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## Editorial

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**Biographical notes:** Konstantinos Margaritis holds a Law degree from the Democritus University of Thrace, LL.M. in International and European Public Law from Tilburg University and PhD in Law from National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. He has held teaching positions at the Staffordshire University (Crete Campus) and University of Crete, and is currently an Adjunct Academic at School of Social Sciences, Hellenic Open University. Since 2017, he is elected to the board of directors of the Greek Public Law Association. He is an Attorney at Law and Legal Counsel to the Special Account for Research Funds of the University of Crete. He has published extensively in the fields of public law, EU law and the protection of fundamental rights in the EU.

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Since the beginning of 2020, the world has been dealing with the tremendous effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 was officially declared as pandemic on 11 March 2020.<sup>1</sup> Statistical data demonstrate that the number of people infected by COVID-19 worldwide is over 660,000,000<sup>2</sup>, while the total number of deaths is reaching 6,700,000.<sup>3</sup> Given the circumstances, all countries have adopted measures in order to control the spreading of the disease and ultimately protect public health. On the other hand, those measures inevitably lead to limitations in several aspects of life that possibly involve fundamental rights. Emergency-related legal measures taken due to COVID-19, led to major constitutional changes. Deep concern arises with regard to the contingent multifaceted negative impacts of the pandemic on democracy, human rights protection and the rule of law as constitutional normality has been proven fragile. As a result, in every legal order, several cases concerning measures adopted due to the COVID-19 pandemic have reached the courts.

Those measures include many aspects of everyday social life. Restrictions on the freedom of movement, introduction of the lockdowns with tremendous economic effects, closure of places of worship just to name a few. Apart from the substantive measures, the application of emergency law in the law making process had become the normality in the majority of the states.

In order to effectively combat the COVID-19 pandemic, various vaccines have been developed and a vaccination policy has been implemented in a relatively short period. In particular, during the course of 2021, the discussion focused on the mandatory vaccination debate and possible violation of personal integrity and the right to consent to medical treatment. For example, within the EU legal order, the President of the Commission Ursula von der Leyen has emphatically stated that: "It is understandable and appropriate to lead this discussion, how we can encourage and potentially think about mandatory vaccination within the European Union. This needs discussion. This needs a common approach."<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, the pandemic crisis has triggered the discussion on a variety of issues related to measures adopted, from different perspectives. The aim of this special issue is to contribute to this discussion by providing well-written academic papers from scholars having different legal backgrounds and hence provide an insight to several legal orders. More specifically, the special issue includes the following papers:

- M. Tarawneh and A. Al-Adaiyleh, ‘The legality of the emergency defence orders in Jordan issued during corona pandemic: compliance or derogation’
- B.E. Kooffreh and B.F.I. Anyatang, ‘Pandemics and health equity issues: effects of disparities and social health determinants’
- O. Sumar and A. Villanueva, ‘Vaccine sell ban as a corollary of the Peruvian response to COVID-19’
- R. Méndez Reátegui and R.B. Lehmann, ‘Thoughts on institutional tax framework: a comparative study in the context of COVID-19’
- P. Singh and V. Sharma, ‘Legitimacy of fake news regulations on touchstone of freedom of speech and expression: a comparative study of Singapore and India’.

The papers reflect different approaches to the pandemic phenomenon from a doctrinal, practical and comparative perspective. This special issue is oriented towards the academic community and practitioners with a broad interest in the matters of the pandemic; additionally, it will be useful to all readers interested in expanding their knowledge in those areas. The diversity of topics and the geographical variety of legal orders in the special issue allow readers to compare the relevant measures for combating the pandemic and guarantee a multi-faceted and complete contribution to the crucial topics opened due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

At this point, I would like to warmly thank all authors for submitting their valuable contributions to this special issue and the editorial board of the *International Journal of Private Law* for the excellent cooperation. In addition, I deeply thank Professor Giuseppe Mastruzzo and the Journal Manager, Ms. Alexandra Starkie for their continuous support throughout the whole process of publication.

## Notes

- 1 See the announcement of the Director General of the World Health Organization [online] <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020> (accessed 2 January 2023).
- 2 For an updated version of the statistical data, visit the webpage Our World in Data [online] [https://ourworldindata.org/explorers/coronavirus-data-explorer?facet=none&Metric=Confirmed+cases&Interval=Cumulative&Relative+to+Population=false&Color+by+test+positivity=false&country=~OWID\\_WRL](https://ourworldindata.org/explorers/coronavirus-data-explorer?facet=none&Metric=Confirmed+cases&Interval=Cumulative&Relative+to+Population=false&Color+by+test+positivity=false&country=~OWID_WRL) (accessed 2 January 2023).
- 3 Our World in Data [online] [https://ourworldindata.org/explorers/coronavirus-data-explorer?facet=none&Metric=Confirmed+deaths&Interval=Cumulative&Relative+to+Population=false&Color+by+test+positivity=false&country=~OWID\\_WRL](https://ourworldindata.org/explorers/coronavirus-data-explorer?facet=none&Metric=Confirmed+deaths&Interval=Cumulative&Relative+to+Population=false&Color+by+test+positivity=false&country=~OWID_WRL) (accessed 2 January 2023).
- 4 Fleming, S. and Chazan, G. (2021) ‘Von der Leyen calls for EU ‘discussion’ on mandatory vaccination’, *Financial Times*, 1 December.