

Central Crisis Staff and its role as advisory body of the Slovak government.

Abstract

The COVID-19 crisis caught many of European countries unprepared and the need for quick and reliable advice for decision-makers was more necessary than ever. Especially in the case of Slovakia, where availability of good advice was hampered by handing over the government directly in the first days of the crisis. This crucial advisory role is legally given to the Central Crisis Staff (CCS) of the Slovak Republic and most of the governmental policies were based on their recommendations. The CCS is composed of representatives from various ministries, Government Office, and other institutions including those from the fields of national security, healthcare, and economics. This paper will present the theoretical background and methodological approach for examining the profiles, career paths, recruitment and appointment of the members of the CCS. In further research, we will aim to compare the CCS with other advisory bodies in Slovakia and analyze whether different types of advisors work with different knowledge and provide a different type of advice.

The topic of political advisors is linked with the study of the politicization of civil service. As Eichbaum and Shaw point out, the traditional approaches of politicization are narrowed to appointments and dismissals of the heads of the department and thus are insufficient in covering the politicization via advisory bodies. The first part of the paper aims to provide an overview of literature from the topic and applies it to the Slovak context. There is not much we know about advisory bodies in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries, which are notoriously politicized, therefore this paper will build mostly on the literature from the Westminster democracies, Scandinavia, and Western and Southern Europe. The profile of Slovak advisors was covered by the work of Samuel Krajňák and Katarína Staroňová, who analyzed ministerial advisors in Slovakia between years 2010 – 2020. Based on their work, where the main outcome is the profile of the advisors, we will try to adjust the typology of advisory roles to better fit our case.