



Editorial

As the world is still struggling with the COVID-19 pandemic, UNIO's Editorial Team set a call for papers in order to assess the disease's impact on law fields and, particularly, on how the Union's legal order is dealing with this new challenge.

This issue's contributions – originating from that call for papers – showcase how the European Union is trying to grasp a path to follow through and beyond the challenges the coronavirus was able to highlight. We were pleasantly surprised with the number of enriching contributions submitted to our call and, therefore, in addition to the present work, a second special issue is being prepared to be published in the first semester of 2021.

The first contribution, authored by Patrícia Jerónimo, and entitled “COVID-19-related travel restrictions and mobility rights: a test for international human rights standards and EU citizenship”, aims at discussing to what extent Member States can use their prerogatives on closing their borders on public health grounding without breaching international human rights standards and affecting EU citizenship.

The second article, under the theme “Revisiting access to internet as a fundamental right in times of COVID-19”, by Mariana Estrada, tries to unravel how the European Union legal order should acknowledge a fundamental right to internet access as the pandemic crisis was able to showcase the vulnerable position of those who have no internet connectivity. Furthermore, the author also showcases how it can also be perceived as instrumental to the exercise of other fundamental rights acknowledged in the European Union.

The third contribution, presented by Bárbara Lazarotto and entitled “The impact of disinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic and its regulation by the EU”, aims at pointing out some suggestions of how the European Union has to regulate disinformation in the internet in order to overcome negative impact on fundamental rights of citizens, which gained a new dimension before the present pandemic crisis.

The following contribution is authored by Luis Miranda Ramos and it is entitled “Digital contact tracing and data protection: assessing the French and Portuguese applications”. It deals with one of the technological approaches to manage the impact of the virus – the one related to contact tracing applications – and how personal data protection has to continue to be promoted at a highest level in the European Union.

Andreia Barbosa addresses the theme “The justification of the means by the ends in the context of indirect taxation in COVID-19 times – a real catastrophe?” and, with this contribution, the author, resorting to proportionality considerations, aims at discussing how, in the pandemic context, the European Union is acting on indirect taxation, mainly through customs relief and the VAT exemption on the import of necessary goods to combat COVID-19’s effects.

Alfonso Iozzo, Fabio Masini and Antonio Padoa-Schioppa contribute to this issue with the paper entitled “Locally decentralized responses to the European recovery: exploring the role of the Euratom Treaty and the ESM”, where these authors tackle the need to the European Union to perceive with different eyes two major instruments in order to enhance its resilience to recover: the Eurotom Treaty and the European Stability Mechanism.

The following contribution is authored by Nataly Machado under the theme “Solidarity and responsibility as the framework for the COVID-19 response in the European Union – the European Green deal is the path?”. With this text, the author aims at understanding the European Green deal in the aftermath of COVID-19 crisis, perceiving it as a link between solidarity and responsibility among Member States so sustainability and well-being are common goals.

Lastly, the issue closes with the contribution of Carla Piffer and Paulo Cruz, whose text addresses the theme “World Health Organization guidelines, the COVID-19 pandemic, and transnational law”. Departing from the importance of transnational law, the paper addresses the role of WHO as a transnational actor whose guidelines are internalized by Member States on public health matters.

The Editorial Team