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EGPA2026 CONFERENCE

24-27 August Rome, Italy

CALL FOR PANELS



Public Governance for the
Common Good: Human Intelligence
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Symposium for PhD Students and Early-Career Researchers

Dr. Manuela Barreca; Università della Svizzera Italiana, Switzerland;
manuela.barreca@usi.ch

Prof. Ellen Wayenberg; Ghent University, Belgium;
ellen.wayenberg@ugent.be

Prof. Gabriella Racca; University of Turin, Italy;
gabriella.racca@unito.it

Dr. Sabrina Bandera; Scuola Nazionale dell'Amministrazione (SNA), Italy;
s.bandera@governo.it

EGPA PhD Symposium: Why Participate?

This year's PhD Symposium presents a unique opportunity for emerging scholars, PhD students and early-career researchers (within three years of PhD completion) to engage with peers, academics and experts in a collective dialogue about public administration, management, law, governance, and policy.

The EGPA PhD Symposium is designed as an intellectual and human experience, an academic platform to improve quality, visibility, and impact of the next generation of international community of brilliant and motivated doctoral and early-career researchers across Europe and beyond. Rather than emphasizing formal and rigid presentation, the new approach prioritizes constructive feedback, long-term thinking and proactive debate aimed at strengthening theoretical and methodological approaches; and, central to support the scholarly growth to build an international network of young and engaged scholars in the field as a base for future collaborative projects.

The new format is aimed to reinforce EGPA's capacity to attract, integrate, and retain PhD students and early-stage scholars by creating structured pathways into the Permanent Study Groups (PSGs), Ad Hoc Groups (AHGs), and Specialized Panels (SPs). This should enhance the continuity of participation and raise and sustain the future international academic community of EGPA, committed to increase inclusiveness and equal opportunity to support students and researchers from diversity in institutional, geographic, and disciplinary backgrounds, reducing participation barriers and fostering continuity across years.



EGPA PhD symposium format: What is new?

The EGPA 2026 PhD Symposium introduces a substantially renewed and more ambitious format designed to offer doctoral students and early-career researchers an inspiring, collaborative space to engage with leading academics, explore emerging debates, and co-create opportunities for research collaboration and co-authored publications. Conceived as a learning community, the Symposium prioritizes dialogue, reflection, and experimentation, while supporting the development of academic trajectories and professional growth within the EGPA network.

At the core of this innovation are the **PhD Research Labs**, which replace traditional stand-up paper sessions with a structured, thematic, small group working format. The Labs are built on three developmental principles: **Improve through focused insight**, providing actionable feedback to strengthen research design and publication potential; **Grow through collective intelligence**, enabling peer comparison, testing of assumptions, and collaborative refinement of ideas; and **Advance through guided development**, where senior scholars help participants transform insights into concrete research pathways and early-career strategies.

The Symposium is organised in PhD Research Labs, each potentially bringing participants grouped by thematic affinity based on the open Call for Papers. Possible research areas include public governance, administrative reforms, administrative law, digital government and AI, collaborative governance, service delivery, public finance and performance, sustainability and the SDGs, comparative and multilevel governance, policy design, HRM and leadership in the public sector, ethics and integrity, and research methodology in public administration.

The final thematic configuration of each Research Lab will be defined once submissions close, depending on the number, quality, and distribution of proposals. Each Research Lab is chaired by one or two senior scholars—ideally aligned with relevant EGPA PSGs—ensuring coherence with the broader conference community.

The Labs unfold across three interconnected rounds that guide participants from concise research pitches to collective analysis. In **Round 1 (Research in Progress)**, participants present the core elements of their projects (research question, theoretical framing, method, expected contribution) and receive initial feedback from Chairs. In **Round 2 (Collective Learning)**, thematic roundtables enable participants to compare approaches, explore theoretical and methodological alternatives, and engage in peer-enhanced dialogue oriented toward problem-solving. In **Round 3 (Final Wrap-Up)**, participants



synthesize key insights and articulate short-term development goals, ensuring continuity of learning beyond the event and laying the foundation for collaboration.

Each Research Lab also serves as an entry point into EGPA's Permanent Study Groups (PSGs), encouraging participants to continue their engagement through thematically aligned PSG panels, Ad Hoc Groups (AHGs), and Specialized Panels (SPs) during the main conference. Dedicated sessions for PhD participants—such as methods workshops and publication-oriented meetings with national and international journal editors.

Abstract submission

Selection of participants will be based on a review of the **complete application package**. Applicants are asked to upload **ONE single PDF document** containing the following elements:

Personal Information

Please include:

- Full name
- Institutional affiliation (university and department)
- Name(s) of PhD supervisor(s)
- Area and topic of the dissertation or PhD project
- Year in which doctoral studies commenced
- Affiliation with a doctoral school or programme (if applicable)

Extended Abstract

Of maximum 1,000 words, the abstract should clearly present the proposed contribution and include:

- Title of the paper/project
- Problem statement and motivation
- Research question(s)
- Theoretical positioning and relevant analytical frameworks
- Research design, methodology, and data
- Preliminary or expected findings
- Main challenges you are currently facing in the research



Letter of Motivation

In 300 words max., please explain: What do you hope to gain from participating in the Symposium? How advanced is your project? How may your contribution benefit other participants? How does your proposed paper relate to your dissertation?

Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be assessed based on:

- Originality of the research question and contribution
- Theoretical grounding and conceptual clarity
- Methodological rigor and appropriateness of the research design
- Potential contribution to advancing the relevant fields in public administration, management, governance, and policy.

Participation fee

A special participation fee of 200 € will be charged for both PhD Symposium and the EGPA Conference. Please note that only applicants with an accepted paper for presentation can register for the symposium. All fees are exclusive of transport and accommodation. The Gala Dinner is charged separately at 50 €.

EGPA, as organizers, does NOT award academic credit and/or grades for contributions to the EGPA Symposium for PhD students and early-career researchers.

Upon completion of the symposium, all participants will receive a certificate.

If you wish to apply for an **EGPA travel grant** for PhD students and early-career researchers, more information is here: <https://iias-iisa.org/news/call-for-egpa-travel-grant-applications-2026/>



EGPA Permanent Study Group 1 on e-Government

e-Government: AI for Public Administration

Prof. Gabriella Racca; University of Turin, Italy;
gabriella.racca@unito.it

Prof. Aristide Police; LUISS University, Rome, Italy;
apolice@luiss.it

Prof. Patricia Valcárcel-Fernández; Universidad de Vigo, Spain;
pvalcarcel@uvigo.es

This track aims to discuss how the integration of Artificial Intelligence (including Agentic Systems) is transforming public and administrative law, the organization and exercise of public power, and the legitimacy of decision-making in digital public administrations, with a focus on ensuring that AI strengthens rather than replaces human intelligence and serves the common good.

Contributions will explore whether and how AI systems, capable of coordinating complex processes and interacting with data infrastructures and digital ecosystems, can be designed and governed to remain aligned with constitutional principles, fundamental rights, the rule of law and institutional trust.

As it is well known, the ongoing digital transition of public authorities is no longer limited to procedural dematerialisation but entails a broader transformation of public institutions and innovation frameworks, requiring public administrations to operate within interconnected digital ecosystems, to develop data-driven forms of coordination, and strengthen their ability to govern complex technological infrastructures for public value.

Agentic AI systems may autonomously manage multi-step administrative procedures and processes, coordinate workflows across institutional and territorial boundaries, and dynamically interact with data infrastructures and external actors. Public law is therefore increasingly called upon not only to regulate innovation but also to guide and shape it, ensuring that digital transformation remains aligned with constitutional principles, fundamental rights, and the public interest.

Contributions may explore experimental and narrative-based governance approaches, including regulatory sandboxes for AI in public administration, digital identity and trust



frameworks such as ID wallets and interoperable infrastructures enabling secure interaction among public authorities, citizens, and economic operators.

The Call explicitly encourages submissions examining experiences, case studies, and regulatory approaches also beyond the European Union, providing empirical analyses of successful implementations, case studies, and best practices.

By bringing together diverse methodological perspectives from law, public administration, political science, computer science, and ethics, this Call invites contributions examining how public administrations can design, govern, and remain accountable for agentic AI systems embedded in administrative processes. Particular attention is devoted to institutional arrangements ensuring that AI operates at the service of human intelligence and the common good.

Contributions may also address specific sectoral and operational dimensions of AI integration in public administration, as illustrative areas of application within the broader reflection on the transformation of public law and governance in the age of AI, including:

- Agentic AI in Public Organisations
- AI-enabled health governance
- AI-Driven Spatial and Urban Governance
- AI in local public services
- Innovation-driven and strategic public procurement
- AI for the common good: welfare and inclusion policies
- Interoperable Data Ecosystems for AI Government



EGPA Permanent Study Group 2 on Public Sector Performance

Public Sector Performance and its Future Challenges

Gerhard Hammerschmid; Hertie School, Berlin, Germany;
hammerschmid@hertie-school.org

Francesco Vidè; SDA Bocconi School of Management, Italy;
francesco.vide@sdabocconi.it

Shirin Ahlbäck Öberg; Uppsala University, Sweden;
shirin.ahlback@statsvet.uu.se

Wouter Van Dooren; University of Antwerp, Belgium;
wouter.vandooren@uantwerpen.be

The ability of the public sector to formulate goals for improving policy impact and public services, and deliver on these ambitions remains a crucial issue in the study of public administration. However, much has changed in how these goals are formulated (involving more actors and continuously evolving priorities), how public ambitions and policies are achieved (requiring the collaboration between public, private, and community actors), and how public performance and policy outcomes are measured and scrutinized (involving multiple actors holding the government to account).

This permanent study group seeks to understand the challenges of public sector performance by exploring both traditional and innovative approaches to address the key drivers and effects of policy and performance management cycles on individual behaviours, organizational performance, and societal outcomes. We welcome contributions addressing a range of relevant issues in various policy domains, including (but not limited to): (i) formulation of policy objectives, goal setting and the design of performance management systems; (ii) the adoption and implementation of policies/services to achieve these goals; (iii) the measurement and evaluation of their effectiveness; (iii) the use of performance information, data and evidence to enhance public value creation.

We capitalize on the lessons of decades of research into performance management and the use of performance information, accountability, and public management, but we also need fresh insights into the mechanisms and effects of ‘new’ approaches such as



collaborative performance management or evidence-based policy making to assess and improve public sector performance.

In recent years, there has been a significant effort to improve government performance by developing capacity in evidence-based policy making and policy analysis with the better use of data worldwide. However, the impact of these efforts is still unclear and we see issues both on the demand side (how much governments genuinely want evidence information to support their policy making) and on the supply side (e.g. the type of evidence and data needed and the experts who will provide this evidence).

We invite contributions offering theoretical or empirical explorations of these themes, expressly welcoming a diversity of methodologies, policy contexts, and geographic settings. We welcome papers on the long-standing themes covered by SGII: the politics of performance, the use of performance information, the behavioural effects of performance management and the link between performance and accountability and especially invite papers with a link to the overall theme of the 2025 EGPA conference.

Contributions may also intersect with the themes of other permanent study groups, such as the performance of networks, the role of professions and certified experts, the governance structure of performance management systems, the performance of government digitalization or behavioural insights into performance information use. We actively seek collaborations with other study groups.

Please contact the co-chairs if you are unsure if your paper would fit the scope of the panel, we are happy to discuss the various options.



EGPA Permanent Study Group 3 on Administrative History

Ass. Prof. Toon Kerkhoff; Leiden University, the Netherlands;
a.d.n.kerkhoff@fgga.leidenuniv.nl

Prof. Stefan Fisch; German University of Administrative Sciences, Speyer, Germany;
sfisch@uni-speyer.de

Prof. Elisabetta Colombo; University of Pavia, Italy;
elisabetta.colombo@unipv.it

A PSG on Administrative History

In his 1955 textbook, Public Administration scholar Leonard White noted how “every system of public administration is the product of many influences. Its form and content reflect its historical origin; existing patterns are a composite of practices and procedures both ancient and contemporary. No administrative system can be well understood without some knowledge of what it has been, and how it came to be what it is.” (White 1955) Taking a similar position, many scholars have over the years turned their attention to the history of public administration as a way to understand how public institutions and governance practices evolved over time and how past practices, systems and ideas shaped public administration in historical context (Rugge 2025).

A first central premise underlying this Permanent Study Group is that in order to understand both past and present political and administrative systems one needs to also understand and apply historical perspectives (e.g. Raadschelders 1994; Raadschelders et al. 2000; Tilly 2008). Historical research concerning the development of ideas about past realities of public service delivery, policy, bureaucracy, politics and the state also serves to discuss contemporary questions (e.g. Leff 1985; Neustadt and May 1986). The history of public administration provides insights into the long-term dynamics of change, continuity and diversity (Tholfsen 1967) of political-administrative practices, civil service systems and bureaucracies, and public policy, organization and management.

A second central premise of the PSG is the aim to bring together contemporary work by (Europe-focused) scholars on administrative history. While people in different departments of different universities across the world are actively working on various aspects of administrative history, much can be done to improve knowledge of each other’s work. This PSG aims to function as a platform to find out what people are working on,



which questions are being asked, which themes are being addressed, what historical and/or multidisciplinary methods and sources are being developed and deployed. The PSG aims to promote interdependency and to offer a collaborative, long-term platform for developing ideas, advancing research, and building an intellectual community that connects early-career researchers and seasoned experts alike.

This PSG wishes to connect to general themes of interest in PA-scholarship, based on the notion that any number of present-day issues and questions of governance inherently benefit from and – usually also already include (see Raadschelders et al. 2000) – a historical approach. This PSG is, for example, of interest to scholars on topics such as cutback management, leadership, digitalization or EU-relations, who are looking to also present and discuss historical angles to their work. The panel aims to draw people from various disciplines since administrative history as a field of study closely borders on many other academic fields of research such as public administration, sociology, anthropology, political science, history, philosophy and economics. The panel in particular also welcomes early career scholars and PhD students with an affinity to history and historical approaches to public administration to join us in Rome and beyond.

A call for papers

We invite papers that – in the widest sense – explore the history of public administration, understood as the study of structures and processes in, and ideas about government in the past and the real or desired place of public functionaries therein (Raadschelders 1994, 120). Due to being a part of EGPA the main focus of this PSG is on European administrative history, but this of course includes Europe-related historical scholarship by non-Europeans, for example on colonial administrative systems or the history of international relations. We welcome a variety of approaches, ranging from empirical to theoretical and/or methodological contributions, from single to multiple case studies, from qualitative to quantitative historical work and international and/or longitudinal comparisons.

More specifically, papers could fall in (or combine) any of the following range of areas:

- Papers on the origins and evolution of **public administrations**, focusing on the development of administrative structures, personnel and activities over time. This includes different types of administrations — central, local and parastatal — as well as the administrative apparatuses of parliamentary institutions and constitutional bodies.



- Papers on the origins and evolution of various **specific policy areas**. Examples are the history of education management, food safety, sustainability management, cultural policies, migration, anticorruption or digitalization.
- Papers on the origins and evolution of **ideas about public administration**, examining, for example, how conceptions of its role, legitimacy, autonomy and relationship with politics have changed over time. Other topics may include the politics–administration dichotomy, administrative neutrality, public service ethics, state capacity, accountability, evolving understandings of administrative performance and its measurement, changing ideas about the skills, professionalism and competencies required of public personnel and shifting views on the relationship between citizens and government.
- Papers with **theoretical and/or historiographical** contributions, for example on the history of the field of public administration, on critical junctures, path dependency in administrative development and causation in history or on theoretical approaches to how historical legacies might interact with contemporary challenges and on the relation between administrative history and other relevant disciplines such as public administration and public management, law, economics or sociology.
- Papers on **methodology**. These could, for example, focus on strengths and limitations of comparative historical analysis, on doing archival research, process tracing, or historical institutionalism as a method.

A special panel section

In Rome the PSG Administrative History is excited to host a special session on post-communist administration, convened by Astrid Hedin (Malmö University) and Rustamjon Urinboyev (Lund University) on **State Administration under Communism and After: Structures, Practices, and Legacies**. Based on panel papers, the aim is to submit a proposal for a special issue. A line-up of presenters is already established, so there is no call for papers for this session. However, all those interested are more than welcome to join and participate in the discussions on this great topic of historical interest.

Format and acceptance

For the general PSG sessions, we invite paper proposals with an overview of the topic, question and approach, preferably grounded in literature and academic and societal relevance. Max. 1000 words, including references. Proposals should include names and affiliations of all authors and one e-mail address of one contact person per paper proposal.



Please note that quality of paper proposals as well as limits to capacity in Rome might force us to reject proposals. We will do our best to accommodate and/or suggest alternative PSGs where papers could also find a (better) home.

EGPA travel grant

We encourage PhD students to also join this PSG. Please note that EGPA offers a **reduced fee for PhD students and young scholars** and also offers the possibility (for young researchers) to apply for the **EGPA travel grant**. You can find more information [here](#).

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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

Ylva Norén Bretzer; University of Gothenburg, Sweden;
ylva.noren-bretzer@spa.gu.se

Sabine Kuhlmann; University of Potsdam, Germany;
sabine.kuhlmann@uni-potsdam.de

Martin Laffin; Queen Mary University of London, United Kingdom;
m.laffin@qmul.ac.uk

Ellen Wayenberg; University of Ghent, Belgium;
ellen.wayenberg@ugent.be

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.



EGPA Permanent Study Group 5 on The Politics and Management of Policing and Public Safety

Public Administration and Risk

Prof. Loredana Giani; European University of Rome, Italy;

loredana.giani@unier.it

Dr. Claudia Principe; National Research Council of Italy (CNR), Italy;

claudia.principe@igg.cnr.it

Prof. Josep Ramon Fuentes i Gasó; Rovira i Virgili University of Tarragona, Spain;

josepramon.fuentes@urv.cat

Prof. Francesco Fabrizio Tuccari; University of Salento, Italy;

segreteria.slr@didiritto.it

General Description

This Permanent Study Group (PSG) is dedicated to examining the evolving role of public administration in addressing the increasing complexity of risks that affect contemporary societies, including natural, environmental, technological and urban security risks. Climate change, environmental degradation, rapid urbanization, social fragmentation, and the growing frequency of extreme events – such as floods, wildfires, heatwaves, and earthquakes as well as urban unrest and public safety threats – are profoundly challenging traditional public frameworks, regulatory approaches, and governance models. These phenomena expose structural vulnerabilities within public institutions and demand new forms of administrative capacity, coordination, and adaptability.

In particular, the PSG expands the analysis of risk governance to include the paradigm of urban security, understood not only as policing or crime control, but as a multidimensional governance challenge involving public order, social cohesion, spatial planning, technological infrastructures, and citizens trust.

Urban environments represent privileged laboratories for observing the transformation of public authority under conditions of uncertainty. Cities concentrate on environmental vulnerabilities, social inequalities, infrastructural interdependencies, and security demands. As a result, public administrations are required to manage overlapping risks – natural hazards, infrastructural fragilities, social tensions, and public safety concerns – through integrated and multi-level arrangements.



Public authorities are increasingly required to operate under conditions characterized by elevated levels of scientific uncertainty, incomplete or contested knowledge, and severe time constraints. Decision-making in the field of natural risk management often involves balancing precaution, proportionality, and urgency, fundamental rights and democratic accountability, while simultaneously navigating legal mandates, political pressures, and societal expectations.

Particular attention is devoted to:

- the interaction between scientific expertise and administrative discretion;
- the role of policing and public safety institutions within broader governance frameworks;
- the integration of risk-based regulatory approaches in urban policy;
- the relationship between security, resilience and legitimacy.

As scientific assessments of risk become more complex and probabilistic, public administrations must interpret, translate, and integrate expert knowledge into policy choices and operational decisions. The PSG explores how this interaction shapes regulatory design, emergency preparedness, crisis response, and long-term planning, as well as how it affects the legitimacy and effectiveness of administrative action.

The PSG examines the legal, organizational, and policy instruments employed by public administrations to prevent, mitigate, and respond to natural disasters and other hazards that represent a challenge for abroad idea of natural ad urban security. These include regulatory frameworks, planning tools, risk assessment procedures, early warning systems, inter-agency coordination mechanisms, and collaborative arrangements with private actors and civil society. By adopting a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective, the PSG highlights similarities and differences across administrative systems, governance traditions, and territorial levels - local, regional, national, and supranational- shedding light on how institutional contexts influence risk governance outcomes.

In addition, the PSG addresses key normative and democratic dimensions of natural risk governance, extending this reflection to the field of urban security. Issues of accountability, transparency, and responsibility are particularly salient in contexts where decisions are made under uncertainty and may entail significant social, economic, environmental, and public safety consequences. In urban settings, where risk governance intersects with policing, spatial planning, and social regulation, administrative choices directly affect fundamental rights, social cohesion, and perceptions of security. The PSG



also reflects on the role of public trust, citizen engagement, and communication strategies in enhancing societal and urban resilience, strengthening community-based prevention, and ensuring the legitimacy and acceptability of administrative decisions in both environmental and public safety domains.

By integrating administrative theory with empirical analysis, the PSG aims to advance scholarly debate on the capacity of public administrations to adapt to complex, systemic, and transboundary natural risks, as well as to multifaceted urban security challenges. Overall, the discussion seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of how contemporary administrations can evolve to manage uncertainty, govern interconnected environmental and urban risks, foster resilience, and maintain democratic legitimacy in the face of escalating natural and public safety challenges.

The PSG will be progressively strengthened through field-based research, thematic seminars, and dedicated workshops focusing on specific issues, with the aim of consolidating and expanding its research agenda over the years.

The PSG welcomes contributions that engage with a broad range of research questions related to the role of public administration in the governance of natural risks. Papers may explore how public administrations adapt their structures, capacities, and decision-making processes in response to the growing challenges posed by climate change, environmental degradation, and extreme natural events. Special attention may be given to the ways in which administrative models and institutional arrangements shape the ability of public authorities to anticipate, prevent, and manage complex and systemic risks.

A central focus of the PSG concerns public decision-making under conditions of scientific uncertainty and time pressure. Contributions may examine how scientific knowledge, expert advice, and risk assessments are integrated into administrative processes, and how this interaction affects administrative discretion, the application of the precautionary principle, and the legitimacy of public action. Relatedly, papers may address the legal and regulatory frameworks that govern natural risk management, including the design and implementation of preventive, mitigation, and emergency response instruments.

The PSG also encourages research on governance and coordination mechanisms across sectors and levels of government. Comparative and multi-level perspectives are particularly welcome, as they can shed light on variations in risk governance across



administrative systems, territorial contexts, and institutional traditions. Contributions may analyse forms of inter-institutional coordination, collaboration with private actors and civil society, and the role of local and regional authorities in disaster preparedness and response.

In addition, the PSG invites studies that address the normative and democratic dimensions of natural risk governance. These include issues of accountability, transparency, and responsibility in administrative decision-making, as well as the role of communication, public trust, and citizen engagement in contexts of risk and emergency. Papers may also examine processes of institutional learning and administrative reform following disasters, as well as the use of digital tools, data, and emerging technologies in risk management.

Overall, the PSG seeks theoretical and empirical contributions that advance understanding of how public administrations can enhance resilience, maintain legitimacy, and effectively govern natural risks in an increasingly uncertain and interconnected environment.

In addition to natural risk governance, the PSG welcomes contributions addressing:

- Urban security and risk governance;
- Security, rights and administrative appropriateness;
- Multi-level and networked security governance;
- Crisis emergencies and public order.

Topics to be developed

Administrative Decision-Making under Scientific Uncertainty: Governing Natural Risks in Complex Policy Environments

Natural risks increasingly require public administrations to take decisions in contexts characterized by uncertainty, incomplete data, and contested scientific knowledge. This PSG investigates how administrative decision-making adapts to such conditions, focusing on the balance between precaution, discretion, and accountability. Drawing on administrative theory and selected case studies, it analyses the institutional mechanisms that mediate between scientific expertise and public authority. The PSG argues that effective risk governance depends on the capacity of administrations to integrate uncertainty into decision processes without undermining legitimacy. Particular attention is paid to procedural tools and organizational arrangements that support informed and transparent choices.



From Prevention to Resilience: Institutional Capacities for Natural Risk Governance

The shift from reactive disaster management to resilience-oriented governance has profound implications for public administration. This PSG examines the institutional capacities required to support prevention, adaptation, and long-term risk reduction in the face of natural hazards. It explores how administrative structures, resources, and skills are reshaped by resilience-oriented policies. Through a comparative analysis of different administrative systems, the PSG aims to highlight best practices and persistent gaps. The findings suggest that resilience depends not only on technical planning but also on administrative learning and inter-institutional coordination.

Multi-Level Governance and Natural Risk Management: Coordination Challenges across Administrative Levels

Natural risk management typically involves multiple levels of government, from local authorities to national and supranational institutions. This PSG analyses coordination challenges in multi-level governance systems, focusing on competence allocation, information sharing, and decision-making authority. Using examples from disaster prevention and emergency response, it shows how fragmentation can weaken administrative effectiveness. The PSG also discusses institutional instruments designed to enhance vertical and horizontal coordination. It argues that coherent risk governance requires clearer frameworks for cooperation and shared responsibility.

The Role of Expertise in Public Administration: Integrating Scientific Knowledge into Natural Risk Regulation

Scientific expertise plays a central role in the governance of natural risks, yet its integration into administrative decision-making raises significant challenges. This PSG examines the institutional relationship between experts and public administrations, focusing on advisory bodies, risk assessments, and technical discretion. It explores how administrations translate scientific inputs into regulatory and operational decisions. The analysis highlights tensions between expertise, democratic legitimacy, and legal accountability. The PSG concludes that effective integration of science requires procedural safeguards and clear allocation of responsibility.

Accountability after Disaster: Administrative Responsibility and Public Trust in Natural Risk Governance

Disasters often expose weaknesses in administrative systems and trigger demands for accountability. This PSG explores how public administrations are held responsible for



decisions related to natural risk prevention and response. It analyses legal, political, and administrative forms of accountability and their impact on public trust. Drawing on post-disaster inquiries and judicial proceedings, the PSG discusses the risks of blame avoidance and over-deterrence. The PSG argues for accountability frameworks that promote learning and institutional improvement rather than solely sanctioning failure.

Risk Governance beyond Emergency: Administrative Learning and Policy Adaptation after Natural Hazards

While emergency response is crucial, long-term risk governance depends on the capacity of public administrations to learn from past events. This PSG focuses on administrative learning processes following natural hazards, including policy evaluation, organizational reform, and knowledge retention. It examines how lessons from disasters are incorporated into planning and regulation. The analysis shows that institutional inertia and political pressures often limit learning outcomes. The PSG aims to identify conditions under which administrations can effectively transform experience into adaptive risk governance.

Urban Security as Risk Governance: Policing, Prevention and Democratic Legitimacy

Urban security increasingly operates within a risk-based framework in which prevention, anticipation and resilience replace purely reactive models of law enforcement. This topic explores how public administrations conceptualize and regulate security in urban context marked by uncertainty, social fragmentation and technological transformations.

Security and Risk as Paradigms of Public Governance – Including Urban Security (Specialized Panel)

This panel explores the structural interconnection between security and risk as foundational paradigms of contemporary public governance. Security is no longer conceived merely as the preservation of order, but as the outcome of institutional processes designed to manage uncertainty. In complex and urbanized societies, environmental, technological, and social risks reshape legal reasoning, administrative discretion, and regulatory design. The panel examines how anticipatory mechanisms, precaution, proportionality, preparedness, and resilience structure decision-making across multiple levels of government. Particular attention is devoted to the interaction between scientific expertise, policing practices, administrative authority, and democratic accountability. By fostering interdisciplinary and comparative dialogue, the panel aims to advance a refined understanding of security as an institutional and normative construction of uncertainty in contemporary governance.



Methodological Approach

The PSG adopts an open and pluralistic methodological approach, welcoming both qualitative and quantitative research designs. Contributions may draw on comparative case studies, single-case analyses, cross-national comparisons, and multi-level analyses to investigate how public administrations govern natural risks in different institutional and territorial contexts. Qualitative methods such as interviews, document analysis, legal and policy analysis, and process tracing are particularly suitable for exploring decision-making dynamics, governance arrangements, and the interaction between scientific knowledge and administrative discretion.

At the same time, the PSG encourages the use of quantitative and mixed methods approaches, including survey data, administrative datasets, policy evaluations, and statistical analyses of risk governance outcomes. Longitudinal designs and post-disaster studies are especially welcome, as they can capture processes of institutional learning, adaptation, and reform over time. Conceptual and theory-driven contributions are also invited, particularly those aiming to refine existing frameworks or develop new analytical models for understanding administrative responses to complex and systemic natural risks.

Target Research Community and Planned Activities (2026-2028)

The PSG is addressed to a broad and interdisciplinary research community engaged in the study of public administration, public policy, and governance. It is particularly relevant for scholars working on administrative theory, public management, public law, environmental governance, and disaster and risk management. Researchers with an interest in climate change governance, regulatory policy, multi-level governance, and institutional design will also find the PSG highly pertinent.

In addition, the PSG aims to attract both early-career and senior scholars, as well as researchers employing diverse theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches. By fostering dialogue across disciplinary boundaries and research traditions, the PSG seeks to create a forum for exchange among academics studying public administration in different national and comparative contexts.

Between 2026 and 2028, the PSG will coordinate thematic panels and roundtables at the annual EGPA conferences, promote special issues in leading peer-reviewed (Class A and open access) journals, and strengthen comparative research networks focused on sectoral and transnational variations. The PSG will also encourage and promote joint publications and policy briefs addressing emerging regulatory gaps, while actively supporting early-



careers scholars through mentorship initiatives and collaborative research opportunities in the specific fields.

Contribution to EGPA

The PSG contributes directly to EGPA's core mission of advancing knowledge on public administration and governance in Europe and beyond. By focusing on natural risk governance, the PSG addresses a pressing and increasingly salient challenge for public administrations, one that cuts across policy sectors, levels of government, and administrative traditions. The PSG aligns closely with EGPA's interest in administrative capacity, governance under complexity, and the relationship between institutions, expertise, and democratic accountability.

Through its emphasis on comparative analysis, theoretical development, and empirical evidence, the PSG aims to strengthen scholarly debate within EGPA on how public administrations can adapt to uncertainty, enhance resilience, and maintain legitimacy in the face of systemic risks. More broadly, the PSG seeks to contribute to EGPA by fostering cross-national dialogue, promoting methodological pluralism, and advancing a deeper understanding of the evolving role of public administration in addressing contemporary societal challenges.

Invited Scholars

Dr. Angeliki Bourboulis; National Centre for Public Administration & Local Government (EKDDA), Athens, Greece

Prof. Endrius Cociolo; Rovira i Virgili University, Tarragona, Spain

Prof. Isabel Celeste Monteiro da Fonseca; University of Minho, Braga, Portugal

Prof. Judith Gifreu Font; Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain

Prof. María Ángels González Bustos; University of Salamanca, Spain

Prof. István Hoffmann; Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary

Prof. Emmanuel Jimenez Franco; University of Salamanca, Spain

Prof. Anna Pallarès Serrano; Rovira i Virgili University, Tarragona, Spain

Prof. João Vilas Boas Pinto; University of Minho, Braga, Portugal

Prof. Marina Rodríguez Beas; Rovira i Virgili University, Tarragona, Spain



EGPA Permanent Study Group 6 on Public Administration and Migration

From policy to practice: administrative challenges in migration integration policy implementation

Dr. Daniel Rauhut; Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal;
rauhut_research@outlook.com

Prof. Dr. Goranka Lalić Novak; University of Zagreb, Croatia;
goranka.lalic@pravo.unizg.hr

Dr. Eli Auslender; University of Stirling, United Kingdom;
eli.auslender@stir.ac.uk

Dr. Pekka Kettunen; Migration Institute of Finland, Finland;
pekka.kettunen@utu.fi

Migration is one of the defining challenges of the 21st century, and its success or failure is ultimately determined by the capacity of public administrations to implement integration strategies effectively. While migration integration policy is often debated at the highest political levels, its success or failure is ultimately determined by the capacity of public administrations to implement integration strategies effectively. Despite this centrality, the administrative dimension of migration remains underexplored

Migration integration policy implementation sits at the intersection of political intent and social outcomes. Public administration is the conduit through which integration policies are translated into services, programs, and everyday interactions. However, this process is fraught with long-standing challenges, e.g.:

- *Street-level bureaucracy:* Frontline workers often exercise discretion in interpreting and applying policies, leading to inconsistent outcomes and potential bias.
- *Principal-agent problems:* Bureaucrats may pursue objectives that diverge from those of elected officials or the broader public interest, complicating accountability.



- *Conflicting agendas:* NGOs and advocacy groups, while essential service providers, may operate with political goals that conflict with national integration strategies.
- *Market-driven actors:* Private companies involved in service provision prioritize profit, which may undermine the social mission of integration.
- *Employer centred constraints:* employers shape migrant trajectories through hiring practices, workplace cultures, and adherence to labour standards, and their incentives can diverge from policy goals when cost minimization governs recruitment, training, and retention decisions.

These issues are compounded in multi-dimensional governance systems, where responsibilities are shared across national, regional, and local levels, and among public, private, and civil society actors. The result is a fragmented landscape where financing, service delivery, and accountability are often unclear.

The mission of this PSG on Public Administration and Migration is to advance understanding and improve the implementation of migration and integration policies through the lens of public administration, fostering interdisciplinary research, policy dialogue, and institutional innovation. To meet this vision, several thematic areas are explored:

- **Legal frameworks and compliance mechanisms:** How legal norms and enforcement procedures structure migrant rights and administrative discretion
- **Street-level bureaucracy and discretion:** How frontline workers interpret and apply migration policies
- **Multi-level and multi-actor governance:** Coordination challenges across administrative levels and sectors
- **Public-private partnerships:** The role of private actors in service delivery and integration outcomes
- **NGO involvement and accountability:** Balancing civil society engagement with policy coherence
- **Administrative ethics and equity:** Ensuring fair treatment and non-discrimination in public services
- **Digitalization and migration services:** Opportunities and risks in using technology for integration
- **Crisis management and migration:** Administrative responses to sudden influxes or humanitarian emergencies



- **Public administration in migration regulation:** How administrative institutions translate political objectives into regulatory frameworks

We invite papers that cover issues related to public administration and migration discussing the themes above. Given the complexity of these aspects and the growing political importance of migration management and integration governance, we welcome empirical and comparative contributions as well as analytical, conceptual or theoretical contributions.

Submission Guidelines

Please submit an abstract of 400 words that includes:

- The title of the paper
- Research question or objective
- Theoretical framework or analytical approach
- Method and data
- Key findings or expected contributions
- Name, affiliation, and contact information of the author(s)

Paper presenters will be expected to prepare a short presentation and act as a discussant for another paper in the sessions.

We look forward to receiving your submissions!



EGPA Permanent Study Group 7 on the Governance of Ecological Sustainability

Governing Ecological Sustainability in and through Public Administration: Framing, Power Struggles and Spatial–Institutional Dynamics

Alexandre Camino; Université Paris-Panthéon-Assas, France;
alexandre.camino@assas-universite.fr

Assist. Prof. Magdalena Potz; École des Mines de Saint-Étienne, France;
magdalena.potz@emse.fr

Dr. Youssef Khanfir; Université Sorbonne Paris Nord, France;
youssef.khanfir@univ-paris13.fr

Prof. Guillaume Delalieux; La Rochelle Université, France;
guillaume.delalieux@univ-lr.fr

Prof. Peter C. Lorson; Universität Rostock, Germany;
peter.lorson@uni-rostock.de

Prof. Étienne Maclouf; Université Paris-Panthéon-Assas, France;
etienne.maclouf@assas-universite.fr

Prof. Bérange Szostak; Université Versailles-Saint-Quentin, France;
berangere.szostak@uvsq.fr

Scientific committee:

- **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gerard Breeman**; Leiden University, The Netherlands;
- **Prof. Dr. Véronique Chanut**; University of Panthéon-Assas, France;
- **Dr. Hervé Chomienne**; University Versailles-Saint-Quentin, France;
- **Dr. Hugo de Tarragon**; University of Limoges, France;
- **Prof. Dr. Guillaume Delalieux**; La Rochelle University, France;
- **Prof. Dr. Art Dewulf**; Wageningen University, The Netherlands;
- **Prof. Dr. Peter C. Lorson**; Universität Rostock, Germany;
- **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Trond Loyning**; University of South-Eastern Norway, Norway;
- **Prof. Dr. Étienne Maclouf**; Université Panthéon-Assas, France;



- **Prof. Dr. Éric Pezet**; University Paris Nanterre, France;
- **Prof. Dr. Bérangère Szostak**; University Versailles-Saint-Quentin, France;
- **Prof. Dr. Katrien Termeer**; Wageningen University, Pays-Bas;

Positioning and aims of the Study Group

Ecological sustainability has become a central concern for public administrations across Europe and beyond. Climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, resource depletion, and ecosystem degradation increasingly challenge public authorities, who are confronted with uncertainty, interdependence, and contested priorities. These challenges are not only environmental, but fundamentally socio-political, mobilising public administration, public management, public policy, and related disciplines.

This Study Group provides an interdisciplinary forum for scholars interested in how ecological challenges shape public action, administrative processes, and governance arrangements across different institutional contexts, including countries, levels of government, and policy sectors. It brings together theoretical and practice-oriented research, fosters critical debate, encourages interdisciplinary exchange, and welcomes methodological pluralism. The Study Group does not function as an expert body or advocacy platform, but as a space for critical inquiry, dialogue, and collective reflection.

For the launch of the study group, we have decided to structure this call around two broad themes relating to the Governance of Ecological Sustainability. The first theme relates to the definition, understanding and interpretation of ecological sustainability and the grand challenges it aims to tackle. The second theme relates to the actors of ecological sustainability governance, how they interact, negotiate, and co-create public decisions and policies.

Conceptualising the Governance of Ecological Sustainability

Ecological sustainability is often framed as a long-term political objective or normative horizon. In contrast, for public administrations, ecological sustainability and its underlying challenges materialise as concrete governance problems that call for immediate action, cross-sector and cross-level coordination, and the engagement of a wide array of actors.

These Ecological Grand Challenges are frequently described as complex, wicked, or pernicious problems, characterised by uncertainty, contested problem (re)definition, conflicting interests, and long-term consequences. Within public administrations, such



challenges may also be instrumentalised to legitimise political decisions, reforms, and even organisational restructuring.

To better understand, define and conceptualise the Governance of Ecological Sustainability, we welcome contributions that critically examine how ecological sustainability is framed, prioritised, and governed in public administration. Relevant questions include:

- How does ecological sustainability affect public action, administrative capabilities, and governance arrangements?
- How do public administrations coordinate ecological policies across sectors and levels of government?
- What intersections exist between various ecological challenges addressed by public administrations?
- How do the economic, political, civil and intimate spheres and their interests interact, influence or are ousted from ecological governance?
- In what ways do spatial, temporal, and cultural contexts shape the governance of ecological sustainability?

We particularly welcome contributions engaging with wicked problem theory, institutional complexity, and governance under conditions of deep uncertainty.

Governance arrangements, actors, and instruments

The governance of ecological sustainability involves a wide diversity of actors, instruments, and institutional arenas. Public administrations interact with political authorities, private actors, civil society organisations, trade unions, experts, and citizens through regulatory, economic, deliberative, and organisational devices. The Study Group welcomes contributions exploring, for example:

- Policy instruments addressing ecological sustainability, including regulatory, economic, and hybrid approaches;
- The making and implementation of ecological policy, law and regulation;
- Political–administrative–scientific interfaces;
- The role of public administrations as drivers, mediators, or obstacles;
- Pro- and counter-movements surrounding the development of labelling, certification schemes and regulatory oversight mechanisms;
- Deliberative arrangements, including citizen participation and consultation mechanisms;



- Bottom-up initiatives and their potential for institutionalisation or scaling;
- The role of infrastructures and technical systems in enabling or constraining ecological action.

Issues of power, conflict, coordination, resistance to change, and accountability are central to these analyses.

Disciplinary and methodological openness

The Study Group explicitly adopts an interdisciplinary perspective. Contributions are welcome from public administration, public management, political science, sociology, geography, law, history, communication studies, and related fields.

A wide range of approaches is encouraged, including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research; comparative studies; historical and longitudinal analyses; conceptual papers as well as empirically grounded case studies.

The Study Group encourages contributions from early-career scholars, including PhD candidates and postdoctoral researchers, as well as confirmed scholars. Submissions presenting work in progress are welcomed, provided that research questions, empirical material, and analytical perspectives are clearly articulated.

Language and inclusiveness

While English is the main working language of the Study Group, communications in French are also welcome, and linguistic mediation may be arranged where appropriate. However, to ensure balanced and inclusive panels, submissions written in French may be redirected to the French-speaking Ad Hoc Group, in coordination with the conference organisers. Authors are encouraged to contact the co-chairs of our Study Group and/or the French-speaking panel if they are unsure about the most appropriate panel for their submission.



EGPA Permanent Study Group 8 on Governing Preventive Healthcare and Health Promotion Policy Across Administrative Levels

PD Dr. Renate Reiter; Fern Universität in Hagen, Germany;
renate.reiter@fernuni-hagen.de

Prof. Shiran Bord; The Max Stern Yezreel Valley College, Israël;
shiranb@yvc.ac.il

Dr. Anna Uster; The Max Stern Yezreel Valley College, Israël;
annau@yvc.ac.il

Prof. Thomas Gerlinger; University of Bielefeld, Germany;
thomas.gerlinger@uni-bielefeld.de

Preventive healthcare and health promotion policies exemplify how public administrations can serve the common good by leveraging human intelligence, institutional capacity, and community engagement. Governing these policies requires inclusive, multilevel coordination, intersectoral collaboration, and participatory mechanisms that strengthen resilience, reduce social inequalities, and promote sustainable well-being.

Concretely, the implementation of national guidelines on prevention and health promotion combined with the simultaneous conception and deployment of own local strategies of preventive healthcare and health promotion tailored to local conditions poses comprehensive governance challenges for the responsible public administrations. Firstly, they need sufficient administrative capacity (including the ability to develop and select locally adapted health strategies, organizational and management skills, personnel, finances, technical and material infrastructure, and knowledge). Secondly, they are reliant on intensive coordination and cooperation with public institutions, policy actors, and stakeholders in different sectors or fields of public action (e.g., health, education, welfare, urban planning, environment, housing) and at different levels. Thirdly, they must win over citizens to participate in the implementation and/or co-production of relevant policies, e.g. through empathetic and needs-sensitive case work, through measures tailored to the needs of specific groups, or through campaigns and opportunities for participation.



Human intelligence is a key resource in all three dimensions of the governance challenge. Administrative decision-makers – in cooperation with administrative actors at all hierarchical levels – are called upon to develop intelligent strategic solutions based on existing capacities, enabling policy implementation that is sensitive to local conditions and can respond agilely to changes in those conditions. Conflict sensitivity and the ability to trust, which stem from human intelligence, are important for coordinative governance. And human intelligence, e.g., in the context of municipal decision-making or as a street-level bureaucrat, also makes it possible to respond sensitively to the needs of populations, groups, and individuals.

In its session, the temporary Permanent Study Group “Governing Preventive Healthcare and Health Promotion Policy Across Administrative Levels” will examine the prerequisites and conditions for successful regional and municipal governance of preventive healthcare and health promotion. We focus on the conditions for success in the three dimensions of the health prevention and promotion governance challenge. Of interest is the governance of policies to maintain and promote both physical health (nutrition, physical activity, smoking prevention) and mental health (well-being, resilience).

The range of topics that could address includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Studies on institutional capacities to enable the effective implementation of preventive healthcare and health promotion policies under fiscal and organizational constraints,
- Analyses on the impact of multilevel governance arrangements on inequality reduction and community engagement,
- Studies on health workforce competencies and training for health promotion, on professional roles and boundary-spanning practices,
- Analyses of co-production and citizen engagement in health policy implementation,
- Analyses of policies for promoting physical and mental health across different levels of governance,
- Research on adaptive and resilient governance during crises, and
- works on innovative approaches to sustainable health outcomes

The temporary Permanent Study Group (PSG) “Governing Preventive Healthcare and Health Promotion Policy Across Administrative Levels” provides an intellectual platform for the joint reflection of scholars and practitioners on public administrations’ role in the governance of health promotion and preventive healthcare policies. It aims to attract a



diverse and interdisciplinary research community (including amongst others: public administration, public policy and public health governance scholars; experts in multilevel governance, budgeting, and public management; early-career researchers; practitioners and policymakers engaged in health promotion and preventive healthcare policy) and strives to create a network of close collaboration among its participants and all interested parties. For this purpose, it organizes *inter alia* paper sessions at the EGPA annual conferences, develops thematic calls for papers aligned with its research agenda, fosters collaborative publications, including special journal issues or edited volumes, and encourages further activities such as joint research proposals at national and European levels.

Submitting your proposal

Please draft your proposal as an abstract of approximately 300-400 words to include:

- Your name and organization (university, government organization, etc.);
- The theme (s) of your proposed paper;
- The key questions, hypotheses, propositions, etc. you are considering;
- The nature of your research (e.g. case study, interview data, comparative study, experiment);
- Your data/evidence and key findings (or what you expect your key findings will be);
- A discussion of the theoretical implications of your research and/or the practical applications of your conclusions (e.g. management/policy recommendations/suggestions).

We look forward to receiving your abstracts!



EGPA Permanent Study Group 9 on Education and Training in Public Administration and Public Policies

Prof. David Ferraz; ISCTE, University Institute of Lisbon, Portugal;
david.ferraz@iscte-iul.pt

Prof. Luisa Neto; Instituto Nacional de Administração, University of Porto, Portugal;
luisa.neto@ina.pt

Prof. Mario Pireddu; Università Degli Studi della Tuscia, Italy;
mario.pireddu@unitus.it

Prof. Sabrina Bandera; Italian National School of Administration (SNA), Italy;
s.bandera@governo.it

The PSG 9 invites submissions that contribute to a demanding, up-to-date agenda on education and training in Public Administration and Public Policy, with a primary focus on how curricula can be aligned with the professionalisation of the public sector as a condition for institutional robustness. In a time marked by recurring cycles of distrust, populist pressures, polarisation, and anti-institutional simplifications, curriculum design and teaching/training methodologies can no longer be treated as an “internal” concern of schools. They have become a core mechanism of democratic resilience: it is through the way competencies are developed, public values are consolidated, and professional practices are institutionalised that the State’s capacity is strengthened to serve the common good, uphold legality, sustain merit, and respond to citizens with quality and proximity.

We seek contributions that help identify, compare, and test good teaching and training practices oriented towards verifiable learning outcomes, with particular attention to balancing digital capabilities (data literacy, digital governance, the ethics and responsible use of AI, interoperability, service design and service improvement) and the behavioural and relational competencies that are essential to public trust (clear communication, active listening, empathy, conflict management, emotional intelligence, integrity, impartiality, inclusive service delivery, cultural sensitivity, and citizen orientation). We are especially interested in work showing how curricula and pedagogical devices can simultaneously increase the technical sophistication of public administration while protecting its institutional core—rules, routines, accountability, neutrality, legality, and



professionalism—avoiding both techno-solutionism and purely rhetorical “soft-skills” training without assessment.

The PSG welcomes theoretical and empirical submissions (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods), comparative studies, analyses of programmes and curricular reforms, as well as systematised accounts of good practices supported by evidence of implementation and evaluation. For this PSG, we particularly value proposals that describe with precision: (i) the problem the curriculum/training intervention seeks to address; (ii) the competency model and how it is translated into learning outcomes; (iii) the pedagogical methods used; (iv) assessment approaches (rubrics, practical tests, authentic assessment in context, portfolios, structured observation); and (v) evidence of results (performance change, service quality, user satisfaction, organisational indicators, and effects on culture and integrity).

Within the thematic scope, we welcome, among others, contributions on: curriculum design and revision for public-sector careers (including mapping and alignment with job profiles and organisations’ real needs); training for public ethics, integrity, and the prevention of capture and partisan political pressures, including how to teach “professional independence” and evidence-informed decision-making; innovative methodologies focused on citizen interaction, such as simulations and role-play for service delivery, mediation and conflict management, plain administrative writing, risk communication, participation and facilitation; policy and service labs/clinics (policy labs, service design studios, citizen journey mapping), problem- and challenge-based learning grounded in real-world issues, and structured partnerships with public organisations; the responsible integration of technologies into teaching and practice (generative AI with safeguards, applied data analytics, automation with accountability, privacy and data protection), including competencies for “human oversight” and risk management; evaluation and quality assurance of public-sector training (including accreditation, standards, continuous improvement mechanisms, and impact metrics beyond immediate satisfaction); and lifelong learning and flexible models that strengthen capabilities without fragmenting trajectories (e.g., coherent modular pathways, micro-credentials integrated into professional careers, and continuous training oriented to critical functions).

PSG3 also encourages submissions oriented towards transferability and scalability—“what works, for whom, under what conditions, and at what costs and trade-offs.” In that sense, we especially welcome cases that provide reusable instruments (rubrics, simulation guides, curriculum models, competency matrices, evaluation protocols, designs for

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pedagogical experiments) and that discuss limits, risks, and institutional requirements for replication.

Submissions should take the form of an extended abstract, sufficiently informative, to enable scientific review, including purpose, background, approach/methodology, contributions, and implications for teaching/training and the professionalisation of public administration. Selection will consider relevance to the PSG's mission (curricula and institutional professionalism), methodological quality and transparency, the capacity to identify evidence-informed good practices, and the usefulness of the contribution for academic communities and schools of government/public service.



EGPA Permanent Study Group 10 on Law and Public Administration

Prof. Dr. Polanca Kovač; University of Ljubljana, Slovenia;
polanca.kovac@fu.uni-lj.si

Prof. Dr. Krisztina Rozsnyai; Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), Hungary;
rozsnyaik@ajk.elte.hu

Prof. Dr. Yseult Marique; University of Essex, Essex Law School, United Kingdom;
ymarique@essex.ac.uk

Introduction

Law and Public Administration is a Permanent Study Groups of the European Group of Public Administration, established in 2005. It aims at fostering the multi- and interdisciplinary study of the practice and theory of law in public administration, administrative science and policy from national and European perspectives. The group aspires to be a meeting place for scholars and practitioners from all parts of Europe and beyond from different fields: lawyers, sociologists, policy analysts, economists, IT experts, working in academia and public institutions, as well as civil servants in national and supranational institutions and NGOs. We aim to combine academia and practice on administrative law, its functioning and its institutions in a public administration context.

Projects & publications

Papers presented and discussed at annual conferences have been peer reviewed and published in the last years in scientific monographs, e. g. *The Sound of Silence in the EU Administrative Law* (2020, Palgrave MacMillan), *The Laws of Transparency in Action* (2018, Palgrave MacMillan), *ADR in European Administrative law* (2014, Springer), as well as in special issues of international journals, e. g. *REALaw* (2026), *CEPAR* (2024), *Administrative Science* (2021), *NALL* (2016), *IPAR* (2014), *Utrecht Law Review* (2013), *TRAS* (2009). We offer publication opportunities every year and concentrate research efforts to a joint comparative study.



Focus theme of the PSG in 2026

For the 2026 EGPA Conference, scholars and practitioners are invited to explore issues concerning the **effectiveness of legal protection in administrative matters**, with particular emphasis on systems **excluding administrative appeals and the resulting impact on court workload in administrative disputes**.

As a rule, individual administrative decisions are adopted by various public authorities. However, both supranational and national principles require not only administrative but also judicial review of their legality. Administrative appeals pursue several objectives, including ensuring consistency in administrative decision-making, providing regulatory feedback for the improvement of public policies, and reducing the burden on courts. National systems differ significantly in this regard, ranging from mandatory administrative appeals as a prerequisite for access to the courts—confirmed as complaint to the Article 47 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights in Puškar case (C-73/19)—to optional systems allowing parties to choose the most effective form of protection, as well as mixed models.

Moreover, despite the predominance of a German-inspired model of mandatory administrative appeals, sector-specific legislation may exclude administrative appeals where special reasons justify a deviation from the general framework. This typically results in an increased judicial workload and potentially less effective protection for parties. Conversely, where an administrative appeal is merely formal in nature, imposing it on parties may prove counterproductive.

From the perspective of effectiveness, further questions arise concerning the most appropriate system, including issues related to devolutive and suspensive effects, as well as the duration of administrative and judicial proceedings in practice.

The Rome conference is dedicated to examining not only **the normative regulation within national legal orders** in this regard but also analyses of the **actual effectiveness of the systems** in place for the public interest and rights of the parties alike.

In this context, contributions analysing general administrative procedure and judicial procedural law—namely national Administrative Procedure Acts and procedural codes—are welcome, whether focusing on overall regulation, case law, empirical data, or selected subtopics and sector-specific rules.

To facilitate comparative research and support publication outcomes, potentially in a special issue of a leading European journal, authors are invited to submit their proposals.

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The study group also welcomes contributions addressing broader issues of European, comparative, and national administrative law and public administration. In particular, papers addressing one or more of the following recurring themes are encouraged:

- The development of European and national administrative law principles;
- The digital transformation of public administration and European integration trends in transnational law enforcement, including the evolving nature of administrative law through new legal instruments and emerging phenomena.



EGPA Permanent Study Group 11 on Strategic Management in Government

Prof. Dr. Paul Joyce; University of Birmingham;
p.joyce.1@bham.ac.uk

Prof. Dr. Åge Johnsen; Oslo Business School, Oslo Metropolitan University;
aage.johnsen@oslomet.no

Each year at the annual EGPA conference the Permanent Study Group on Strategic Management in Government (PSG XI) has a series of sessions discussing research, theory and practice. Its members have been meeting on a yearly basis since 2009, when the Study Group was set up by EGPA. If you wish to take part in the 2026 EGPA Conference, you will be very welcome. Please register for the conference, which you can do through the conference website (see below).

If you wish to present a paper in one of the Permanent Study Group's sessions at the conference, please upload an abstract outlining your proposed conference paper. This may be done through the conference website. Practical information about the conference includes the following important dates:

- Deadline for submission of abstracts: April 6, 2026
- Acceptance notification and opening of registrations: April 20, 2026
- Full paper submission deadline and registration deadline: July 19, 2026.

Possible themes for your paper and details of what to include in your abstract are presented below. Abstracts that are not aligned to these themes will also be welcomed and considered for inclusion on the basis of their likely contribution to knowledge of strategic management in the public sector, theoretical insights, and practical relevance.

The Study Group's conference sessions have eight main themes this year:

- Theme 1: The theory and practice of organization-centred strategic management in the public sector.
- Theme 2: Public value models of strategic management.
- Theme 3: Transitions from long-term development planning (e.g., Five-Year Plans) to strategic planning.
- Theme 4: Collaborations involving the public sector and the role of strategic planning and management in collaborative governance.



- Theme 5: Core governance capabilities in strategic policy making.
- Theme 6: Strategic governance.
- Theme 7: Strategic leadership.
- Theme 8: Cross-national studies in strategic management in the public sector.

Submitting your proposal:

Please draft your proposal as an abstract of approximately 300-400 words to include:

- Your name and organization (university, government organization, etc.);
- The theme (s) of your proposed paper;
- The key questions, hypotheses, propositions, etc. you are considering;
- The nature of your research (e.g. case study, interview data, comparative study, experiment);
- Your data/evidence and key findings (or what you expect your key findings will be);
- A discussion of the theoretical implications of your research and/or the practical applications of your conclusions (e.g. management/policy recommendations/suggestions).

For any questions regarding EGPA 2026, please contact Paul Joyce at:
publications-director@iias-iisa.org



EGPA Permanent Study Group 12 on Public Policy

Policy Implementation and Hybrid Service Delivery: Street-Level Decision-Making in Turbulent Times

Prof. Dr. Anat Gofen; Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israël;
anat.gofen@mail.huji.ac.il

Prof. Dr. Fritz Sager; University of Bern, Switzerland;
fritz.sager@unibe.ch

Dr. Anka Kekez; University of Zagreb, Croatia;
akekez@fpzg.hr

Street-level professionals and organizations play a pivotal role in translating public policy into effective public service delivery and represent the most direct interface between government and citizens. Today, this role is exercised under conditions of growing societal turbulence and institutional strain. Complex and interrelated challenges, such as including multi-problem client groups, declining trust in government, polarization, democratic backsliding, systemic discrimination, digital transformation, and climate adaptation, are reshaping the context in which policies are implemented, and services are delivered. These pressures increasingly affect frontline discretion, organizational routines, accountability relations, and implementation outcomes.

In response, public service delivery is becoming more fragmented, hybrid, and collaborative. Street-level organizations and professionals are required to work across organizational, sectoral, and professional boundaries, often under conditions of resource constraints and shifting mandates. Frontline workers and managers must cope with multiple accountabilities, political pressures, media scrutiny, and rapidly changing policy signals, while maintaining service continuity and fairness in their day-to-day decision-making. Against this backdrop, this year's Permanent Study Group XIII focuses on policy implementation, modes of service delivery, and street-level decision-making amidst contemporary societal challenges. We are particularly interested in how implementation unfolds in turbulent governance environments characterized by uncertainty, cross-boundary collaboration, hybrid governance arrangements, and evolving state–society relationships.



Direct public service delivery is being reshaped by global trends such as polarization, democratic erosion, crisis governance, and rapid technological change. Implementation processes are often affected not only by formal policy reforms but also by political contestation, administrative reinterpretation, and public communication dynamics. At the same time, digitalization and data-driven tools are increasingly entering frontline settings, raising new questions about discretion, accountability, and professional judgement.

A further major development is the expanded role of third-party and external actors in service delivery. Governments increasingly rely on nonprofit organizations, private firms, community actors, and cross-governmental partnerships to design and deliver services. As a result of successive reform waves, many welfare, health, educational, regulatory, and social services now operate through complex mixes of governance modes, including state-third sector partnerships, co-production, relational contracting, commissioning, consultative in-house delivery, insourcing, co-management, and network-based arrangements. However, we still lack sufficient insight into how these contemporary delivery modes and governance conditions shape policy implementation processes and street-level decision-making in practice.

Our PSG invites contributions using diverse conceptual frameworks, analytical approaches, and research designs that examine on-the-ground implementation dynamics, service delivery modes, and street-level and boundary-spanning practices. We particularly welcome papers that move beyond descriptive case studies to develop conceptual, comparative, or theory-building insights that advance understanding of public policy implementation and service delivery.

Topics and research questions include, but are not limited to:

- Implementation arrangements and service delivery modes, and how different governance and contracting arrangements translate into frontline delivery practices and client interactions.
- Hybrid, collaborative, and cross-sectoral service delivery, including relational contracting, co-production, and partnership-based implementation.
- Street-level decision-making, discretion, and coping practices under conditions of turbulence, resource constraints, and conflicting demands.
- The role of street-level managers and frontline leaders in coordinating collaboration, managing tensions, and sustaining service quality.
- Boundary-spanning roles and practices in implementation and service delivery networks.

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- Tools and mechanisms for coordination, trust-building, learning, and accountability in fragmented and hybrid delivery systems.
- Frontline implications of digitalization, algorithmic governance, and AI-supported decision systems.
- Implementation under political polarization, democratic backsliding, and institutional fragility.
- Inequality, bias, and fairness in street-level decision-making and service provision.
- Comparative and multi-level perspectives linking system-level governance arrangements to frontline practices and outcomes.

We welcome empirical, theoretical, and methodological contributions that deepen understanding of how contemporary societal challenges and evolving service delivery modes reshape policy implementation and street-level work.



EGPA Permanent Study Group 14 on Administration, Diversity and Equal Treatment

The Bright Side of Diversity: Promoting Inclusion and Equal Treatment in Public Administration through Human Intelligence

Prof. Dr. Anna Simonati; University of Trento, Italy;
anna.simonati@unitn.it

Prof. Dr. Esther Happacher; University of Innsbruck, Austria;
esther.happacher@uibk.ac.at

Prof. Dr. Bice Della Piana, University of Salerno, Italy;
bdellapiana@unisa.it

Prof. Lamiss Khakzadeh; University of Innsbruck, Austria;
Lamiss.Khakzadeh@uibk.ac.at

Dr. Nathalie Colasanti; University of Rome Unitelma Sapienza, Italy;
nathalie.colasanti@unitelmasapienza.it

Dr. Noemi Rossi; La Sapienza University, Italy;
noemi.rossi@uniroma1.it

Dr. Rocco Frondizi; Università degli Studi di Roma "Tor Vergata", Italy;
rocco.fronzizi@uniroma2.it

In recent times, public policies, both at national and supra-national (especially E.U.) level, have started a new path. Differently than in the past, the idea, according to which equality is not based only on protection against discrimination but also on promotion of diversity as a source of richness for society, is widely shared.

The Permanent Study Group on Administration, Diversity and Equal Treatment focuses on the rules, implementation tools and best practices, to ensure equal treatment and enhancement of diversity in administrative action. The main purpose is to develop and strengthen a fruitful dialogue between researchers and practitioners from different regions, in different fields (e.g.: law, management, sociology, anthropology, administrative sciences, political science, philosophy, education, etc.), as well as in their relationships with institutions and civil society. Bottom-up initiatives by civil society



organisations, adopting a collaborative approach toward local and national administrations and inducing co-productive practices, will also be analysed.

2026 Theme

The possible causes of discrimination are numerous: sex and gender, race, age, religion, state of health, economic and social condition, and so on. Especially socio-economic differences often produce or aggravate other kinds of inequalities and are the origin of the multiple-discrimination phenomenon. A “negative” approach to differences should be replaced by a “positive” one based on sensitivity to diversity as a relevant driver of human interaction. The aim at inclusion primarily involves the implementation of an integrated and inter-sectional perspective. Moreover, equal treatment corresponds to fundamental rights of individuals and to a duty of public authorities and formally private subjects pursuing a public interest. To erase discrimination and foster diversity, many various instruments (both normative and best practices) may be suitable.

In such polyhedric context, technification and the use of artificial intelligence are seen as drivers of efficiency, and partially they really are. However, numerous sides of administrative action rely on strictly human activities, which cannot be either erased or delegated. For instance – but not solely – this is related to the fair management of procedures, to the relationship with stakeholders and citizens, in the perspective of the best pursue of the protection of individual fundamental rights and the fulfilment of the general interest. Therefore, in some fields the careful use of modern instruments and technologies can be very useful in order to achieve the desired results in terms of good administration; sometimes, on the contrary, the same tools can even represent – if not properly managed – obstacles to the full achievement of objectives of equal treatment and respect for diversity. Consequently, the importance of maintaining the centrality of human intelligence in administrative action is going to be the main (even though not exclusive) focus of 2026 theme.

We invite proposals (both papers and “discussion pieces” in the form of 1-3 pages proposals outlining topics open for further discussion) addressing issues such as (although not limited to):

- Innovative Models and Tools for Citizen Participation in Administrative Decision-Making;
- Innovative Tools, also based on Advanced Technologies (like but not only Artificial Intelligence), Enhancing Diversity and Strengthening Democracy

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- Rules and Tools to avoid illegal discrimination or mitigate gender and cultural bias, potentially caused by the use of artificial intelligence or technologies in administrative decision-making;
- Public Policies for Promoting and Managing Diversity;
- Strategic Approaches to Diversity and Inclusion Management in Public and Private Sectors;
- Fostering Collaboration through Public-Private Partnerships: Challenges and Opportunities;
- Multicultural and Multidisciplinary Teamwork: Strategies for Culturally Intelligent Human Resource Management
- Bridging Theory and Practice: Strengthening the Dialogue Between Researchers and Practitioners
- Cross-Cultural Training Models: Designing Programs with Measurable Social Impact



EGPA Permanent Study Group 15 on Collaborative Governance and Social Innovation

Prof. Marco Meneguzzo; Università della Svizzera Italiana, Lugano, Switzerland; & University of Rome Tor Vergata, Italy;
marco.meneguzzo@usi.ch ; meneguzzo@economia.uniroma2.it

Dr. Manuela Barreca; Università della Svizzera Italiana, Lugano, Switzerland;
manuela.barreca@usi.ch

Prof. Luca Mazzara; University of Bologna, Italy;
luca.mazzara@unibo.it

Prof. Diego Galego; SPAA Rutgers University-Newark, United States;
diego.galego@kuleuven.be

Dr. Giulia Leoni; University of Bologna, Italy;
giulia.leoni10@unibo.it

Dr. Fulvio Scognamiglio; London South Bank University, United Kingdom;
fulvio.scognamiglio@lsbu.ac.uk

The **PSG XV on Collaborative Governance and Social Innovation** invites scholars, researchers, professionals, and policymakers to submit their contributions to the EGPA Conference 2026, hosted by Sapienza University of Rome, Italy, from 24 to 27 August 2026. In line with the EGPA Conference theme, “*Public Governance for the Common Good: Human Intelligence Serving the Global Community*”, the PSG XV focuses on how collaborative governance and social innovation contribute to ethical, inclusive, and human-centred forms of public governance capable of addressing complex, transboundary, and polycrisis challenges.

Collaborative governance is understood not merely as a managerial arrangement or organizational model, but as an institutional expression of human intelligence in governance. It encompasses public judgment, ethical discernment, collective sense-making, and the capacity of diverse actors to co-create public value. While early scholarship emphasized horizontal relationships, trust-building processes, and voluntary coordination among actors (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012), more recent research has demonstrated that collaborative governance often unfolds “within the shadow of hierarchy”, where hierarchical interventions, regulatory mandates,



performance evaluation mechanisms, and coordinative involvement shape collaborative dynamics and outcomes (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009; Zhou & Dai, 2023). This perspective calls for a more nuanced understanding of how collaboration is initiated, structured, formalized, and sustained within institutional and bureaucratic contexts. Rather than opposing hierarchy and networks, contemporary research increasingly explores their interaction, examining how meta-governance strategies, institutional design, and varying degrees of formalization influence accountability, commitment, and long-term public value creation.

In the context of contemporary polycrisis and digitally interconnected governance systems, collaborative arrangements have become central mechanisms for involving public authorities, private actors, third-sector organizations, and citizens in co-designing and co-delivering public services (Agranoff, 2006; Klijn, 2008; Isett et al., 2011). Yet significant questions remain regarding leadership, coordination, performance, and legitimacy in complex networked settings (Cristofoli, Meneguzzo, & Riccucci, 2017). The digital transformation of government further reconfigures these dynamics, not merely by introducing new technological tools, but by reshaping institutional architectures, accountability mechanisms, and the distribution of authority among actors. Emerging concepts such as Government as a Platform signal a shift in how hierarchical steering, network coordination, and ecosystem governance intersect in digitally mediated environments (Cordella & Paletti, 2019).

Social innovation provides a pathway for transformative change and mobilizes critical resources to address polycrisis dynamics (Montgomery & Mazzei, 2021). It is widely understood as a novel mode of collaboration among public sector organizations, citizens, third-sector actors, and businesses aimed at creating public value (Caulier-Grice et al., 2012). Governments worldwide increasingly engage in multi-stakeholder collaboration to address complex societal challenges (Brandsen et al., 2016) and use social innovation as an instrument to co-produce public value and respond to public sector retrenchment (Sinclair & Baglioni, 2014). However, social innovation originally emerged both as a response to public sector deficiencies and as a grassroots reaction to neoliberal policy trajectories (Fougère et al., 2017). This dual origin has generated a persistent paradox between path continuity and path discontinuity in the role of public actors, who may simultaneously enable and constrain the development of social innovation initiatives (Avelino et al., 2019). In this regard, particular attention is devoted to how social innovation operates within the public sector, examining the evolving roles of public authorities as facilitators, regulators, coordinators, or strategic stewards, and assessing



how hierarchical interventions may enable, structure, or constrain collaborative processes.

Based on these theoretical insights, the PSG XV on Collaborative Governance and Social Innovation invites submissions and research projects focused on (but not limited to):

- The role of social innovation within the public sector: evolving institutional roles, governance configurations, and implications for public value creation. The PSG welcomes both in-depth case studies and cross-national comparative analyses that advance theoretical understanding, methodological rigor, and cumulative knowledge-building in the field.
- The interaction between horizontal collaboration and hierarchical steering in collaborative governance arrangements.
- The degree of formalization and institutionalization of collaborative governance (e.g., informal forums, formal agreements, joint policy instruments) and their effects on performance and accountability.
- Relationships between public actors and societal stakeholders in social innovation processes.
- Leadership, governance, and management for public value co-creation in collaborative settings.
- Drivers, barriers, and performance dynamics in cross-sectoral and multilevel collaboration.
- Comparative perspectives on collaborative governance and social innovation across administrative traditions (e.g., centralized vs. decentralized systems), policy sectors, and territorial levels, including manifestations of the “shadow of hierarchy” and variations in institutional design.
- Digital transformation, digital ecosystems, and Government as a Platform in collaborative governance.
- Human-centred digital governance: how digital tools can support rather than replace human intelligence in collaborative processes.
- Collaborative responses to global and transboundary crises (e.g., climate change, migration, public health, social inequalities).
- Social innovation and collaborative governance in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Learning, knowledge co-creation, reflexivity, and adaptive governance in collaborative ecosystems.
- Emerging trends and future challenges in collaborative governance and social innovation.



The PSG welcomes both in-depth case studies and cross-national comparative analyses that advance theoretical understanding, methodological rigor, and cumulative knowledge-building in the field.

Abstract format

When submitting your abstract, please make sure that you follow these guidelines:

- **Title:** mention the title of your paper.
- **Authors:** mention the names and affiliations of all the authors. Use an asterisk (*) to indicate the corresponding author.
- **Abstract:** provide a brief and concise summary of your work. The abstract should be between 800-1000 words and state the objectives, methodology, results, and implications of your research.
- **Keywords:** include 3-5 keywords that represent the content of your paper.

As in past editions, the PSG XIX will operate in close partnership and collaboration within the IIAS Study Group on *Social Innovation, Commons and Administration*, and with other relevant forums for public management and collaborative governance research, including:

- **European Academy of Management (EURAM)** – Strategic Interest Group on Public and Non-Profit Management
- **International Research Society for Public Management (IRSPM)** – Special Interest Group on Strategizing and Entrepreneurship for the Common Good
- **European Group for Organizational Studies (EGOS)** – Public Sector–related sub-themes



EGPA Permanent Study Group 16 on Welfare State Governance and Professionalism

Prof. Dr. Tanja Klenk; Helmut-Schmidt Universität & Universität der Bundeswehr, Germany;

tanja.klenk@hsu-hh.de

Prof. Dr. Karsten Vrangbæk; University of Copenhagen, Denmark;

kavr@sund.ku.dk

Ass. Prof. Dr. Elisabetta Notarnicola; SDA Bocconi School of Management, Italy;

elisabetta.notarnicola@unibocconi.it

Description

The permanent study group Welfare State Governance & Professionalism is dedicated to analysis of welfare state reform and of transitions in welfare state arrangements – with particular attention to health care, welfare and education –, as well as analysis of the accompanying restructuring of such professional services. The aim is to provide an intellectual platform for scholars of public administration, public management, organization research, social policy, sociology of professions, health care management and educational sciences, to work together to describe, to explain and to study the impact of the recent restructuring of European welfare states for professional services and the quality of the services they render.

The objectives of the Study Group are to:

- To understand which welfare state reforms have been adopted in European countries in recent years and, it is hoped, compare them with trends in non-European countries;
- To investigate the impact of societal changes on welfare policies and services and how these are adapting to new social needs;
- To analyse the critical issue of reform processes, in particular with regard to the relationship between theories, policies, policy design, decision making and implementation processes;
- To study the implications of reform for professional services, professionalism and professional action, within changing administrative and organizational settings;



- To relate reforms to the quality of services rendered, in order to understand whether and how welfare state reforms are ‘improving’ services;
- To explore the evolution of concepts such as societal value when applied to welfare policies and services;
- To elaborate new conceptual frameworks that should be interdisciplinary and to propose policy statements and coherent implementation strategies, relating processes to outcomes.

Call for paper 2026: Public Governance, Professionalism and the Common Good in Welfare States

Contemporary welfare states are undergoing profound transformations driven by demographic change, social inequalities, fiscal constraints, digitalisation and evolving societal expectations. In this context, public governance is increasingly called upon to serve the common good by mobilising not only institutional capacities, but also human intelligence, professional knowledge and collective responsibility.

The permanent study group Welfare State Governance & Professionalism invites paper proposals that explore how governance reforms in welfare states are reshaping professional services in welfare settings, and how these changes affect the quality, equity and societal value of services delivered to communities.

The panel aims to provide an interdisciplinary forum for scholars in public administration, public management, social policy, sociology of professions, health care management and educational sciences to critically examine how welfare governance can reconcile efficiency, accountability and innovation with professional autonomy, ethical responsibility and responsiveness to social needs.

Key themes and questions include, but are not limited to:

- Governance reforms and the common good: How do recent welfare state reforms redefine societal value, public purpose and collective well-being?
- Human intelligence and professional judgement: What is the role of professional knowledge, discretion and ethical reasoning in governance arrangements increasingly shaped by rules, performance metrics and digital tools?
- Policy design and implementation: How do theories of public governance translate into welfare policies and implementation practices, and with what consequences for professionals and service users?



- Professionalism under transformation: How are roles, identities and practices of welfare professionals evolving within changing administrative, organisational and inter-organisational settings?
- Quality and outcomes of services: Do governance and welfare reforms improve service quality, accessibility and equity? For whom, and under which conditions?
- Societal change and new needs: How are welfare systems adapting to emerging social risks, ageing populations, migration, vulnerability and inequality?

The panel welcomes theoretical, empirical and comparative contributions, as well as qualitative and mixed-methods research, that critically engage with the governance of welfare states and the future of professional services in serving the common good. Contributions that propose interdisciplinary conceptual frameworks, policy lessons and coherent implementation strategies linking governance processes to social outcomes are particularly welcome.

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EGPA Ad Hoc Group 1 on Horizontal integration and transborder participatory governance in the European Administrative Space

Dr. Peter Ulrich; University of Potsdam, Germany;
peter.ulrich@uni-potsdam.de

Prof. Dr. Joachim Beck; University of Applied Sciences Kehl, Germany;
beckj@hs-kehl.de

Ass. Prof. Hynek Böhm; University of Opole, Poland; & Technical University of Liberec Czech Republic;
hynek.bohm@uni.opole.pl

Dr. Alice Engl; Institute for Minority Rights, EURAC Research, Bolzano, Italy;
alice.engl@eurac.edu

Ass. Prof. Lukáš Novotný; Jan Evangelista Purkyně University, Ústí nad Labem, & University of Chemistry and Technology Prague, Czech Republic;
lukas.novotny@ujep.cz

Ass. Prof. Sara Svensson; Halmstad University, Sweden;
sara.svensson@hh.se

Cooperation of regional and local public entities – such as political actors and public administrations – across national borders has evolved dynamically in Europe in the last decades especially after the fall of the Iron Curtain. Border regions accommodate a significant share of population and territory in Europe which makes it a “Europe of cross-border regions”. Several Euroregions and so-called European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs) have been created in national peripheries to facilitate euroregional political and administrative cooperation in cross-border regions for example in managing cross-border public services or EU projects and funds.

Yet, deeper political and administrative integration and cooperation partially experiences boundaries. Besides general re-bordering processes through re-nationalization, the discursive and political dismantling of values, ideas and political processes of Europeanization and Transnationalism and the re-enforced border controls in the EU



Schengen Area also practical barriers in the daily cross-border collaboration practice of public entities reveal that cross-border integration reaches its limits.

The newly established Ad Hoc Group (AHGs) aims at discussing this ambivalence under the notion of “Horizontal Integration” in the European Administrative System (EAS) and also asks the question how could cross-border governance structures be more inclusive and participatory by including distinct actors across civil society, academia or private actors beside public administration and political actors in these governance arrangements.

The Ad Hoc Group is a novel experimental forum that brings together outstanding European expert researchers from political and administrative sciences that work on cross-border cooperation in Europe. Jointly, the group will discuss theoretical approaches of “horizontal integration”, cross-border “participatory governance” and “multilevel governance” in the debate revolving around the EAS, current developments and will compare the administrative horizontal integration in different border regions in Europe. The Ad Hoc Group aims at bringing different European cross-border administrative experiences under a holistic analytical lens to test new ideas and approaches.

The Ad Hoc Group brings two thematic threads into discussion: horizontal integration in cross-border territories and participatory governance in cross-border regions:

Horizontal integration in cross-border territories

Although cross-border cooperation in Europe has already a long history, it varies concerning the duration of cooperation and the depth of integration. While there are territorial authorities that have cooperated with each other for several decades, countries from Central and Eastern Europe have experienced cooperation in a EU integration context less time. Moreover, European cross-border regions differ in their depth of integration in terms of administrative capacities and leeway, autonomy, resources, institutionalization and broadness of policy fields involved in cross-border cooperation.

Approaches and instruments to horizontal integration and cross-border cooperation

To foster cross-border cooperation of administrative and political transborder structures, there have been introduced political, legal and financial approaches mostly by the European Union (EU). Through the financial instrument Interreg cross-border projects and networking has been promoted fiscally. The transnational network Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) and the official EU body Committee of the Regions are representing politically the interests of border regions. Legal instruments such as the



EGTC or the currently debated BRIDGEforEU regulation aim at deepening cooperation of administrations and to resolve legal boundaries that exist so far in the EAS.

Challenges and prospects to horizontal integration and cross-border cooperation in different policy fields

Cross-border cooperation and horizontal integration contain prospects and opportunities for nationally peripheral territorial authorities to join forces and to bundle synergies functionally or territorially. Potentials exist in different policy fields like health provision, public transport, education, security and police cooperation, catastrophic management, tourism, urban and regional planning and development, economic development, energy supply, environmental and climate protection. The creation of jointly administered hospitals in cross-border regions such as the French-Spanish EGTC Cerdanya, energy security cooperation, cross-border district heating supply or wastewater treatment in the German-Polish border or hydrogen infrastructure cooperation in the industrial French-German borderlands, show the opportunities and synergies that exist in transborder cooperation. On the flipside, there are also legal, administrative, socioeconomic, sociocultural, historical or political boundaries that hinder efficient and effective administrative and political cooperation across borders. The AEBR together with EU institutions introduced the programme *b solutions* to tackle concrete obstacles in border regions which is a central EU wide initiative.

The proposed papers shall make a contribution to answering one or more of these questions:

- How are political initiatives and strategies, administrative and legal structures coordinated across national borders? How are administrations and legal structures horizontally integrated?
- How are EU instruments and approaches utilized in border regions?
- To what extent are different policy fields (health, transport, education, security and defense, catastrophic management, tourism, urban and regional planning and development, economic development, energy, environmental and climate protection) integrated across borders?
- Which opportunities and obstacles exist in cross-border cooperation practice? What are the prospects for good administrative practice across borders?
- What roles could the approaches of horizontal cross-border cooperation play within the broader institutional multi-level context of the EAS (e.g. as specific fields of application for the ComPAct Initiative of the European Commission)?



- How well can major theories from the field of public administration be applied in border regions?

Participatory governance in cross-border regions

Besides cross-border cooperation structures, also the composition of actor relations is of interest. Thus, we are discussing different dynamics and ways of cooperation among different kinds of actors in border regions with a special emphasis on the inclusion of the population and civil society groups. We are interested in cross-actor relations and in cross-border public services that are provided for and with the society.

Cross-actor relations and cooperation in multilevel cross-border governance

Cross-border cooperation has been mostly being the domain of public actors – political and administrative bodies. In the last decades academic, consultancy, private and economic partners have also been involved for example as cooperation partners in Interreg projects on economic development or public service delivery. In recent years, citizens and civil society were actively engaged in cross-border co-creation. By introducing different approaches like citizen polls, surveys or consultations, petitions, citizen councils or citizen budgeting the civic dimension was actively integrated in cross-border governance. Also approaches like (cross-border) smart cities or cross-border open government show current trends in local (cross-border) contexts to get the citizens back in in times of the perceived democratic deficit and erosion of democratic values and institutions. On the other hand, civil society is integrated into different kind of participation format of cross-border governance by being part of working groups on future priorities and action plans.

Cross-border public services for and with society

Public services are mostly organized in a national context. Growing demands of public service delivery across borders, for example in metropolitan regions have triggered regional planners and administrations to think about how to conceptualize service delivery f.e. in the transport, education, energy and heating supply, education, and infrastructure sector across borders. Since the corona pandemic also the health sector came to the fore as solidarity and equipment and patients exchange was observable in different border regions. With the creation of so-called *InfoBest* or *border contact points* citizens can also be actively informed about border-related concerns that affect their daily lives. Also approaches to public service delivery, which is co-organized and co-created by citizens and civil society groups, are of interest.



The proposed papers shall make a contribution to answering one or more of these questions:

- How do different actors (public, private, academic or societal) cooperate in cross-border settings such as in Euroregions, EGTC's, smart (double/twin) cities or metropolitan regions?
- How are citizens or civil society interacting with primary administrative and political actors in cross-border governance? Which formats of participatory governance (citizen polls or consultations, citizen councils or citizen budgeting) exist and how do they work? To what extent is there a cross-border open government? Who is typically missing in cross-border governance structures?
- Which cross-border public services exist for and with the society in border regions?

We would welcome contributions that deal theoretically and/or empirically with either one of both thematic threads *horizontal integration in cross-border territories* and *participatory governance in cross-border regions*.



EGPA Ad Hoc Group 2 on Creativity, Innovation, and Digital Transformation in the Public Sector: A crossroads between internal HRM and external sources of knowledge

Prof. Andrea Tomo; University of Naples “Federico II”, Italy;
andrea.tomo@unina.it

Dr. Manuela Barreca; Università della Svizzera italiana, Lugano, Switzerland;
manuela.barreca@usi.ch

Prof. Manuel Castriotta; University of Cagliari, Italy;
manuel.castriotta@unica.it

The Ad Hoc Group (AHG) on Creativity, innovation, and digital transformation in the public sector: a crossroads between internal HRM and external sources of knowledge invites scholars, researchers, professionals, and policymakers to submit their contributions to the EGPA Conference 2026, hosted by Sapienza University of Rome, Italy, from 24 to 27 August 2026.

In line with EGPA Conference theme, “Public Governance for the Common Good: Human Intelligence Serving the Global Community”, our group places particular emphasis to the capacity of public institutions to mobilize, develop, and sustain human intelligence in contexts marked by digitalization, complexity, and societal transformation—all-embracing skills, creativity, ethical decision, and predict and adaptive capabilities—in order to generate public value and address organizational and collective challenges.

In this perspective, HRM emerges as a strategic governance function that goes beyond regulating work to enable learning, innovation, inclusion, and well-being.

Creativity, innovation, and digital transformation as collective, relational, and knowledge-intensive processes in which, human capital in public sector is positioned as key agents of democratic value creation in service of society at the intersection between internal HRM practices and external sources of knowledge, within citizens, civil society, academia, private sector, and the new digital ecosystems.

Digital transformation has profoundly reshaped public organizations, affecting workflows, leadership styles, organizational cultures, and modes of service delivery



(Bunker, 2020; Mascio et al., 2020; Schuster et al., 2020; Välikangas & Lewin, 2020; Yang, 2020). In the public sector, these transformations are increasingly driven by societal expectations for high-quality, transparent, and real-time digital services that serve the public interest and the common good, pushing administrations to redesign governance arrangements and organizational practices (Mergel et al., 2019). Digital technologies operate simultaneously as enablers of service transformation, organizational culture change, and new forms of public value creation (Scupola & Mergel, 2022), while also accelerating pressures on public employees and institutions (Sudarmo, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic further intensified these dynamics, exposing structural vulnerabilities in public administrations and placing human resource management (HRM) at the center of organizational resilience and adaptive capacity (Van der Wal, 2020; Wang et al., 2009). The rapid diffusion of flexible and hybrid forms of work—such as smart working—has expanded autonomy and performance opportunities, while simultaneously demanding new creative, flexible, and experimental practices from civil servants (Gratton, 2021; Jeyasingham, 2016; Petani & Mengis, 2021; Todisco et al., 2023; Tomo, 2023; Houtgraaf et al., 2023). Yet, persistent bureaucratic rigidities and reform legacies continue to constrain creativity and innovation within public organizations (Kärreman & Alvesson, 2009; Lapsley, 2009; Tomo, 2018).

In response, public organizations increasingly rely on external and marketized sources of expertise to pursue innovation and flexibility, a trend that raises critical concerns regarding accountability, organizational learning, and the long-term development of human intelligence within public governance systems (Furusten & Werr, 2017; Kirkpatrick et al., 2018; Ylönen & Kuusela, 2019). Despite extensive reform rhetoric (Kickert, 2011), limited attention has been paid to how these tensions shape micro-level organizational processes, such as HR policies, leadership practices, skills development, and professional identities, precisely where creativity, ethical judgment, and public value creation are enacted in practice.

Session format. Inspired by innovative formats developed within the EGOS community, this AHG aims to create an interactive and experimental space within EGPA. Sessions will go beyond traditional panel presentations by fostering cross-paper dialogue, collective sense-making, and shared agenda setting. The objective is not only to discuss individual contributions, but also to stimulate methodological exchange, collaborative thinking, and future research collaborations. Conferences can be conceived not merely as venues for academic dissemination, but as living laboratories of knowledge creation



aimed at fostering deeper theoretical dialogue, methodological exchange, and collective sense-making (Bertella & Castriotta, 2024).

Rather than focusing solely on individual paper presentations, sessions will be designed to:

- Foster collective sense-making around emerging research questions;
- Encourage cross-paper dialogue and thematic clustering;
- Actively involve participants in shaping a shared research agenda, projects collaborations and co-authoring papers (last session).

The AHG invites contributions that focus on a wide range of issues, including, but not limiting to, the following:

- The impact of HR strategy on nurturing workforce and place embracing creativity and innovation;
- The transformation of working practices and organizational models in the public sector after the pandemic and the spread of digital technologies;
- The effects of agile forms of working on management practices, knowledge management, leadership, strategy, sustainability, and recruiting;
- The implications of new forms of working on individual well-being, work-life balance as well as on their identities;
- The effects of algorithms, artificial intelligence, and other advanced forms of technology on HRM and other organizational practices;
- The logic, practices, and values involved in replacing human-centric creativity with creativity generated by artificial intelligence;
- The role of collaboration with external partners in creative and innovative processes within the public sector;
- The power/resistance dynamics, reactions, and identity processes related to digital transformation;
- Strategies to overcoming barriers to innovation in a bureaucratic system;
- The comparison of the outcomes of internally and/or externally driven innovation in the public sector;
- The challenges of managerial competence development and the role of civil servant training, HRM policies, and organizational strategies in managing conflicting objectives and demands and coping with innovation, reforms, and macro changes such as digital transformation;
- The presentation of case studies for talent development, training, and retention in the public sector



- The comparative analysis of cross-sectoral and cross-national experiences of public management reforms, focusing on the deconstruction/reconstruction of cultural, professional and creative paradigms and identities within administrations.

Abstract format. When submitting your abstract, please make sure that you follow the following guidelines:

- **Title:** mention the title of your paper.
- **Authors:** mention the names and affiliations of all the authors. Use an asterisk (*) to indicate the corresponding author.
- **Abstract:** provide a brief and concise summary of your work. The abstract should be between 800-1000 words and state the objectives, methodology, results, and implications of your research.
- **Keywords:** Please include 3-5 keywords that represent the content of your paper.



EGPA Ad Hoc Group 3 on Accountability and Popular/Social Reporting in the Public Sector: A comparative perspective

Paolo Biancone; University of Turin, Italy;
paolo.biancone@unito.it

Silvana Secinaro; University of Turin, Italy;
silvana.secinaro@unito.it

Valerio Brescia; Università Degli Studi di Milano, Italy;
valerio.brescia@unimi.it

Federico Chmet; University of Eastern Piedmont, Italy;
federico.chmet@uniupo.it

Justyna Fijalkowska; Społeczna Akademia Nauk (SAN University), Poland;
jfijalkowska@san.edu.pl

Dominika Hadro; Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny we Wrocławiu, Poland;
dominika.hadro@ue.wroc.pl

In recent years, public sector accountability has evolved beyond compliance-based and financially oriented models, incorporating Popular Reporting, Social Reporting, and Sustainability Reporting to enhance transparency, accessibility, and democratic legitimacy (Bovens, 2007; Yusuf et al., 2013; Biancone et al., 2025). There is currently a gap in the comparison of models and approaches adopted.

Popular Financial Reporting (PFR) or Bilancio POP is a simplified, citizen-oriented reporting tool designed to communicate consolidated financial and non-financial information in a clear and accessible format (Biancone et al., 2025a; Grossi et al., 2021). It emphasizes comprehensibility, inclusion, integrated vision, and the use of emerging technologies to identify citizens' informational needs integrated by focus on long-term public value created (Biancone et al., 2024). By contrast, Social Reporting focuses on social impact, mission achievement, and stakeholder engagement (Dumay, Guthrie & Farneti, 2010), while Sustainability Reporting adopts an integrated perspective, often structured around the Six Capitals framework, to capture long-term public value creation (Cheng et al., 2014; Secinaro et al., 2022).



Furthermore, these models support participatory budgeting and participatory reporting in the planning, programming and control process. E-participation tools are recognized as mechanisms supporting democratic decision-making and representative democracy based on last evidence of social reporting. Citizen participation is a core element of modern public accountability (Bovens, 2007) and digital platforms can enhance transparency and engagement, although their effectiveness depends on socio-demographic factors and accessible financial and non-financial information (Macintosh, 2004; Meijer & Bolívar, 2016).

Adopting a comparative European perspective and models (Italy, Spain, Poland, Switzerland), the panel contributes to debates on:

- Citizen-centred accountability and public value communication;
- The role of accounting in strengthening trust and legitimacy;
- Stakeholder engagement and participatory governance;
- Tensions between standardisation and local adaptation;
- Institutional and regulatory drivers of reporting innovation.

In this respect, the panel also contributes to building continuity towards the EAA Annual Congress 2027, hosted by the University of Torino, fostering long-term academic collaboration across governance and accounting studies, and EAA Annual Congress 2028, hosted by University of Krakow, Poland, May 2028.

By systematically comparing countries with different governance traditions, the panel seeks to advance theory, inform practice and outline a shared European research agenda on accountability and popular/social reporting in the public sector.

Papers accepted for presentation in the panel will be eligible for a fast-track review process in:

- [European Journal of Social Impact and Circular Economy](#)
- [European journal of volunteering and community-based projects](#)

Authors will be invited to submit extended versions of their contributions, which—after further development and in line with each journal’s editorial standards—will undergo an expedited review procedure.



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EGPA Specialized Panel 1

From Tensions to Paradoxes: Rethinking public administration and management

Marta Ingaggiati; University of Milan, Italy;

marta.ingaggiati@unimi.it

Giovanni Barbato; University of Milan, Italy;

giovanni.barbato@unimi.it

Iris Seidemann; Leuphana University Lüneburg, Germany;

iris.seidemann@leuphana.de

Martina Pissarra; University of Milan, Italy;

martina.pissarra@unimi.it

Tasfia Mazid; University of Glasgow, United Kingdom;

t.mazid.1@research.gla.ac.uk

Public administration and management (PAM) are increasingly characterized by enduring structural contradictions arising from grand societal challenges, institutional pluralism, and growing demands for accountability, participation and performance. Public organizations are expected to reconcile competing expectations from diverse stakeholders—citizens, political actors, professionals, and experts—while operating under conditions of uncertainty, resource scarcity, and complex governance arrangements.

While tensions and contradictions have long been acknowledged in PAM scholarship, they have traditionally been approached through lenses such as hierarchical control (Weber 1958), trade-offs and dilemmas (Hood 1991), or wicked-problem perspectives (Angeli, Camporesi, and Dal Fabbro 2021). Paradox theory offers a complementary lens to deepen our understanding of these tensions by conceptualizing them as **contradictory yet interdependent elements that persist over time (Smith and Lewis 2011)**. Rather than seeking definitive resolutions, a paradoxical perspective highlights how actors navigate, accommodate, and enact tensions through ongoing strategies and practices (Lewis and Smith 2022).



Although paradox theory has gained traction in management and organization studies, its application within PAM remains fragmented and still emerging, despite its strong potential to illuminate governance dynamics, organizational processes, decision-making and multi-level interactions (Adeoye and Ran 2023; Ingaggiati et al. 2024; Qi and Ran 2023).

This call for paper seeks to broaden and strengthen the conversation by inviting contributions that explore **tensions, contradictions and competing demands in PAM and reimagine them as potentially assuming a paradoxical nature.**

We particularly welcome works that expands the empirical, theoretical, and methodological boundaries of paradox research in public administration and stimulates dialogue across different PAM domains.

We invite proposals addressing paradoxes, tensions, and contradictions across different levels and contexts, including (but not limited to):

Macro-level dynamics, including:

- Governance arrangements, policy processes, and institutional complexity, Public sector reform, digital transformation, and advanced technologies,
- Accountability, legitimacy, and public value tensions.

Meso-level organizational processes, including:

- Collaborative and networked governance,
- Citizen participation and engagement, co-production, and co-creation,
- Value creation and destruction in public services,
- Strategic management, performance evaluation, HRM, and DEI policies.

Micro-level foundations:

- Individual agency, sensemaking, emotions, and identity,
- Leadership, professional roles, and power dynamics in navigating tensions.

Cross-level and ecosystem perspectives:

- Nested or knotted paradoxes across governance levels,
- Inter-organizational collaboration and public service ecosystems,
- Intersections between organizational, institutional, and societal tensions.



We invite contributions from any theoretical or empirical tradition, expressly welcoming a diversity of methodologies (including qualitative, quantitative, mixed-method), comparative research or analytical approaches (conceptual, longitudinal, historical works; e.g., Ingaggiati et al., 2025), diversity policy contexts, administrative traditions, and geographic settings.

Contributions may also intersect with the themes of other EGPA permanent study groups or connect to the overall theme of the 2026 EGPA conference.

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EGPA Specialized Panel 2

Accountability and governance in and of collaborative organizational arrangements

Prof. Dr. Jörg Raab; Tilburg University, The Netherlands;

j.raab@uvt.nl

Dr. Cor van Montfort; Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands;

c.j.van.montfort@vu.nl

Challenges to overall well-being— environmental degradation, poverty, mobility, chronic health issues—remain persistent because they comprise interconnected problems that cross boundaries between private, non-profit and governmental sectors. Such wicked problems or grand challenges have to be tackled through the collaborative efforts of organizations. By participating in these collaborative arrangements, organizations still accomplish their core missions despite increasing interdependencies and achieving a collective output. However, by operating through interorganizational arrangements they also lose part of their sovereignty and collaborating with other organizations can create dependencies and risks that can be hard to manage.

Classical hierarchical accountability arrangements are thus challenged in this context, and the question is what other accountability arrangements are possible, to support the effectiveness of collaborative organizational forms. On the one hand, existing accountability systems often only hold the single organization accountable for their individual performance and as such might even function counterproductive in achieving the common good. On the other hand, the question arises, how can we avoid accountability getting lost in the diffusion or even the evaporation of different responsibilities? In the literature on (the governance of) collaborations and networks, questions of accountability are not often discussed and even somehow seen almost as an oxymoron.

Submissions might be addressed but do not have to be limited to the following questions:

1. How can transparency and accountability be conceptualized and analyzed in collaborative settings?
2. What are the characteristics and effects of existing accountability arrangements in collaborative settings?



3. What is the relationship between specific network governance forms and accountability, transparency, and supervision?

We welcome empirical as well as conceptual papers that focus on the organizational level or the level of the collaboration or explore mutual influences. Empirical settings can be in the private, non-profit or public sector or cover cross-sector collaborations.



EGPA Specialized Panel 3

French-speaking panel

New dynamics in francophone public administration: interdisciplinary perspectives on contemporary challenges

Nouvelles dynamiques dans l'administration publique francophone : défis contemporains et perspectives interdisciplinaires

Cassandra Delorme ; Université Clermont Auvergne, France ;
cassandra.delorme@uca.fr

Prof. Laurent Mériade ; Université Clermont Auvergne, France ;
Laurent.MERIADE@uca.fr

Nils Randriamanantena ; Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, France ;
Nils.Randriamanantena@etu.univ-paris1.fr

Prof. Nathalie Raulet-Croset ; Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, France ;
nathalie.raulet-croset@iae.pantheonsorbonne.fr

Prof. Corinne Rochette ; Université Clermont Auvergne, France.
Corinne.ROCHETTE@uca.fr

Dans le cadre de la Conférence annuelle du GEAP 2026, qui se tiendra à l'université La Sapienza de Rome du 24 au 26 août 2026, ce Groupe représente un espace dédié aux échanges francophones.

Positionnement et objectifs du Groupe

Ce Groupe vise à créer une nouvelle communauté collaborative et interdisciplinaire dédiée à la recherche en management public en contexte francophone. Il s'agit de structurer un espace de dialogue scientifique permettant d'explorer les défis contemporains auxquels sont confrontées les administrations publiques, dans des environnements institutionnels, politiques et culturels variés.

Notre ambition dépasse le seul cadre de la conférence. Nous souhaitons contribuer à structurer une réflexion collective sur la francophonie scientifique en management public,



en l'inscrivant dans une perspective ouverte, à la fois intra-européenne et au-delà de l'Europe. Les contextes francophones offrent en effet une diversité institutionnelle riche (Europe, Afrique, Amérique du Nord, Caraïbes, etc.) qui permet d'interroger les traditions administratives, les dynamiques de réforme, les formes d'innovation publique et les processus de transformation organisationnelle sous des angles renouvelés.

Le groupe se propose ainsi comme un forum multidisciplinaire explorant comment les organisations publiques en contexte francophone innovent, collaborent, régulent et se transforment face aux défis contemporains : transitions écologiques et numériques, recompositions territoriales, mutations des rapports État-société, contraintes budgétaires, enjeux de participation et de légitimité démocratique. Nous accueillons des contributions issues du management public, de l'administration publique, de la science politique, du droit public, de la sociologie des organisations et des disciplines connexes.

Nous offrons un cadre bienveillant et exigeant, favorisant des échanges approfondis, un feedback personnalisé et des possibilités de collaborations futures. L'objectif est également de poser les bases d'un réseau pérenne de chercheurs francophones. À terme, cette initiative pourrait déboucher sur des projets collectifs structurants afin de valoriser les travaux présentés et de contribuer au rayonnement international de la recherche francophone en management public.

Axes thématiques de discussion

Les axes thématiques suivants fournissent une orientation initiale pour le panel et établissent un cadre flexible de discussion. Ces thèmes sont provisoires et peuvent évoluer en fonction des contributions reçues et des intérêts des chercheurs participants.

Ce groupe offre un espace privilégié permettant aux chercheurs d'aborder un large éventail de défis contemporains en administration et management publics, en restant attentif aux contextes institutionnels et territoriaux. Les travaux portant sur les enjeux de durabilité au sens large, au-delà de la seule dimension écologique (santé, urbanisme, transitions économiques, économie circulaire dans les organisations publiques, cohésion sociale, etc.), trouveront dans ce groupe un cadre de dialogue particulièrement adapté.

Les contributions peuvent explorer de façon non exhaustive les thématiques suivantes :

- Réformes organisationnelles et institutionnelles dans la fonction publique,
- Transformation numérique du secteur public,
- Organisations publiques et les enjeux de durabilité,
- Place de l'instrumentation dans les organisations publiques,



- Réseaux inter-organisationnels et partenariats : relations public-privé,
- Relations entre organisations publiques et territoires locaux,
- Mise en œuvre et évaluation des politiques dans les administrations locales et régionales,
- Les organisations de santé publiques,
- L'université comme organisation publique.

Modalités de soumission

Les propositions de communication peuvent être écrites en anglais ou en français. Les présentations acceptées seront présentées et discutées en français.

Veillez présenter votre proposition avec un résumé de **500 mots** maximum qui articule :

- Questions de recherche ou objectifs,
- Cadre théorique et/ou approche conceptuelle (le cas échéant),
- Matériau empirique et méthodes (pour les articles empiriques),
- Contributions attendues à la recherche et à la pratique en administration publique.



EGPA Specialized Panel 4

When Reform Matters: Public Administration, Institutional Resilience and Democratic Backsliding

Ass. Prof. Elisabete de Carvalho; Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas (School of Social and Political Sciences), University of Lisbon; Portugal;
ecarvalho@iscsp.utl.pt

Ass. Prof. Maria José Garcia Solana; Complutense University of Madrid, Spain;
mjgarcia@ucm.es

Prof. João Ricardo Catarino; Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas (School of Social and Political Sciences), University of Lisbon, Portugal;
jcatarino@iscsp.ulisboa.pt

Adj. Prof. Ricardo Corrêa Gomes; FGV EAESP, Brazil; ricardo.gomes@fgv.br

Ass. Prof. Pedro Camões; University of Aveiro, Portugal;
pjcamoes@ua.pt

Public administrations across Europe and beyond are operating in increasingly contested political and institutional environments. Recurrent crises, geopolitical instability and rapid technological transformation are exerting sustained pressure on governance capacity, while simultaneously reshaping the relationship between politics and administration. In this context, administrative reform has re-emerged as a central – yet profoundly ambivalent – instrument of state transformation.

Traditionally associated with efforts to improve the quality of government, administrative reform is now implicated in wider processes of democratic stress. While some reform initiatives reinforce institutional resilience, professionalism and administrative legitimacy, others contribute to the politicisation of the civil service, the weakening of checks and balances, and the erosion of administrative autonomy. Far from being normatively neutral, reform choices may actively reconfigure power relations within the state, with far-reaching implications for the rule of law and the quality of democratic governance.

Contemporary debates on democratic backsliding increasingly recognise that democratic erosion does not necessarily unfold as a slow or linear process. In certain contexts, it may



be accelerated, episodic or concentrated in critical moments of institutional change. Public administrations are not peripheral to these dynamics. They constitute key arenas in which reform designs, implementation practices and professional norms intersect with political strategies, shaping how democratic safeguards are maintained, recalibrated or, in some cases, swiftly reconfigured.

This panel examines administrative reform as a critical nexus linking governance capacity, institutional resilience and democratic quality. Drawing on public governance paradigms – from classical bureaucracy and the Neo-Weberian State to New Public Management and New Public Governance – the panel invites contributions that analyse how reform trajectories shape administrative autonomy, accountability and legitimacy under conditions of political and institutional stress.

Papers may address, among other issues:

- How dominant public governance paradigms shape administrative responses to challenges affecting democratic governance;
- How reform trajectories have contributed to the weakening of bureaucratic institutional resilience, thereby increasing the risk of democratic backsliding;
- Under what conditions reforms facilitate the politicisation of public administrations rather than their professionalisation;
- How reform design and implementation vary across administrative traditions, and with what implications for governance capacity and the rule of law; and
- To what extent digitalisation and algorithmic governance strengthen administrative resilience or, alternatively, generate new risks for democratic oversight, transparency and ethical governance.

The panel welcomes empirically grounded and theoretically informed contributions that combine careful institutional analysis with critical reflection on administrative practices and reform processes. By foregrounding the political and institutional consequences of administrative reform, it aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how and why reform matters for the resilience of public administrations and the sustainability of democratic governance.



EGPA Specialized Panel 5

Local Government Studies: Germany and the Nordics

Ylva Norén Bretzer; University of Gothenburg, Sweden;
ylva-noren-bretzer@spa.gu.se

Dalia Mukhtar-Landgren; University of Lund, Sweden;
dalia.mukhtar-landgren@svet.lu.se

Ulf Ramberg; University of Lund, Sweden;
ulf.ramberg@fek.lu.se

Sabine Kuhlmann; University of Potsdam, Germany;
skuhlman@uni-potsdam.de

The next upcoming European Group of Public Administration (EGPA) conference meets under the theme “Public Governance for the Common Good: Human Intelligence Serving the Global Community”. From this general theme, we have derived the following call for local government contributions. We are pleased to invite early-career and senior scholars studying local or regional governments in Germany and the Nordic countries to a Specialized Workshop at the EGPA conference at Sapienza University of Rome, Italy, 24-27 August.

Europe is undergoing profound transformations driven by a shifting global power balance. These changes affect multi-level relations between states and local governments, as well as security and resilience concerns. In this context, a key question arises: *Under these re-embedded conditions, can local governments further strengthen their contribution to the Common good – both for their citizens and for the global community?* Local governments stand at the forefront of these transitions, navigating the shift from old resilience paradigms to new.

This Specialized Workshop welcomes paper proposals from both early-career and senior scholars; PhD students as professors. Submissions may address the challenges and contributions of local governments in responding to contemporary topics such as democratic backsliding, local security agendas, climate transition, social inequality and social stress, urban planning and management, and local digitalization. Papers focusing on themes of safety, (dis)trust, (dis)cohesion, and public service provision and



management are also encouraged, as other critical challenges faced by German and Nordic local governments.

Local Governments in Times of Transition

We are pleased to invite you to a lunch-to-lunch workshop on these topics in Rome, which can be combined with other study group sessions of EGPA. The event brings together local government scholars from the Nordic countries and Germany, and beyond, to strengthen the research collaboration in the field of local government studies.

With this call we welcome paper proposals that engage with the workshop's theme and one or more of its subthemes. We specifically welcome papers that offer empirical, research-based analyses and contribute to a renewed theoretical understanding of these challenges, as well as papers that adopt a comparative approach; be it 'overtime', 'cross-countries', 'multilevel' or 'cross-service'. We are particularly keen to include papers that include Germany and/or Nordic local governments together with possible other local government comparisons.

The workshop will feature paper presentations (full papers or extended abstracts) and close with a roundtable discussion, including both early-career and senior scholars, on the evolving role of European local governments of the North.



EGPA Specialized Panel 6

Living Labs in Government and Administration: Problems, positions and perspectives

Dr. Tobias Polzer; WU Vienna University of Economics and Business, Austria;
tobias.polzer@wu.ac.at

Prof. Dr. Sabine Kuhlmann; University of Potsdam, Germany;
skuhlman@uni-potsdam.de

Prof. Dr. Isabella Proeller; University of Potsdam, Germany;
isabella.proeller@uni-potsdam.de

Prof. Dr. Reto Steiner; ZHAW Winterthur, Switzerland;
reto.steiner@zhaw.ch

Living labs are open innovation ecosystems that operate in a real-life setting, placing citizens and end-users at the center of the innovation process. They are fundamentally about co-creation and experimentation, bringing together diverse stakeholders to design, test, and validate new solutions, services, or policies in an authentic, multi-contextual environment.¹

Such labs often operate using the ‘Quadruple Helix’ model, which involves intensive collaboration among four key stakeholder groups: (1) Public authorities/government: ensuring alignment with policy, providing infrastructure, and ensuring solutions address societal priorities; (2) Citizens/civil society: contributing lived experiences, needs, and feedback; (3) Private sector/industry: offering market perspectives, technological solutions, and capacity to scale; and (4) Academia/research: bringing scientific evidence, research methods, and expertise.²

Living labs are a powerful method to enhance government innovation capabilities, especially for (wicked/complex) problems that lack a single, easy solution (such as urban

¹ Gascó, M. (2017). Living labs: Implementing open innovation in the public sector. *Government Information Quarterly*, 34(1), 90-98. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2016.09.003>

² Marchesani, F., & Ceci, F. (2025). A quadruple helix view on smart city: Exploring the effect of internal and external open innovation on public services digitalization. *Technovation*, 139. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.technovation.2024.103141>



mobility, or digital local public services). In this context, the real-life setting is often a city, neighborhood, public service, or even a specific piece of public infrastructure.

The purpose of this proposed panel (one session @ 90 mins.) is to connect scholars with expertise and vision on living labs. The session aims to bring together three speakers that share their expertise on the following aspects of living labs:

- Taking stock of different types of initiatives (e.g. civic tech labs, open government data labs, smart city/urban mobility labs, public health living labs) across government and administration;
- Exploring the specific methodologies that are applied within living labs and that aim to ensure active, user-centered co-creation (largely drawn from the fields of design thinking, co-creation, and action research);
- The role of digital technologies in living labs, either regarding digital public services or living lab methodologies that are pursued in the digital realm;
- Case studies on successful but also lessons from failed labs.

In terms of format, each speaker is allocated a slot of 15 minutes for an opening address, followed by a plenary discussion of 45 minutes.

Please submit a short abstract of the proposed input outlining its format, topic, and content via the central electronic conference system (max. 1 page). In the proposal, it should be clearly mentioned which one(s) of the four aspects mentioned above is to be addressed.



EGPA Specialized Panel 7

‘Populism’ and its continuing implications and challenges for public administration governance and delivery of public services

Prof. Alex Murdock; London South Bank University, United Kingdom;
alex.murdock@lsbu.ac.uk

Prof. Gene Brewer; University of Georgia, United States;
geneabrewer@uga.edu

Prof. Stephen Barber; University of East London, United Kingdom;
sbarber@uel.ac.uk

Panel topic description

This panel investigates the extent to which the era of populism will lead to a semi-permanent transformation or at least evolution in the way that public administration and services are governed and administered. Submissions are welcome which address the broad issues of populism and public administration.

Recent years have witnessed the emergence of ‘populism’ and ‘populist leaders’ and this has demanded a new response by public management. The USA, Brazil Italy and Hungary are clear examples of the phenomenon. The shelf life of populist leaders can be relatively short, as evidenced in the UK by the eviction of Boris Johnson from office.

The phenomenon of Trump in the USA suggests that ‘rules based’ systems whether international or national in nature can be subsumed by an authoritarian personality for whom such rules are both an impediment to be removed and indeed a challenge to be overcome. Public Administration in both its theoretical and practitioner guises has a reliance upon ‘rules’ which are observed until – through proper process – they are amended. But public administration without ‘rules and process’ is reminiscent of primitive forms of governance which are idiosyncratic and subject to the whims and wishes of an authoritarian ruler, whether it be in some feudal form or otherwise.

Looking back, *New Public Leadership* represented a response to a period of ‘austerity’ where those responsible for managing public services attempted to do more (or at least



the same) with squeezed financial resources. It was a development from the radicalism of an earlier time when *New Public Management* sought to re-cast the public sector from fat bureaucracies to efficient organisations modelled on a private sector ideal. The era of populism which has emerged in western democracies represents a different sort of challenge which invites a fresh appraisal of public services and the people who rely upon them most.

To understand this challenge, we adopted the concept of *New Public Populism* which is a departure in logic from *NPM* and *NPL* and which we develop further theoretically here. It represents a contradiction for the delivery of public services when the very citizens who need to be satisfied politically are in many cases also the most vulnerable and need to be cared for.

With this conceptual lens, we explore in this paper the continuing implications of a populist trend even when the populist leaders are defenestrated. The persistence of populism in public discourse (whether of the left or right) has implications for the creation of public policies and for the operational environment of public managers. We argue that it challenges the traditional concepts of public service value, neutrality and the rule of law.

Even in countries where populist leaders have been kept at bay or removed from office, disenchantment, social division and anti-elitism have given rise to simplistic answers and contradictory positions. Since populism is neither inherently logical nor rational, it is difficult to address in a coherent fashion. And yet public services are expected to tackle the broad array of social concerns which underpin the growth of populism. After all it is the most vulnerable in society who rely on health, social care and welfare, but they are also most likely to be part of the demographic which identifies with populist rhetoric and vote for populist politicians.

In developing further the concept of *New Public Populism* we argue that there is a permanent departure in logic from *NPM* and *NPL* that appears capable of outliving populist leaders. This represents a contradiction for the delivery of public services when the very citizens who need to be satisfied politically are in many cases also the most vulnerable and need to be cared for.

Panel format

We intend that the panel format will include submitted papers which will have nominated discussants. However, we also hope to organise a 'round table' discussion to encourage wider participation. As populism is a subject which has largely been the focus of



psychology and politics, we hope that the panel will identify how the public management and public administration research community might develop a particular perspective which brings to bear the particular agendas and issues which populism might present in our academic discipline.

Brief References

Burleigh, M., 2021. Populism: Before and after the Pandemic, Hurst.

Moynihan, D.P., 2022. Public Management for Populists: Trump's Schedule F Executive Order and the Future of the Civil Service. *Public Administration Review*, 82(1), pp.174-178.

Murdock, A. and Barber, S., 2020. Beyond Public Services: The Era of New Public Populism. In *Public Management and Vulnerability* (pp. 14-35). Routledge.



Transatlantic Dialogue 2026

New Perspectives on Democratic Backsliding, Populism, and Public Administration

Prof. Dr. Joseph E. Trainor; Joseph R Biden, Jr. School of Public Policy & Administration, University of Delaware, United States;
jtrainor@udel.edu

Dr. Céline Honegger; IDHEAP, Swiss Graduate School of Public Administration, University of Lausanne, Switzerland;
celine.honegger@unil.ch

The last decade was marked by a combination of external and internal pressures on democratic states, including a global pandemic, wars, economic challenges, immigration concerns, and changing demographic structures. These forces combined with their politicization have given rise to dangerous self-reinforcing trends with the potential to permanently transform citizen–state relationships within modern democracies. It is crucial that the field of Public Administration seriously engages in the growing consequences of these forces. As an action oriented and applied field of study it is also critical that we direct our scholarship towards developing a more robust science and the corresponding practical and policy interventions to address democratic decline, the vicious circle of populism, and its resulting consequences for the values and systems of public administration.

Among the most noticeable effects of the pressures above, global scholars continue to find that democracy is in decline globally, with 2024 marking the 9th consecutive year that measures of democratic systems have worsened. For example, the 2024 Global State of Democracy report suggests that one in three voters lives in a country where election quality has declined, that in the past four years one in five losing candidates or parties has rejected election outcomes and that even high performing countries have suffered significant decline especially in the Americas and Europe (The Global State of Democracy, 2024). The erosion of democratic institutions and values have thus become common problems in many parts of the world, calling academics and practitioners alike to assess how such backsliding impacts public administration. The situation is however more complex.



Parallel to democratic decline there has been a continued rise in the “vicious circle of populism” (Docquier et al. 2022). marked by distress, increases in populist policies and practices, and in turn intensified instability and further democratic erosion. Among other features, this populism is marked by anti-intellectual tendencies such as, growth in “elite labeling”, and an expansion of “deep state” conspiracy as well as a broader rejection of expertise in favor of “common sense” and growing belief in intellectual egalitarianism. These broader populist trends have been amplified by increased skepticism, change in the landscape of news media, social media, and the rise of AI all of which have blurred lines between facts and opinions. In sum, these lead to a declining trust in institutions, increased grievances, and expanded election of populist leaders (Cremaschi et al. 2025) potentially creating feedback loops that further weaken democratic governance and administrative capacity.

This rise of populism coupled with democratic decline, and a redefined information landscape has fuelled increasingly aggressive ideological and structural attacks on the very idea of a neutral, rational, science driven public service and, in some instances, a marked return to more politically driven forms of government. These dynamics have the potential to reshape public institutions on both sides of the Atlantic. The overarching research question of this Transatlantic Dialogue is thus: How do we understand these dynamics, how are they similar or different across the Atlantic, and most importantly, what has our field to do next?

We invite research that clarifies how public administrations respond to these complex pressures, what happens to legitimacy and trust when services erode, and how democratic governance can be safeguarded while improving public sector performance. We are particularly interested in work that speaks to the sustainability of public services and to practical pathways for revitalizing the social contract, strengthening effectiveness and efficiency without sacrificing equity, accountability, and professionalism.

We welcome papers that explore (but are not limited to):

- Multiple drivers of pressure on public administration: e.g., crises, polarization, populism, or democratic backsliding
- Austerity & public service deprivation: retrenchment, unequal service access, administrative burden, and distributive consequences
- Citizen–state interactions: trust, legitimacy, compliance, participation, lived experiences of public services
- Governance and institutional resilience: safeguarding professionalism, process, accountability, and impartial implementation under stress



- Technology and public administration: (de-)regulated AI, algorithmic decision-making, digital public services, transparency and oversight
- Comparative and transatlantic perspectives: cross-country learning and bridges between public administration and political science literatures
- Reform and renewal: strategies to sustain public services, rebuild legitimacy, and strengthen democratic governance

We welcome theoretical, empirical, and methodological diversity, comparative case studies, survey and experimental research, qualitative research, critical approaches, and mixed-method designs. Papers that connect public administration scholarship with work on democratic governance and institutional change are particularly encouraged.

References

- Cremaschi, Simone, Paula Retzl, Marco Cappelluti, and Catherine E. De Vries. 2025. "Geographies of discontent: Public service deprivation and the rise of the far right in Italy." *American Journal of Political Science* 69: 1581–1599. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12936>
- Docquier, F., Guichard, L., Iandolo, S., Rapoport, H., Turati, R., & Vannoorenberghe, G. (2022). *Democracies in Danger: How Can We Break the Vicious Circle of Populism?* LISER Policy Brief 2022-05.
- The Global State of Democracy 2024 (2024) Global State of Democracy Initiative- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. <https://www.idea.int/gsod/2024/chapters/global-trends/>



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 (extended): April 21, 2026
- Deadline for submission of abstracts (extended) for Transatlantic Dialogue: May 10, 2026
- Deadline for submission of EGPA Booster Grant applications: April 15, 2026
- Acceptance notification and opening of registrations: May 5, 2026
- Deadline for submission of EGPA Travel Grant applications: May 10, 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

- egpa-conference@ias-iisa.org