

Quarter Century of Quality Management and Consumer Protection in Romania

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Abstract

The former socialist/ communist rule kept Romania almost isolated from the Western World during about half a century (1945-1989). All about 7000 Romanian former state-owned companies (which were operational at the end of 1989) were obliged, by Law, starting the years '60, to organize their own so-called "CTC (Technical Quality Control) Department", in order to only inspect the quality of their products. In 1992, two years only after the fall of Ceausescu's dictatorship, in Romania were published both the first Romanian edition of famous ISO 9001 standard (in 1987, when ISO published its first international issue, the former Romanian regime did not allow the translating of it in Romanian!) and the first Consumer Protection Act in Romania's history.

Index terms— Romania, quality management, consumer protection, legislation, organizations, approaches.

1 Introduction

Romania is the ninth largest country of the EU by area [about 238,400 square kilometers (92,000 sq mi)] and has the seventh largest population of the EU (with over 19 million people [1]). Its capital and largest city is Bucharest -the tenth largest city in the EU (with a population of around 2 million).

"Romania joined NATO on 29 March 2004, the European Union on 1 January 2007 and is also a member of the Latin Union, of the Francophonie, the OSCE [2], the WTO [3], the BSE [4] and the United Nations." [5] Like for other former "socialist" countries, the transition of Romania to the functional free market economy, between years 1990-2000, included the transition of companies and of other organizations from State "Quality Control" towards the much more efficient "Quality Assurance" and "Total Quality Management" approaches.

2 II. Former Passive-Repressive Approach of Quality

The former "socialist" rule kept Romania isolated from the Western World for almost half a century (1945-1989).

Starting years '60, all Romanian industrial companies (large, medium and small -all Stateowned) Introduce the so-called State "Quality Control" as were obliged to expression of the Passive-Repressive Approach of Quality [4]. Its characteristics were the following:

1. Over 12,000 mandatory State national standards (called "State Standards" -STAS)
2. Legislation and rules implementing exclusively the State "Quality Control" According to the former legislation, all Romanian industrial companies were State owned and compelled to adopt, since their founding, the microeconomic "(Technical) Quality Control" approach. This was very frequently understood and achieved thanks mostly to the lack of resources -as only "Inspection" approach (also called "passive Quality Control" approach, without "corrective actions" and with few efficient "corrections"). The "Inspection" approach invented in industrialized countries over a century ago is considered today to be only the first step of all other more efficient "Quality Management" approaches (like "active Quality Control" or "Quality Control", "Quality Assurance", "Total Quality Management").

42 The "Quality Assurance" approach was implemented before 1989, in Romania, only in some very few
43 companies, operating mainly in the nuclear, aeronautics, electronics and defence sectors.

44 The "Total Quality Management" approach models, principles and practices were, until years 2000, practically
45 ignored in Romania.

46 3 3.

47 Establishment and operation of central and local governmental agencies (the so-called "State General Quality
48 Inspectorate" -IGSCCP 6 nicknamed "Quality Police") aimed to over-check manufactured products and .H to
49 punish -especially financially -companies' staffs and employees found "guilty" for not having provided quality
50 products.

51 Year 2015 ()

52 4 A

53 These three above mentioned features characterized the so-called "Passive-Repressive Approach of Quality", a
54 former State quality policy that was specific to Romania and to other centrally planned economies from Central
55 and Eastern Europe as well as from Asia, during some decades (1960 -1990).

56 Many Romanian quality professionals do agree now that this approach came in Romania and in other ex-
57 "socialist" countries from USSR (via GOSSTANDARD) that, in turn, imported it -after the Second World War
58 -from USA. ("The US approach has historically been command-and-control oriented. This might be the result
59 of a history of political and military management as a basis for business management." [4]. This situation was
60 reflected in a negative way as well in the educational system as in creating a solid quality culture, especially
61 regarding "prevention" versus "detection"/ "correction" attitudes and behaviours.

62 In December 1989, this Romanian authoritarian approach was abandoned and the "Quality Police" dismantled.
63 But their counterproductive heritages especially at the level of people mentalities, attitudes, behaviours, etc. -still
64 remained.

65 5 III.

66 Cnsmca New but Ephemeral Governmental Agency which Drafted Romania's First New Laws and Government
67 Decisions on Quality Matters

68 After 1990, like other Central and Eastern European countries, Romania was facing the great challenge of
69 rapidly implementing and adjusting its accreditation and certification systems according to the EU Quality
70 System as well as implementing quality standards and quality systems in its private and state owned companies.
71 In order to cope with these objectives, starting years 1990-1992 and till 2006, new legislation was adopted and
72 new infrastructures were established in the fields of standardization, certification, accreditation, metrology and
73 consumers' protection. necessary legislative and institutional changes, compatible with democracy, free market
74 economy and EEC policies [4]. During its only two years action, the CNSMC drafted over twenty Government
75 Ordinances (GO) -future Laws -and Government Decisions (GD) on standardization, metrology, certification,
76 accreditation and consumers' protection matters. The last one was a new concern in all emerging European
77 democracies intending to become freemarket based "capitalist countries" with "consumer societies" 9 . These
78 drafts attempted to start the harmonization of Romania's legislation, standards, structures and procedures with
79 those existing in EC Member States.

80 In During the same year, after thorough documentation, some expert teams of CNSMC started to elaborate
81 first drafts of Government Decisions and Laws. It was a difficult task because CNSMC's action domains -
82 standardisation, metrology, quality and consumers' protection -were heterogeneous and full of innovations (in
83 rapport with their levels of development in Romania before 1990).

84 Simultaneously, CNSMC supported the initiatives of some of its employees and collaborators aiming to establish
85 new specialized non-governmental bodies. Thus, till the end of 1990, there were founded, for example, the
86 Romanian Quality Association -ARC 10 , the Consumers' Protection Association -APC 11 , and the Network
87 of Romanian Laboratories -RELAR 12 . Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture, etc. which were
88 nevertheless confronted with many quality challenges -"hoping" that the free-market will succeed alone to solve
89 itself these problems!! In 1992, IRS, the Romanian Standardization Institute -one of the basic components of
90 CNSMCsucceeded finally to translate, adopt and publish (even with 5 years delay!) the Romanian edition 19 of
91 the first issue of ISO 9000 family standards. As it is worldwide largely known, this first international issue of these
92 standards was published by ISO in 1987 but, till 1989, a Romanian version of these standards was informally
93 banned in Romania, as being "unnecessary" ??0 structures and, later, through practices).

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95 IV. New Regulatory Frame and New Structures Dedicated to Trust/ Confidence Generation and Market
96 Surveillance

97 After the dismantling of CNSMC in August 1992, during the following 23 years, some hundreds of small
98 companies and non-governmental bodies dedicated to quality were created, in order to deal with certification,

99 accreditation, education & training and consultancy in Quality Management matters, as well as in order to survey
100 the market.

101 Meanwhile, some dozens of new basic regulatory measures were promulgated in the areas of quality assurance/
102 certification and of consumers' protection; the most important of them being the following:

103 -L No. 10/1995 -on buildings'/ constructions' quality -GD No. 629/1996on products quality assurance and
104 their certification ??9 The first Romanian edition of ISO 9000 standards (most "attractive" and "interesting"
105 of them being ISO 8402 and ISO 9001 standards) was a trilingual (Romanian/ English/ French) publication,
106 in order to facilitate the understanding of their somehow "unusual" content. All further Romanian editions of
107 all ISO 9000 standards were published later only in RomanianH 20 According to some former IRS employees,
108 the answer given in 1987 by one of the former Romanian Communist Party leaders at their official request to
109 be allowed topublish a Romanian version of ISO 9000 standards was: "Comrades, there is no need to publish
110 such standards in our country because we do not need <quality systems> inRomania, our <socialist system>
111 being fully sufficient!". In addition, only in 1990 it became possible to re-establish the ISO FRPC 24 (Bucharest,
112 Romania) promoted in Romania,

113 In an increasingly globalizing economy, the European Quality Policy -as it was conceived by the DG
114 IIIB Directorate -was based on Quality Management concepts "that place individual at the center of every
115 organization".

116 "Part of the European Commission's new industrial competitiveness initiatives, the European Quality Policy
117 was developed to provide the humanistic component of Europe's competitiveness policy. It was designed
118 in cooperation with the various stakeholders (including European and national quality organizations, trade
119 associations, chambers of commerce and national authorities), to develop a favorable environment in which
120 companies and public administrations in Europe aim to achieve excellence in terms of their outputs and internal
121 organization for the benefit of society as a whole" 25 .

122 24 FRPC -Fundatia Român? pentru Promovarea Calit??ii (The Romanian Foundation for Quality Promotion,
123 www.frpc.ro)between years 1999-2002, the European Quality Policy, with the goal to prepare Romanian
124 mentalities for Romania's accession, in 2007, in EU and CEE. ??5

125 7 EDUCATION & TRAINING AND CONSULTANCY OR- 126 GANISATIONS

127 As such, it could and should be a logical step on the road, from conformity with safety regulations to
128 competitiveness and business excellence, through Quality Management principles. [3], [4] The RFQP's project,
129 financed by EU, included editing and distributing of two dozens of publications (books, leaflets, brochures) as
130 well as some workshops and education & training actions.

131 8 Promotion of European Quality

132 Policy in Romania a) Romania -from "Inspection" and "Quality Control" approaches to "Quality Assurance"
133 approach (Fig. 3)

134 Between years 1991-2006, in Romania were founded many hundreds of thousands of new private companies
135 (mostly small or medium sized ones) and two thirds of existing State-owned companies (mostly large ones) were
136 sold/ privatized or closed. Consequently, a lot of companies -mostly private but also some State-owned ones -tried
137 to become profitable (and even competitive, especially on foreign markets), by adopting the "Quality Assurance"
138 Approach (mainly through implementing a Quality Management System in conformity with ISO 9001 model's
139 requirements), with or without certification. That was a first difficult step aimed to initiate the transition of
140 Romanian industrial companies from "Inspection" to "Quality Control" and, further, to "Quality Assurance"
141 approaches (Fig. ??) Even if, in 1989, the former State "Quality Control" was formally suppressed in Romania,
142 its heritages are still alive (most important of these being the following: lack of financial resources, lack or
143 insufficient managers' commitment for quality, lack or insufficient employees' motivation for quality, resistance/
144 reluctance to change, etc.). Here are, for example, some of today's most known Romanian myths on ISO 9000
145 standards:

146 ? "ISO 9000 is a <product standard>"

147 ? "ISO 9000 is an <authorization>"

148 ? "ISO 9000 certification is compulsory"

149 ? "ISO 9000 is to be implemented mainly within big industrial companies; therefore, it is not adequate for
150 education providers"

151 ? "There are no customers in higher education; therefore, it is nonsense to speak about <customers' require-
152 ments>, <fulfillment of customers' requirements> and <customers' satisfaction> within higher education."

153 In this way, in today's Romania, the quality is no longer the <State's problem> since it became the <everyone's
154 business>! In addition, the former counter-productive bottom-line orientation of companies in quality matters
155 was replaced by a general concern of all its employees for quality. In this connection it is noteworthy that Japan,
156 a country once ridiculed for the poor quality of its exports, has become an economic superpower chiefly because
157 it attained world leadership in quality of products. One of the actions it took to attain that leadership was

9 CONCLUSIONS

158 the creation of a national award for high quality. b) From "Quality Assurance" approach to "Total Quality
159 Management" approach (Fig. 3)

160 In 2000 -thank to a project ??8 In February 2001, the first Romanian awarded companies were presented
161 (by the former President of Romania Ion Iliescu). Before this event, Dr. Juran sent to the award winners the
162 following message: "I have been informed by Dr. Dragulanescu that in November of this year there will be
163 announced the first winners of the <J. M. Juran> Romanian Quality Award. In my view, this is an important
164 forward step for the Romanian economy.

165 In this connection it is noteworthy that Japan, a country once ridiculed for the poor quality of its exports,
166 has become an economic superpower chiefly because it attained world leadership in quality of products. One of
167 the actions it took to attain that leadership was the creation of a national award for high quality.

168 26 ISO Survey 2011 (www.iso.ch) ??? According to ISO Survey 2013, in 2012 there were delivered worldwide
169 1.129.446 ISO 9001 certificates ??8 The Terms of Reference (TOR) document was drafted by Nicolae Dragulanescu
170 and Mihai V?leanu.

171 Many other nations have since created such awards. Their experience has demonstrated that the existence of
172 a national quality award, plus publication of the criteria used to judge the merits of applications for the award,
173 tend to stimulate companies to improve their own quality. Moreover, when one company in a specific industry
174 receives such an award it stimulates other companies in that same industry to bring their quality up to the level
175 of the award winner.

176 So it gives me much pleasure to congratulate this year's award winners and to extend to all Romanian
177 institutions my best wishes for continued progress in improving quality, year after year." In addition, during
178 these 25 years (1990 -2015), unfortunately and for many reasons, no Romanian organization became an EFQM
179 Award finalist/winner (despite some very few "daring" candidatures and attempts!)?

180 9 Conclusions

181 1. Today's Romania has over 1.000,000 registered companies (mostly private, small and medium sized) which are
182 striving to compete -within the Global Market -through their quality products/ services -by mplementing more
efficient Quality Management approaches, like "Quality Assurance" and "Total Quality Management". ^{1 2 3}



Figure 1: RFQP has repeatedly proposed

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Standardization Institute, a former governmental agency, certification (through IRS-the Romanian the forerunner of today ASRO 15), metrology (through BRML -the Romanian Office for Legal Metrology) and consumers' protection (through OPC -the Consumers' Protection Office). Meanwhile, a former Research and Technology Ministry (MCT) established however an own quality structure dedicated mainly to the establishment and management of quality programs/ projects funded by Edi (PHARE Programme). It is to be mentioned that, in 1991, the Romanian Government has decided that the new established Ministry of Public Works (MLP) should subordinate ISCC, the State Inspectorate for Constructions' Quality, a very important governmental agency that was also included, between years 1990-1991, within CNSMC.

ANPC -Autoritatea Na?ional? pentru Protec?ia Consumatorilor (National Authority for Consumers' Protection, www.anpc.ro) managing a national network of 41 regional/ countys' Offices for Consumers' Protection (OPC -Oficiul pentru Protec?ia Consumatorilor)

ASRO -

Figure 2:

The CIIC was later suppressed and this program was never approved and put in practice!

-GD No.1073/1996 -on quality assessment, certification and surveillance for providers of national defence system, establishing some dedicated military bodies named OMCAS -the Military Body for Certification, Accreditation and Surveillance and CCASs Year-the Commissions for Certification, Accreditation and Surveillance. All these structures were later dismantled.

54 GO No.39/1998 -on the standardization activity (approved, after 4 years, by the Law 355/2002) -both

Volume including the long time claimed separation of regulation, standardization, certification and accreditation

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No.21/1992 (on consumers' protection) and establishing principles of liability for defective products, according to European Directives.

[Note: 23]

Figure 3: A

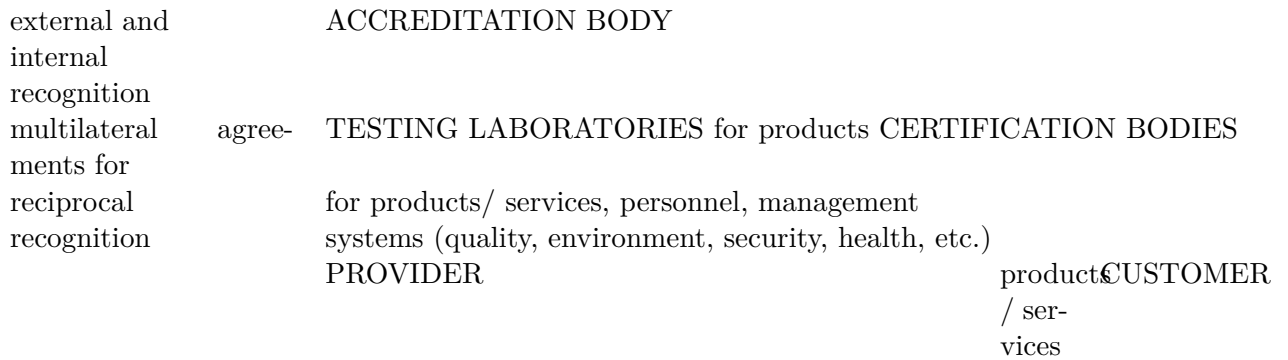
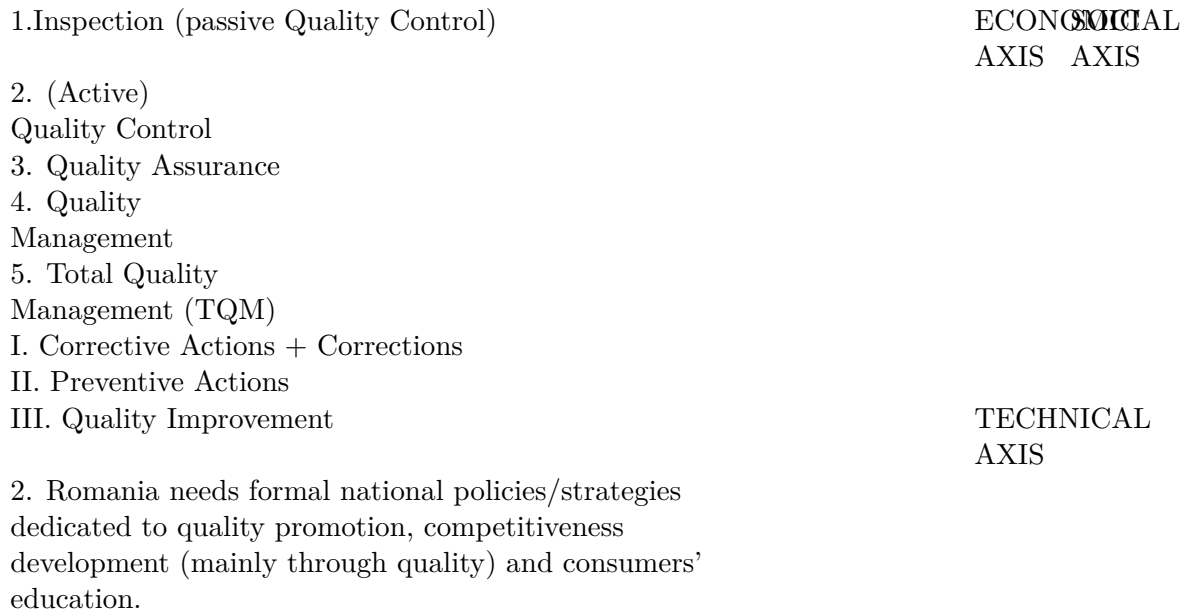


Figure 4:

Figure 5:



[Note: 3]

Figure 6:

¹IGSCCP -Inspectoratul General de Stat pentru Controlul Calitatii Produselor (State General Inspectorate for Products' Quality Control)

²"Consumers society"'s and "consumers protection"'s concepts, goals and practices were officially rejected and/ or even banned in some former "socialist countries" as being ideologically and politically incompatible with the goals and objectives of future "socialist society" and/ or "communist society" (planned to be erected). 10 ARC -Asocia?ia Româna? pentru Calitate (Romanian Association for Quality, www.quality.ro) 11 APC -Asocia?ia pentru Protec?ia Consumatorilor (Association for Consumers Protection , www.apcromania.ro) 12 RELAR - Asocia?ia Re?elei de Laboratoare din România (Association of Romanian Laboratories Network (forerunner of today RENAR -Romanian Association for Accreditation, www.renar.ro)13 OG -Ordonan?? de Guvern (GO -Governmental Ordinance) ; L -Lege (L -Law)

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⁵This ministry became later the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Business Environment

184 Quarter Century of Quality Management and Consumer Protection in Romania -GO No.38/1998on the
185 accreditation activity ??approved,
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