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**THOUGHTS BEFORE THE MAGYARY PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM 2020**

***Annotation.** Our aim with this study is that the readers who are interested in the Hungarian governmental work of 2010-14, and intend to assess it but are not familiar with reading in Hungarian shall get an easily understandable overview from an internal perspective of the development of Hungarian public administration. In order to achieve the above this essay is a summary of the new approaches that – regarding the re-thinking of the Magyary Programme – are reasonable to be considered at the end of the previous government term and necessary before the EU programming period 2014-20. To this end it continues to develop and elaborates the concept of the Good State of the Magyary Programme, in short it scans the results and deficiencies in certain intervention areas of the past four years (organization-task-procedure-staff). Finally it summarizes the major challenges of a new type of Magyary Programme 2020 in 7 points, which the Hungarian state and Hungarian public administration as a part thereof shall respond to – as far as the author is concerned.*

***Keywords:** public administration, governmental work, development, internal perspective.*

Introduction. From nearly four years' perspective it is obvious that in the spring of 2010 the Hungarian politicum got a real, "historical" opportunity by popular mandate to renew and improve the operation of the state including public administration. In a country which, over the past more than 20 years since the regime change, got into such a vulnerable situation that jeopardized its actual sovereignty, there was the voter's high expectation in the background of the two-third majority of the centre-right political power to govern. The voters' expectation was – of course, roughly summarising the internal ratios and nuances – that the government shall find the solutions for the development of the Hungarian economy and certain sectors so that the Hungarian people's life noticeably improves and so does their self-esteem in relation thereof. Briefly the state shall do its duty and serve the nation rather than the interests of a narrow elite, foreign expectations or abstract doctrines. The economic crisis of 2008 revealed in every field of life that an accurate governmental operation lacking the harmony with social reality is paralyzed dramatically fast and is unable to withstand the distortions of external and internal interests. The citizens and leaders of enterprises tormented by the economic crisis from many points of view could not show generosity in the issue of how much strength lies in the government beyond the measures providing good prospects and a life fit to live in within reasonable time. However, the composure of the members of the government shall serve to see clearly – due to the very spectacular failure of the distribution models of Kádár and Péter Medgyessy – that the state – and its economic operation as a part thereof – shall be rebuilt so that its measures and renewals not only meet the requirements of today, the perspective of some (4) years, but also of the traditions of the Hungarian state development – by reason of firmness –, and – by reason of persistence – the ever faster emerging challenges of the future.

The situation of the domestic policy by 2009 – i.e. the foreseeability of the election results with a high degree of certainty – made it possible for the new government to carry out its necessary tasks with a series of carefully elaborated and fully prepared measures in a unique way compared with the previous election years. It was characteristic that the analysers and evaluators (and, besides others, the opposition as well) could only follow the actions in several fields, besides the rhythmical progress going on since then, with considerable delay. Thanks to this planned powerful opening overture the political leaders of the country could finally divide the four-year term left until the next elections into two parts according to the natural order of things. The easiest way to describe the first part of the governance is the adjectival construction of the “administrative governance” (i.e. structural changes, creating new systems of principles and interests, “we rethink everything!”), whereas the second part is that of the “political governance” (i.e. actually presenting the results of the changes made, closing the conflicts, “we justify everything!”). A significant product of the administrative governance was the Magyary Program (MP)¹, whose issue of 11.0 (10 June 2011) and 12.0 (31 August 2012) exhaustively takes into consideration the occurrences and plans in the course of the renewal of public administration by creating new concepts, i.e. it is a report and strategy at the same time. Exhaustiveness meant that, according to the intent of the authors, no single administrative event or activity can be left out from the interpretation domain of the MP, in other words the Magyary Programme, with its four intervention areas and e.g. with its definition of the so called overall task, is some kind of Mendeleev table of the rich and colourful administrative universe. It is clearly visible that as other countries have taken over several crisis management measures having been introduced by the Hungarian government since 2010, or dared to make changes simply following the Hungarian example, the Magyary Programme, which significantly founded the efficiency of the governmental work, also attracted foreign interest. The programme, however, was published with this aim, with the intent of certain administrative development know-how, i.e. it is adoptable, possible to be fully or partly applied by other – occasionally foreign – public administrations and administrative operation(s) due to its character of listing the term of claims² and its comprehensibility.

Our first statement (1) is that the painstaking search for the good state and good-state-index does have a history, which – as we will see, or rather as far as we are concerned – is partly a wrong turn and partly deficient. Every successful (sub)sectoral index (1.1) can be considered an antecedent which measures the gross national income, inflation or employment. It must be

¹ ibid: <http://magyaryprogram.kormany.hu/>

²

1. a program and not a plan, i.e. it develops continuously,
2. overall, i.e. it includes every phenomenon and measure,
3. understandable, i.e. learnable especially for the administrative staff,
4. addressing, i.e. it relies on the emotional commitment of those taking part in its execution,
5. is of value content, i.e. it drafts its aims along the values supporting the national development as part of professional rationality,
6. its main aim is specific and detailed: efficient national public administration,
7. it enables to take into consideration the abundance of phenomena and changes: organization-task-procedure-staff,
8. adoptable, i.e. it adopts the changes of temporarily great intensity created by politics or external circumstances as overall task (e.g. proactive communication),
9. it has a task approach, i.e. it has an accountable action plan with the task for the renewal appropriations, responsibility and deadline thereof.

obvious that, although these indexes are based on in-depth researches and complex surveys, their complexity cannot be measured to the assessment and examination of the overall operational indexes of a state. As a matter of fact, they are one of the indexes of a sector in themselves, i.e., as far as we are concerned, they are at least by three graphs, generalising levels lower than the good-state-index. Thus we have to take into consideration that it will be difficult to reach a value which can be expressed merely by a number, as, even in case of stable elements, it shall be subject to considerable discretion what measurement/qualification and weighted index number shall be considered in a summarized, aggregated value. No wonder that most of the institutes proceed by publishing long sequences/qualifications that often risk perspicuity (OECD: Government at a Glance, IMD: World Competitiveness Ranking, WEF: Global Competitiveness Report).

Another determining antecedent is that almost all of the trials of the good-state-index creation consist of developing competitiveness measures (1.2.). It is not surprising since behind certain arts the second most global (signal) system is the international economy. As such it demands its own language, and, according to its own logic, measures the countries and states' activities in a wide – according to its ambition in a full – range. They are good and quality methods in their own way but there are three reasons why they cause a sprain if we are looking for the good-state-index by using them. One of them is (1.2.1.) that it primarily takes into consideration the aspect of the economic operators, and the expectations and demands of the part of public good of the other two, namely the individual and any community (from family to public bodies, churches and with a priority to the nation) do not appear. The other sprain is (1.2.2.) that they describe the “present”. They cannot evaluate either the past, tradition determined by the actual state movement in state development and public spirit, or the future demanding a complicated historical, political and diplomatic analysis as multiple scripts. The third sprain mainly lies in the subject (1.2.3.). The international institutes carrying out these measures are determined by ideology regarding the importance they attach to the free movement of capital, or the acceptance of the protection of internal, national market. This unique modernism, alongside the values dominating the current world economic ideas, is rather impatient with the concept of nation, church or the institution of a closed hierarchical big family.

Our second statement refers to another typical method of good-state-indexing. We get the result similar to the above if we evaluate the state not as an entity organising and developing the economy but as one that is a lawmaker and creates legal certainty (2). That is, we examine how good the state is in lawfulness and equity, how fair it is. The basis of the good-state-index creation, however, can be – instead of economic competitiveness – the further development and elaboration of certain international human, civil, liberty rights or anti-corruption, transparency measures.

This is how we get to the point that the measure and indexing of the good-state has to be carried out on a new basis. Our proposal for developing the good-state-index by elaborating and further developing the logic of the Magyary Programme in the course of the 2020 Strategy is as follows:

1. The definition of the concept of “good” cannot be avoided. As for our standpoint the goodness of the states, according to the logic of the state as one of the products of human culture development, is not absolute but relative, it can be closely related to the adjective “compliant”, i.e. whether it is compliant with the expectations of the citizens, communities and enterprises of the state. At the same time, the extension regarding timeline 3 must be indicated: it is about the citizens, communities and enterprises of the past, present and future. Furthermore, how well does it progress as self compliance in the process of community and legal institution evolution of humanity and state development, in other words is it able to transmit and develop itself or does it fail and dissolve vis-a-vis other states.

2. We consider the “state” as an institution having power, i.e. the strength of influencing and sapping will, since the predicates emerging in the Good State concept, according to the definition of the Magyary Programme, need strength and power: “it creates a balance, enables claim enforcement, and provides protection”.

3. In case of state assessment we apply the conservative way in the triple division of the branches of power. Namely the governance/public administration – judiciary – legislation/politicum. In case of these three branches of power it is important to name each aim and expectation defining the overall operation, from which the particular indicators shall be broken down. Considering the parts of the checks and balances system with organisational structures we have to define briefly what the expectation is in the aspect of their appropriate operation, since some have the expectation for “goodness” similar to judiciary (constitutional court, ombudsmen), while others to public administration (self-regulatory organisations) by their nature, and others, however, enrich the interest-articulation world of the legislation with further dimensions (forums, councils to reconcile interests).

4. Regarding the “limits of the state” it is a serious dilemma in the course of the index creation that those who are asked about their well-being, satisfaction, and in this regard about the good and compliant operation of the state declare how they actually set the limits of state responsibility. What is the state’s responsibility and why is it rewarded with a reason, and what is an improving or ruining circumstance independent of the state? Taking into consideration the four intervention areas³ of the Magyary Programme it shall be clear, from our standpoint, that the way to determine the limits of the state is the extending interpretation, i.e. if any state or administrative element of the above four is present the evaluation, indexation of the state has necessarily occurred, consequently it is enough if the state organisation, task, procedure or staff can be apprehended in the course of the phenomenon and event which give the subject of evaluation.

³ Organisation – task – procedure – staff

Table 1

The compliance and expectation system of the Good State Index

| good = compliant | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|---------------------------------|
| internal compliance | | self compliance | | external compliance | |
| individual – community – enterprise (1.1.) | past – present – future (1.2.) | operability of the state (2.1.) | state development and conservation (2.2.) | development and conservation of mankind (3.1.) | Liveability of the earth (3.2.) |
| state = institution of power its parts = branches of power | | | | | |
| executive power – governance | | legislation - politicum | | judiciary | |
| public administration | Self-governance (in transferred governmental authorities) | lawmaking | self-regulation | | |
| efficient and national | | representative (democratic - plural) and life-like | | lawful and just | |
| | | | | 1-3. according to the nature of the institution | |

The results related to the good-state-index, which were taken into consideration in the earlier Magyary Programme publications and the efficiency indexes of competitiveness and the rule of law assessed therein, are still far from the above approach. However, it is essential to bring the above, kind of deductive and the rather inductive proposals which were included in several measurements closer to each other. From this mental back and forth bridge building we can successfully reach an interpretable description evaluating the good state, and after it has been comprised, the good-state-index, which is really acceptable and usable in professional and political public discourse.

The first years of the Magyary Programme. According to the expectations of the Magyary Programme the work started “for the salvation of the Nation and in the Service of the Public” in each of the four intervention areas at the same time with a good revolutionary zeal in 2010. The frameworks of this essay are not appropriate to exhaustively take into consideration the results, the necessary corrections, the obstructions of progress or shortages. Thus we only review the most important ones. In the first place it is the new Fundamental Law coming into effect on 1st January 2012 and the cardinal acts, which provided state administration with a more consistent and modern framework than the previous one regarding both organisational and task systems.

Organisation. Within the framework of the Magyary Programme, after having created the overall state organisational cadastre in the field of organisations, the legal and economic consolidation of state administrative organs and background institutions have been carried out successfully. This draw made it possible that the number of organisations decreased from 649 to 320 within a year, i.e. to more than half of it. Thus from 2011 the state administration free from parallelisms and legal or economic disturbances, which destroy efficiency, was able to take over

the significant role of institution maintenance and law application (primarily of authority) from the local government system. The administrative task-load, which have been moved fast this way, reached its final place in the sectoral organisations maintaining institutions in the first case – after the transitional task performance of the government office, and in the second round in the government office system by the establishment of the district government office / government window (one-stop-shop). There are still significant constriction and consolidation tasks ahead regarding the sectoral institution maintenance system and sectoral task integration, and the task integration of government offices, which were pushed to the second phase in order to maintain operability with necessary gradualness.

Task. Within the framework of the Magyary Programme finally the overall Hungarian state task cadastre was prepared, which was the basis for one of the most significant deregulation work of the past 25 years. However, it is important to see that the next phase of the deregulation that can actually be noticed by the administrative customer is still ahead. This is the time when the legal and enforcement regulations at decree level can be shredded further by the politically evaluated task cadastre and the necessary legislative innovations serving simplification. It gives the basis of the work that in one of the main fields of induction regarding legislation a cut never experienced before was successfully made in the world of governmental strategies and bodies, and the order did not relax even in the second half of the term. After four years of experience we can say that the organisation and task compliance has accurately been carried out in public administration, but regarding the procedure simplifications and the staff performance appraisal connected to them it was only the strategic documents that have been drafted, the new systems have not been implemented in the practice of daily process. Lacking this neither the majority of the customers nor the staff can feel what it is like when, according to the expectation of the Magyary Programme, the machinery of the state operates by concentrating on the task-responsible-deadline triad free from slag (without down-time, in a professional way and in a way to reach the objective – c.f. procedural guarantee). The excuse for this deficiency of the implementation of the Magyary Programme is that Hungarian public administration had to handle extraordinary realignment of authority mainly in the field of tasks in order to implement the Fundamental Law and the cardinal acts (new local government and state administrative task allocation, new public bodies and organs specified constitutionally). Without providing the one-time resource necessary for the restructuring and besides handling the staff redundancy exceeding 15% to keep the deficit limit as well as economic blocks Hungarian public administration has succeeded in implementing almost the whole reorganisation. The next term will obviously deal with the fine tuning and minor corrections.

Procedure. The deficiencies regarding the procedures have already been mentioned above. Although the administrative procedures have become simpler and the time of the procedures shorter, in accordance with the Hungarian traditions of public law the political and administrative adjustments have been made both at government and county and district levels. However, massive improvement will only be achieved by the actual application of IT developments being implemented in the next term (electronic signature, governmental cloud computing, fully standardised service environment, e.g. records management), and by the circumstance that the elimination of parallelism and rivalry created and borne due to power technique considerations will be possible at the beginning of the term. For the future the lesson

must be drawn that regarding (the NFÜ [National Development Agency] and the system of public procurements) the governmental resource allocation (especially the EU funds) the performance of the state improved slower than expected, which not only cooled down the economic growth but was also a chief obstacle to the renewal of state(administration). Unfortunately this is the case even if the improvement can be demonstrated in comparison with that of the previous governments.

Staff. The fourth axis of the Magyary Programme is the staff. It was crucial in the area of staff development that even at the beginning of the term – supported by a Constitutional Court decision – the civil public service was successfully lifted from the interpretation environment of employment nature, similarly to the defence and law enforcement service. Not only did it give a higher rank to those concerned but also gave the lawmaker sufficient leeway to define public service and within this the career path of the government officials⁴ on new bases with high principle, and build the institution system of staff management efficiently.

Magyary Programme until 2020. It is important that, after forming the new government in 2014, or at least early 2015, the annual issue of the Magyary Programme (14.0) similar to the issues of 11.0 and 12.0 regarding their concrete nature is prepared which takes into consideration the deficiencies and gives the method of correction and duties at close range. It is also necessary because the planning ideas of the programming period 2014-2020 and the demands of the earthly reality shall coincide more accurately compared with the previous period. Besides this some valuable work has to be done, which considers in the perspective until and beyond 2020, alongside the challenges and possibilities, where and how the Hungarian state and Hungarian public administration as a part thereof have to prove that it is really good. In other words, it is efficient and national, and able to act for the salvation of the Nation and in the service of the Public.

1. Accelerating external and internal operation and, accordingly, a dramatically decreasing reaction time are necessary, consequently the organisational order has to be cut and standardised further, the “administrative mechatronics” providing administrative automatisation has to be established with sufficient e-government support, which relieves the burden of administration to an extent that enough resources and proper attention are given to the priority and special cases.

2. The changing world economic competition which is becoming more and more intense, and in this regard Hungarian public administration is the maid of the Hungarian economy, consequently public administration has to be a competitive advantage for the economic life and Hungarian economic policy in each of its sector by continuously analysing the solutions of the competitors and allies more thoroughly than previously.

3. The IT protection of the citizens of the state (communities and enterprises operating in its territory), i.e. besides the military and financial/economic capacities the global IT world and its dominant actors (Google, facebook, etc.) have become a power factor by now. Thus the

⁴ The career path elements of the government officials' magistrate according to the Magyary Programme:

1. professional ethic norms
2. scope based system
3. recruitment,
4. appraisal
5. career and remuneration,
6. training, further training and examination system
7. state care

matter is how the state can protect its citizens, their personality (profile) existing in and retroacting from the virtual world so that at the same time it does not over-exercise its power, does not restrain or take away popular, useful (indispensible) opportunities or applications. By now it is a priority but not an easy basic task of the state. It shall be obvious that in this new IT system much more and different tools are needed than merely data protection, and the traditional security system of privacy or consumer protection.

4. Providing natural and energy sources, i.e. in the aspect of the development of public administration the demand for natural and energy sources will become greater in the foreseeable future. Should they be available and protected in Hungary, or being transferred from abroad the competition and fight for them will be stronger and fiercer both by financial, political and administrative means.

5. Interpreting and handling the informal (not state) centres of power at global and regional level, the state, however, is not expected to die suddenly even in the 21st century, the out of touch public administration (often extreme formalism, disproportionate legal protection), which is globally experienced – due to the complacency as a result of peace and welfare -, give birth to more and more important and influential systems of power; making them visible, understandable as well as their handling are as important as evaluating the statistics and formal state operation of other countries, the latter of which were satisfactory in Magyary's era. It is a part of this that Hungarian public administration shall have an active (not at all offensive) but not passive role in every system of international membership.

6. A more proactive service of the perpetuance of the Hungarian nation, i.e. Hungarian public administration has to proceed with understanding care and absolute commitment so that the nation finds a really thriving and improving path – although it is often the decrease of the decaying processes that can only be seen – in its numerosity, culture, health and assets, independent of the current state borders. It is also part of this approach that we pay attention to the deprived, and creating opportunities shall be a part of everyday operation, i.e. not only shall we raise the nation but also keep it together.

Conclutions. The progress of the Magyary Programme, its successes and failures, due to the nature of the programme, got less exposure than for instance the events of fight for the country's economic independence. Despite this we have to see that in the past four years the Magyary Programme was one of the strategies which remained the main stream of the development activity regarding the sector of the government during the whole term, and provided meaningful results even in one term. Consequently, as far as I am concerned the Magyary Programme is worth being continued as the interpretation framework of Hungarian public administration development, and all those who made efforts for the success of the Magyary Programme despite the often limited resources in the past four years were on the right side.

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