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**VAEIE**

**Values and Attitudes Education for Inclusive Europe**

**2019-1-BE02-KA201-060238**

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| **Topic** | **THE RULE OF LAW** |
| **Title Image** | <br>**REVISTA 22**<br>**Photo credit: Octav Dragan** |
| **Title** | **TWO ELEPHANTS IN THE ROOM** |
| **Details:** | **Purpose**:<br><br>The lesson aims to introduce the concept of the rule of law (état de droit) and its implications in real life.<br><br>**Objectives:**<br><br>**At the end of the lesson, students will be able to:** |

- Identify various aspects of the rule of law and enunciate its main principles;
- Give examples of violation of the principles of the rule of law and debate the social consequences;
- Understand the role of the balance of power in the state;
- Understand and debate on various democratic practices that involve the citizens in political decision.

**Relevant Vocabulary:**

- Rule of law, democracy, balance of power, government ordinance, emergency ordinance, pardon ordinance, democratic protests, spontaneous protests, authorized protest, social media platform

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| **How to use this lesson:** | **Activities:**<br><br>**INTRODUCTION:**<br><br>Excerpt from the article:<br><br>**„2017–2019 Romanian protests"**<br><br>**From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia**<br><br>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2017%E2%80%932019_Romanian_protests<br><br>„There were numerous protests against the Romanian Government between 2017 and 2019. In January 2017, days after the government of the Grindeanu Cabinet was sworn into office in Romania, protests took place throughout the country against ordinance bills that were proposed by the Romanian Ministry of Justice regarding the pardoning of certain committed crimes, and the amendment of the Penal Code of Romania (especially regarding the abuse of power).[41] At the heart of these protests is the community Corruption Kills, founded by Florin Bădiță, who alongside other civic groups organized what proved to be the largest protests since 1989, thus realizing the "Revolution of our generation".[42][43] |

Despite the negative reactions from both the judicial institutions and the public, the newly sworn-in government secretly approved an ordinance modifying the Penal Code and Penal Procedure Code during the night of 31 January.[44][45]

Opponents raised accusations that the ordinance was intended for decriminalisation of government corruption, and to help hundreds of current and former politicians to escape ongoing criminal investigations or prison sentences.[46]

Immediately after it was announced that the ordinance was passed, more than 37,000 people protested that night. The next day, on 1 February, the protests swelled to over 300,000 people throughout the country, continuing then daily and peaking on 5 February, when over 500,000 Romanians protested throughout the country, making the protests the largest since the fall of Communism and the overthrowing of Nicolae Ceaușescu.[47][48][49] Since the main grievance of the protesters (the government interfering with the fight against corruption) was not addressed, but rather gradually joined by the attempts of the parliament to relax the anti-corruption laws,[50][51][52][53] the protests continued on an almost daily basis throughout the country,[54] with more and more protesters demanding early elections in addition to the resignation of the government.[55] After the winter of 2017, the next mass protest was on 20 January 2018, when 50,000 – 100,000 Romanians went to the streets to protest against proposed changes to the penal code and to the justice system laws.[56][57] While protests on a smaller scale continued to happen almost daily, mass protests then erupted again on 10 August 2018, when an anti-government protest with the "Diaspora at Home" motto was held in Bucharest.[58][55][59] The 10 August 2018 protest was marked by unprecedented levels of violence in comparison to the other 2017–2018 protests, and lead to an ongoing resurgence of mass protests in Romania.[60][61][62]

So far, protestors have succeeded in compelling the government in 2017 to withdraw the contested ordinance and Florin Iordache,[63][64] who as justice minister was formally responsible for putting forward the ordinance, resigned shortly thereafter over the scandal that ensued.[65]"

„2017–2019 Romanian protests", From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2017%E2%80%932019_Romanian_protests

**1) Preparation**

- Presenting the theme and the learning objectives - understanding the role of the balance of power in the state and learning about various democratic practices through the citizens are able to involve in political decision;
- Presenting the material and web resources, instruct students how to use them during the lesson;
- Proposing the main learning methods: exploration of media and e-learning resources, explanation, discussions, forming teams and debating.

**2) Learning activities**

- The students watch the introductory video materials and discuss the following questions;
  - Why the president Klaus Iohannis told ministers at the government meeting he chairs, that "There are two elephants in the room"?
  - What changes did the famous Ordinance 13 bring to the Criminal Code, and why would these provisions have prevented the proper functioning of the rule of law in Romania?
  - How has the public reacted and how has the media reported the event?
  - Would the government have repealed ordinance 13 amending the penal codes if the people had not protested with hundreds of people in the streets?
  - What was the role of social media to initiate and continue the public protests?
- The teacher will introduce the new vocabulary and encourage students to read more about The Rule of Law studying the VAEIE OOC-Module „The Rule of Law, Rights and Duty";
- Invite the teams to note their debating plans and conclusions on the paper chart, while more discussions and explanation take place;
- Supervise the presentations and provide feedback;
- Asses and ensure the learning of new terms and concepts through a quick session of questions and answers.

**3) Ensuring retention and transfer**

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|  | • Encouraging students to study the extra reading materials and consider to enroll in the VAEIE e-courses;<br>• Giving students homework to read or watch the actuality news for one week and prepare short presentations in which they exemplify various aspects of the rule of law in one chosen country. |
| **Materials:** | **1) Video materials (stimulus of learning)** |



President Klaus Iohannis told ministers on Wednesday, at the opening of the government meeting he chairs, that "there are two elephants in the room" - the pardon ordinance and the ordinance amending the penal codes

Source: YouTube, Press Agency AGERPRES, https://youtu.be/5z7vMfFZzWM



Ordinance number 13 is history. For the sixth day in a row, hundreds of thousands of people are protesting in front of the Government in Bucharest, in Timisoara, Iasi, Cluj and Craiova, but also in the diaspora.

Source: YouTube, TVR News, https://youtu.be/KVKTDOCkfPs

**2) Reading materials (learning resources)**

- For deepening stimulus situation: Wikipedia „2017-2019 Romanian Protest": https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2017%E2%80%932019_Romanian_protests
- For deepening notions proposed in Objectives: VAEIE OOC-Modules „Rule of Law, Rights and Duty": https://vaeie.eu/ecourses/course/view.php?id=15

| | 3) Chart paper and markers, projector, smartphones |
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| **Category** | Interchangeably (classroom / online / e-learning) |
| **Main target group** | 14-18 years old / secondary school students |
| **Related school topics:** | English, Ethics, Citizenship Education, European Studies, English as a Second Language, Human Sciences |