

# EGPA 2023 CONFERENCE

Zagreb, Croatia 5-8 September

Steering the European Union through poly-crises storms:  
The role of Public Administration

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### PANEL

*European technical assistance to administrative reforms: from critical junctures  
to the routine of European policies*

Foreign experts' involvement in structural reforms of EU Member States, Candidate and Neighbour countries deserve growing attention. Since the CEE States pre-accession, such interventions into "core State powers" (Genschel, Jachtenfuchs, 2016) have developed, raising many questions: who governs? How? With which democratic legitimacy? What remains of national "sovereignty"? Outsourced policy expertise is increasingly scrutinized (critics by European Parliament, Court of Auditors of the billion € the Commission spent, in 2020, on external expertise), with respect to its cost-benefit balance, appropriateness, ethical risks, lack of parliamentary control or national security threats.

Behind the dissemination of "consultocracy" (Hood, Jackson, 1991, Seabrooke, Sending, 2022), and distinct from the expertise provided by researchers (Brans, Timmermans, 2022), a "small world" of institutional cooperation and technical assistance has emerged, where a few national and EU officials interact to the benefit of several States. Such inconspicuous but intense intercultural circulation of public expertise remains under-researched (few exceptions: Hadjiisky, Visier, 2017; Bonnard, Robert, 2020) while the palace wars and soft power bargains at stake deserve more scientific attention. Our workshop aims at bridging this gap.

Since the end of the Cold War and the enlargements, PHARE, Twinning and other EU programmes have generated hundreds of "capacity-building" projects to the benefit of future/new member states, supporting them to "cope with the acquis" and "strengthen their institutional capacities". Later re-grounded on the conditionality principle during the sovereign debt crisis, this European administrative cooperation is now being renewed by the Commission, with fanciable slogans: "tailor-made support", "peer-to-peer dialogue", "multi-country partnerships" (Ongaro, 2022), and wider policy objectives: "increasing the resilience", "minimising the gaps", "fostering synergies" to "ensure effective coordination", for instance in enforcing the green and digital transitions. Thus, administrative cooperation becomes transversal to varied EU instruments: European Semester, Recovery Plans, European Structural and Investment Plans.

These ongoing dynamics need exploration: three analytical perspectives could guide us. Firstly, who are those public experts? What are their profiles, competences, and ethos? Where goes their loyalty? Do they form a subworld? Do EU and national civil servants monopolize country-to-country administrative cooperation or compete with private consultants and international organizations? Do these different types of policy entrepreneurs have distinctive characteristics (Capano, 2021)?

Second, which policy models, reform ideas, repertoires of instruments are promoted by the experts (Dolowitz, Plugaru, Saurugger, 2020)? The insistence on “distinctive” European “public values”, the reality of “national ownership”, as well as the meaning of “modernization”, “resilience” or “robustness” need to be explored from their practical usages. How are these notions negotiated, then acclimatized by beneficiary administrations?

Third, which driving forces are at work? Is administrative cooperation a domain of growing European “solidarity” or a battlefield where a few Western and Nordic States, seeking to promote their national “administrative model” and technical solutions supplied by their national businesses, compete to provide their expertise to many Eastern and Southern “beneficiaries”? Moreover, is administrative cooperation still driven by intergovernmental, centrifuge dynamics, or is the Commission (DG Reform) strengthening its own capacities as a strong institutionalized “centre” of integrated European expertise on State reforms?

Panel Chairs :

Prof Dr Jean-Michel Eymeri-Douzans, Exceptional Class Professor & Vice-Rector for International Relations at Sciences Po Toulouse (F), President of the European Group for Public Administration (EGPA-IIAS).

E-mail: [jean-michel.eymeri-douzans@sciencespo-toulouse.fr](mailto:jean-michel.eymeri-douzans@sciencespo-toulouse.fr)

Dr Marylou Hamm, Researcher, Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) & teaching assistant, College of Europe, Bruges (Belgium).

E-mail : [marylou.hamm@ulb.be](mailto:marylou.hamm@ulb.be)

Dr Fabienne Maron – IIAS Scientific Director – Lecturer at M2 European Integration and Global Governance at URCA (France)

E-mail: [f.maron@iias-iisa.org](mailto:f.maron@iias-iisa.org)

## Practicalities

### *Important dates:*

- ✓ Deadline for submission of abstracts: May 17, 2023
- ✓ Deadline for notification to the authors: May 31, 2023
- ✓ Deadline for online submission of full papers: August 17, 2023
- ✓ EGPA PhD Symposium 5-6 September 2023
- ✓ EGPA 2023 Conference: 6-8 September 2023

EGPA 2023 Conference Website: <https://www.egpa-conference2023.org/>

EGPA 2023 Conference Management System: <https://www.conftool.org/egpa-conference2023>

For any questions regarding EGPA 2023, please contact us at: [f.maron@iias-iisa.org](mailto:f.maron@iias-iisa.org)

or [info@egpa-conference2023.org](mailto:info@egpa-conference2023.org)