writers but policy makers or legislators, whose task is not to create legible documents but to be the creators of something where the main importance lies in the possibility of creating multilateral compromise, for these reasons the administrators themselves public say that in cases where they write clearly, they only create damage and problems.

3. Third but most important is the audience of the writer of documents and public policy, which consists of heterogeneous legislatures, the executive who may belong to different beliefs and forces the writer to find points in the draft to satisfy each party and this they did it with the use of long, complex and as "vague" texts as possible. Another indicator that facilitates the work of the writer and compiler of public documents and at the same time makes the same more "irresponsible" is that his audience reads only 10% of the text offered to him<sup>7</sup>.

Another indicator of inadequate writing used in public documents in Kosovo is found in public opinion where government officials are considered extremely "bad" writers, but such a conclusion is not that the outside world has simply reached hypotheses which have not managed to be verified. On the contrary, they have been confirmed not only by their writings in personal circumstances expressed on social networks, communication with public opinion through brochures and other forms, but most importantly in the reports compiled by them to report their work to diplomatic communication that it is clearly stated that they do not have the ability to reach another level in the case of writing public documents.

### 3. Management and storage of public documents

The rapid and extraordinary growth of public documents complicates the process of adequate care over public documents, at the same time reduces the possibility of speeding up the processing of these documents, by a special administrative unit, a unit that according to Kosovo law is known as the unit document management, in which all official document management tasks are performed, such as: receipt of documents, receipt of mail, opening and control of mail, evidence and consolidation of documents, stamping of documents and cases, management of deadlines of work, sending acts (papers) and cases in proceedings, sending mail, delivery of mail (papers) and cases, including e-mail.<sup>8</sup>

Every institution that creates, and manages public documents has the obligation to pay special attention to the security of documents, whether in physical or electronic form, and must guarantee

<sup>5</sup> Kessels, Joseph W.M. *Het corporate curriculum*. [*"The corporate curriculum"*]. Inaugural speech, Leiden State University, 1996.

<sup>6</sup> Broad, M.L. & J.W. Newstrom, *Transfer of Training. Action-packed Strategies to Ensure High Payoff from Training Investments*. Reading (Mass.): Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1992.

<sup>7</sup> Daniël Janssen, Rob Neutelings - *Reading and Writing Public Documents*-John Benjamins Publishing Company (2001) p. 121.

<sup>8</sup> Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, Law no. 04 / L-184 On the Administration of Office Work, Official Gazette 18/2013, 2013 article 2, paragraph 1.13.

adequate treatment from the first stage of creation until the final decision. to be obtained for the document which can be archived, scanned or destroyed.

Document management is the process of processing documents in such a way that information can be created, shared, organized and stored efficiently and appropriately.

Managing and preserving itself means protecting documents, thus referring to the protection of information, the evidence that these documents carry and give them rare value. In addition to protection, this process also means the process of classification based on activities, classification in terms of security and right of access, determination of the decision for separation, storage-archiving, as well as the use and tracking of the movement of the document when it becomes accessible. for the public or for a certain category who have the right to be informed of the information contained in the document. To carry out these processes, the main responsibility lies with the public administrator, whose work begins at the creation of the document and ends at the moment when the same document is converted into archival material, which can easily be considered that, among other things, has historical weight, on the preservation of human memory for many generations.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Kosovo after the end of the war has encountered various processes of document management, most of which it has inherited, but in this process, it also has many shortcomings in the collection of documents which belong to it and today are found in the states of other neighbors and not only. As for all organizations, public institutions and not only, this can easily include organizations and private institutions, for Kosovo the procedures of management and storage of public documents are always useful, as such they are not treated with care and therefore the main work today on document management is regulated through the unique international standard ISO-15489 Information and documentation - document management and the law on the administration of office work, a law which in its definitions clearly expresses the division between the document as a notion and the subject and in its articles the management with archival subjects receives more attention than with public documents. Therefore, based on this fact, we can easily say that for the management of public documents and their storage until the time when these documents cannot be considered as archival material, there is no law or administrative instruction as a regulator of the work of public institutions, and this implies that slowly in the future regardless of language rules, and always using compromise or otherwise bureaucratic language will be synthesized the terms public documents with archival material without distinguishing between them as the terms public and official documents despite the differences which exist between them, and since in the new law of 2019 for access to public documents the term official documents is no longer used at all<sup>9</sup>.

Although the public institutions themselves are the ones who create, document and maintain their work continuously, trying to ensure that the process is regulated with the highest national and international standards, it is these very institutions that continuously do not respect these standards, which can easily be said to arise as a result of the lack of sanctions within the legal provisions. There are also complaints and remedies described in these laws in cases of violations but the approach and established bureaucratic procedures to be followed create not only a burden but also a delay in the rapid decision-making process.

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<sup>9</sup> Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, Law no. 06/L-081 On Access to Public Documents, Official Gazette 13/2019, 2019, article 3.

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