

A new content of the liberal economic professions

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The whole socio-economic development relies eventually on the quality of the individual's work as a production generator. Its occurrence within the permanent process of economic development is done in compliance with occupational work division. Work division and specialization represent the most important advancement factors both for the individual and society. Ultimately, the technicality of the economic agent in one activity field or another has its roots in the economic interest, the special advantage of an activity related to another. Therefore, the liberal economic professions - financial-accountancy are becoming more and more important.

Key words: work division, liberal professions, professional competence, competition and competitiveness.

1. Liberal professions features

Any profession can be defined through the close genre and specific difference, by emphasizing its own appropriations and obvious/natural peculiarities which come from all its

characteristic aspects.

In our country, the legislation mixes the obligation and the state's right to arrange the conditions of pursuing the right to free practice of liberal professions with the rights and interests of some private groups and associations,

unconstitutionally built on special laws. The inferences from this puzzling atmosphere and the lack of consistency are major and decisive for Romanian society.

However, there are such professions in Romania that have always had a major role in economic development leading to economic increase and to offering new jobs, consultancy services being a prerogative of economic development.

European economic integration, a very complex process, takes place at the same time with the globalization, as a tendency to reorganize the world, aiming to get beyond the limits of the old order. The French are talking about the globalization as an imposing of American capital interests, while the Anglo-Americans see it as supremacy of the model centered on financial speculations and on the high mobility of financial capital. Under such circumstances, national economies become investment sites, deregulation becomes a condition, remote monetary governance is taken for an ideal *nostrum* – the most capitalized is the most powerful and makes the rules of the game. Therefore, financial accounting liberal professions must keep track, supervise and systematically audit the sequence of efficient financial transactional activities within autonomous patrimonial entities, but at the same time mutually dependent macro economically. Consequently, organic integration of Romania in the European Union implies legislative and institutional

harmonization which should be mutually fruitful. The liberal professions environment will finally achieve a great importance for the future development of middle class in Romania.

Currently, there are many major disfunctions on the liberal professional market in Romania, which too often make the services offered to the citizens too expensive, and a quality that doesn't satisfy their requests.

The European Parliament and The European Council adopted, in 2006, directives which define the liberal profession concept.

Summing up the events after 1989, one can easily notice that the setting up and the development of these professions in Romania has brought, until now, several types of approaches, according to the lobby that interests of different political and professional groups have considered. But a basic, coherent and consequent approach in what concerns liberal professions regulation is still missing. That fact requires a law for liberal professions, in agreement with a professional organization well anchored in Romanian and foreign economic business environment.

Liberal professions are gradually becoming more important as they have a direct influence on consumers, who are interested in permanent improvement of the contents of these professions and in enhancing its efficiency. Competition in this field will gain fundamental dimensions in the near future.

In the diverse and wide sphere of non-material services, financial-accounting liberal professions are solicited to accomplish a bigger role in improving Romanian economy competition, which is appreciated in the European continental context.

Economic reforms in our country in correlation with the demands of the knowing society, of informational booming and efficient economic development have generated the obvious tendency of institutional organization of liberal economic professions. The systemic aspect of existence and specialized human action implies the principle of order and institutional organization, as a basic integrating principle, which gets more insistent in the Romanian post EU adhesion phase.

In our country liberal professions are united in the Liberal Professions Union. This is an independent organism, made of 14 liberal professions associations and includes almost 140000 members that work in adequate professional organizations.

Romanian Liberal Professions Union – RLPU is an observing member of The European Council for Liberal Professions – CEPLIS and of the World Union for Liberal Professions - WULP. Liberal Professions Union of Romania takes active part in the social dialogue within the Romanian Economic and Social Council, having the Statute of observing member of this body.

The Body of Expert and Licensed Accountants of Romania (CECCAR) -

part of RLPU, has a large amount of experience in the accounting field and is representative for the accountant profession in Romania, independent, nongovernmental, non-profit and of public interest. The Body of Expert and Licensed Accountants of Romania has an impressive geographical representation, present in all 42 counties of the country through territorial branches and consists of a number of about 56000 accounting professionals. CECCAR's management, with the help of their chairman, has considered the affiliation to professional international organizations with the same profile, the Body being a member in whole rights of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC).

As a representative of accounting profession in our country, CECCAR has had an important contribution to the international field; it is a member that militated for building the Partnership for Accounting Development from South-Eastern countries (South Eastern European Partnership on Accountant Development – SEEPAD) whose manager presently is.

Between the 15th and the 16th of September 2006 The Body of Expert and Licensed Accountants of Romania organized the XVI-th Congress of Accountant Profession in Romania, with a central theme based on a very actual controverised subject: "Accountant profession and Globalization". The Congress united, as always, almost 1000

participants, members of the Body from all around the country as well as an impressive number of prestigious international guests. During the two days of the Congress matters of major interest for the accounting profession in Romania, like the effect of globalization upon the profession, specific aspects of the IMM and the convergence with the IFRS, were discussed and debated.

Between the 28th of February and March the 3rd 2007, representatives of CECCAR have taken active part in the International Fiscal Conference works at Limasol-Cyprus, where they presented highly appreciated scientific and research papers and interventions. As a proof, the Conference agreed on organizing a future International Workshop of European and World Taxonomy during the summer of 2007.

2. ACCOUNTANT LIBERAL PROFESSION DEMANDS

The fast widespread of IT and real-time communications, the external transfer of funds, capital migration and the unusual growth of the number of businesses have determined the increase of the role of accountancy and the need to correspondingly adjust its procedures. Data processing of operations and financial-accounting transactions have considerably changed the way of carrying out decisional acts, essentially reverberated on accountancy.

Accountancy has become informa-

tional, as the information, knowledge and accounting data are very important resources, without which independent patrimonial entities cannot achieve their strategic targets or tactics. Managing these entities is efficient provided there are some performant data processing systems.

Data processing financial accountant systems, ranging up to top management level, have become an important chapter for all-type enterprise management: operational, tactical as well as strategic. Obtaining performant informational systems has become a significant activity not only for the IT specialists, but for accountant specialists as well. Accordingly, a wide range of methodologies, methods, techniques, procedures, standards and instruments have spread out, combining financial-accountant knowledge with computer science, communication, management, applied mathematics etc.

The competing capitalistic market economy represents the premises on which business data processing systems work, as the market economy is, in its essence, monetarised so that all accountant operations are registered, watched and evaluated by currency means.

Accounting profession implements working, control and synthesis procedures compliant to dematerialized financial information requests and to accountant reflection of patrimonial and extra patrimonial operations

in the annual accounts that are being presented to owners, brokers, banks and other users, with the purpose of identifying and correctly administrating the risks of the good work of the capital market and investment processes. Under the circumstances, the liberal accounting professional must be a competent acknowledged analyst of the economic financial activity. The unprecedented evolution of the importance and complexity of accountancy in administrating the patrimony of enterprises and sharing information to internal and external users means that the accountant professional's training must be controlled, supervised and attested by CECCAR and confirmed by practice.

The European Union adherence binds the liberal professional accountants to react quickly, as well as to provide quality services, innovate, research, improve their professional knowledge, and ultimately, identify those gaps where they can be competitive, considering the high competition of external consultancy firms that will pervade Romanian market of accountancy services. Consequently, liberal accountant professionals may not afford to miss the start for a unique chance.

Competitiveness represents an essential issue both for our country and for the liberal professional accountants, therefore it deserves due care; thus, accountancy must relate to the remarks found in reference literature regarding competition and competitiveness. Competition mirrors the pressure within

the inner space of a person and the environment where they live, grow and act. Competition is externally conditioned versus the individual who chooses to enter the area; competitiveness deals with the potential of a person or of a group to provide performance during the process, replacing themselves in the most favorable location against the competitor and obtain the desired success. Thus, competition has an inlying firmness of the person, a subjective one, that reflects the inborn and educated personality, as well as the behavioral capability acquired through steady learning and practical experience.

Considering the above circumstances, The Body of Expert and Licensed Accountants of Romania attended to professional accountants, by issuing Law no. 32 in view of continuous professional development of accountants. The norms were established compliant to the International Standard of Education no. 7, enforced by the National Federation of Accountants which stipulates that member institutions must implement the demand of Continuous Professional Development as part of the status that an accountant professional has both within the economy and society as well.

A provision as such promotes the accountant profession aim to meet high quality services expected by the consumers. CECCAR's mission is to cater public interest, strengthen the accountant profession all around the

country, thus leading to a strong development of national economy; it will manage to do so by establishing and promoting the adherence at high quality professional standards, convergent with the international ones, and bringing the problems of general interest closer together, an important part of which the professional expertise is.

According to the basic principle of Professional Competence, stipulated in the National Ethic Code of Professional Accountants, a professional accountant has the permanent duty to maintain the knowledge and professional competences at the requested level, so that they make sure a client or employer receives the advantage of competent professional services based on the actual progress practically registered and promoted by legislation. A professional accountant must act according to the technical and professional norms applicable in all their professional or business relations. CECCAR – as a member of IFAC – has the duty to make sure that the professional accountants continue to develop their professional competence demanded by the beneficiary of their services. The body also has the task to promote among the accountant professionals, interest holders and the public the advantages of continuous professional development, emphasizing the importance of permanent improvement of competence and engagement in a lifelong education.

Continuous professional development alone does not certify the fact that all accountants would offer high quality

professional services around the clock; therefore, applying the specialist's knowledge blended with professional judgement and an objective attitude is necessary. Neither can one rest assured that each and every professional accountant, taking part in a continuous professional development training program would obtain all the benefits out of that program and would end by being competitive. However, it is certain that professionals who are not up to date with the actual general and technical attainments will not be able to provide services in a professional way and they would be pulled off the market. Consequently, by issuing norms, CECCAR assumes the following obligations:

- a) promoting permanent education programs for all professional accountants;
- b) facilitate their access to the permanent professional development resources and opportunities;
- c) establish the development and maintenance of professional competence standards, mandatory for protecting public interest;
- d) monitor and implement permanent development and professional competence maintenance.

The strategic target of permanent professional development is to help professional accountants develop excellent competence in order to provide high quality services to attend public interest and be competitive on the services market. The norms stand on the

principle that the professional accountant is responsible for maintaining ceaseless professional competence mandatory for ensuring quality services to their clients, employers and other interest holders who are becoming more and more sophisticated and diverse. Given the circumstances, studying the experience of other countries has a special significance for preparing the efficient integration of accountant specialists compliant to the EU requests, as Romania is a full-rights member.

The European economy model has its own vision upon the normative construction, consonance of freedom movement, strengthening the social finality of economy, according to inner cohesion of the global system. Consequently, speeding the learning process in all fields, including liberal professional accountancy is a must, as

well as the expansion of lifelong learning.

The learning sources vary and relate in specific ways: *e.g.* formal instruction, personal experience, interaction with peers and mentors, belonging to a professional community, logging to virtual environments. The fast dynamics of science and technology stresses the rhythm and the obsolescence of knowledge, so that the educational system has the duty to assist its beneficiaries in "learning to learn".

We infer that successful promotion of Romanian projects in the accountancy field contributes to accomplishing all integration requests and harmonization of economy and finances development of Romania with European models, due to materialize in a superior level of the entire population's life quality.

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