



SAPIENZA
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA

EGPA2026 CONFERENCE

24-27 August Rome, Italy

CALL FOR PANELS



Public Governance for the
Common Good: Human Intelligence
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EGPA Permanent Study Group 4 on Regional and Local Governance

Bridging Innovation and Tradition: Intergovernmental Challenges for European Local and Regional Governments

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Local and regional governments across Europe are involved in many of the crucial and complex societal challenges of our time, and their responses necessarily involve them in looking to change established administrative and political traditions. They are increasingly expected to deliver effective and legitimate public governance in response to issues such as climate change, demographic change, digital transformations and increasing social inequalities. The pressures to respond to these issues are placing a premium on finding innovative policy responses in terms of public service delivery, institutional design, democratic engagement and intergovernmental relations.

The EGPA Study Group on Local and Regional Government invites paper submissions on these issues relating to innovation and the tensions between innovation and the traditional, established practices across, and within, levels of government. We welcome contributions that explore questions relating to how particular innovations emerge, the challenges they pose to traditional assumptions about government, how local communities are governed within inter-governmental contexts, and the shifting relationships between citizens, institutions, territories and notions of 'place.'

Our aim is to develop a rich, critical, and interdisciplinary dialogue on the drivers, barriers, and consequences of innovation in local and regional government, drawing on comparative perspectives and diverse methodological approaches. We would also like to



see this call as building on the policy-focussed approach to IGR identified in our edited and open access book on *New Perspectives on Intergovernmental Relations: Crisis and Reform* (Palgrave Macmillan) which includes ten case studies of policy-driven IGR change in European countries.

Theme Rationale

Innovations in local and regional government are no longer confined to discrete projects or technological upgrades. They involve:

- Changing organisational cultures and leadership practices
- Experimentation, learning, and cross-boundary collaboration modifying governance arrangements with new partnerships and forms of multi-level coordination.
- Engaging citizens and communities in new ways via participatory processes, co-production, and digital platforms.
- Harnessing data and emerging technologies to improve decision-making, service design, and public value creation
- Responding to crises and uncertainty with adaptive, resilient, and anticipatory governance strategies.

These developments raise pressing questions relating to capacity, legitimacy, equity, and accountability within local and intergovernmental contexts. They also pose questions over the uneven geography of innovation – why do some places innovate more effectively than others, and how territorial context shapes innovations.

Suggested Topics

We encourage submissions that generally address innovation and the tensions with administrative traditions, and these submissions can be primarily conceptual, empirical, comparative or practice-oriented. Possible themes include, but are not limited to:

- Digital and technological innovation e.g. Adoption of AI, data analytics in local government, smart city initiatives and their governance implications.
- Institutional and governance innovation e.g. new forms of metropolitan, regional, or cross-border governance, intergovernmental coordination and multi-level policy design, public–private and public–civil society partnerships.
- Public service and organisational innovation e.g. coproduction and co-design of services, workforce development, skills, and organisational learning, leadership in change management.

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- Democratic and participatory innovation e.g. participatory budgeting, citizens' assemblies, and deliberative processes, digital participation tools and their democratic implications, inclusion, representation, and equity in participatory innovation.

We particularly welcome papers which seek both to deliver empirical, research-based arguments and to build a theoretical understanding of these issues; and papers which adopt a comparative approach, be it 'over time', 'cross-countries', or 'cross-service'. We are also particularly keen to include papers from Eastern and Southern Europe as well as Western Europe.



Practicalities

If you wish to present a paper in one of the Permanent Study Group's, Ad Hoc Group's, or Specialized Panel's sessions at the conference, please upload an abstract outlining your proposed conference paper. This may be done through the conference website.

Important dates

- Deadline for submission of abstracts: April 6, 2026
- Deadline for submission of EGPA Booster Grant applications: April 15, 2026
- Acceptance notification and opening of registrations: April 20, 2026
- Deadline for submission of EGPA Travel Grant applications: April 26, 2026
- Full paper submission deadline and registration deadline: July 19, 2026

Website

- <https://www.ias-iisa.org/egpa-2026-conference/>

Submission

- <https://www.conftool.org/egpa2026/>
- Unless specified otherwise, 500-words limit for abstracts

Contact

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