

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 IN UTILIZING  
THE TECHNOLOGY FOR FUNCTIONING  
OF THE COURTS IN KOSOVO

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The development of technology in the recent decades has clearly addressed the need to integrate technology in the judicial system since it has great potential to substantially improve the court system. The outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020, forced all courts and public services around the world to adopt technology at swift speed and scale, and switch to online operations in a matter of weeks. Kosovo was no exception in this situation and as COVID-19 spreading, courts closed and there had to be taken immediate steps to ensure functioning of the judiciary and guarantee the basic rights for its citizens. This paper aims to prove that courts in Kosovo need to develop immediately digitalization strategy and improve technological and human capacities to use technology in court proceedings beyond emergency situations.

Providing a legal analysis of the data and reports related to work of the courts in Kosovo during pandemics period, this paper suggests that by incorporating technology tools in courts, people are offered faster access and less expenses; however, this paper also addresses that shifting from in-person to online services is not a solution for all, in particular for the citizen who lack technology tools, such as proper computer or high-speed internet access, or even for the elders who lack the skills to use such tools. Finally, this study suggests that Kosovo Judicial Council should develop clear and detailed strategy to improve the courts technological capacities and develop rules to govern such digital operations, by working at the same time to improve the in-person processes of accessing justice for all citizens.

*Keywords:* Technology, digitalization strategy, legal system, court access