

# **Trust, regulation and compliance in the COVID-19 crisis**

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# What kind of crises is this?

- **A creeping mega crises**
- **Complexity**
  - Transboundary, crossing policy areas and administrative levels
- **Uncertainty**
  - Uncertain means-end relations? What works?
- **Ambiguity**
  - Contested values: Life and health, individual/civil rights, economy
- **Urgency**
  - Important decisions have to be taken under strong time pressure
- **A stress test for the governmental crises management**
  - Tests the limits of what public bureaucracies are organized to handle

# Some reflections on crises management

- **Governance capacity and governance legitimacy**
  - Not only capacity but also legitimacy matter for crises management
  - Regulative, delivery, coordinating, analytical capacity. Input, throughput, output legitimacy
- **The importance of trust**
  - Trust among citizens, trust in government, trust in experts, mutual trust relations
  - Mass polarization, uncooperative society and uncooperative political elite
- **The importance of meaning-making and effective crisis communication with the public**
  - A convincing, and reliable and effective communication from credible executives
- **Compliance**
  - Hard (mandatory) measures – soft measures (advice, recommendations)
- **Time**
  - Regulation, de-regulation, re-regulation
  - Timing (front runners versus laggards)
- **Logic of action**
  - Consequentiality - appropriateness
- **Difficult trade-offs**
  - Life and death – individual rights/civil rights – economy (unemployment and bankruptcy)

# Crisis management strategies

- **Mitigation or suppression**
- **The precautionary principle «better safe than sorry»**
- **A pragmatic strategy. Experimentation and experiential learning**
- **A collaborative or a confrontational strategy**
- **Managerial/functional versus political strategies**
- **Building walls versus international collaboration**
- **No best strategy**
  - **context matter: regulation, deregulation, re-regulation**
- **Need for more robust governance strategies that allow for adaptive and flexible adjustments**

# How to strengthen the effectiveness and legitimacy of national crises response?

- **Making sense of the crises under deep uncertainty**
  - Improved response capacity, improved preparation
- **Better inter-organizational collaboration and coordination**
  - More fruitful relations between political leader and experts
  - Better relations between central and local level
- **Better knowledge about the relations between governance capacity and governance legitimacy**
  - Crafting a response that is both effective and legitimate
  - Maintaining solidarity through crisis communication. Increased crisis communication skills
  - Better knowledge about how long the crisis can last without losing legitimacy
    - Centralization is important but it creates legitimacy problems
    - Crossboundary coordination is necessary, but it requires high level of trust