



EGPA/IIAS

European Group
for Public Administration

2021

Annual Conference of the

***European Group for Public
Administration***

7-10 September 2021

PhD Symposium

7 September 2021

NISPAcee Panel:

***Central and Eastern Europe at the crossroads: The COVID-19
crisis and its impact on governance and the quality of
democracy***

Call-for-Papers



NISPAcee Panel: Central and Eastern Europe at the crossroads: The COVID-19 crisis and its impact on governance and the quality of democracy

Many countries of the world and, in particular, much of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) is facing two simultaneous changes of historical importance. The first one is deterioration of democratic quality and the emergence and entrenchment of increasingly autocratic, illiberal modes of governance. The sometimes swift, sometimes gradual changes in the quality of CEE countries' democratic quality interacted with their governance systems in diverse ways. (Perceived) deficiencies in government performance seem to have triggered popular sentiments as well as political determination to get rid of (some of) the 'democratic encumbrances' of effective and efficient governance. Illiberal transformation however triggered, and continues to trigger, a broad spectrum of changes in dominant modes of policy making and administration, too, both at the national and the subnational levels.

This emerging and complex dynamics was subsequently hit the cataclysmic force of the COVID-19 pandemic. Crisis management created a strong impetus for further accelerating and centralizing decision making, for eliminating deliberative, consultative mechanisms, and for managing information strategically – all having been key features of illiberal transformations of the preceding years. The opportunity offered by the crisis was – sometimes enthusiastically – grabbed by actual and would-be autocrats themselves. Volatile public sentiments and perceptions of policy effectiveness created an atmosphere in which violations of democratic rules-of-the-game – or even the elimination of some of those rules – seems more permissible than ever. At the same time, the pandemic revealed thus far unknown strengths as well as vulnerabilities and weaknesses of governance.

The objective of the panel is to reflect to the above, historical juncture of CEE countries' pathways. It intends to explore questions related to the above factors on the local, regional or national level such as the following

- ✓ How does the COVID-19 crisis interact with the quality of democracy?
- ✓ How does the crisis impact governance systems in terms of their structural features, process characteristics, or outcomes?
- ✓ To what extent is (or is not) the crisis changing the dominant narratives, doctrines, paradigms or actual practices and results of governance reforms?
- ✓ What is the role of EU institutions, actors and policies in the above dynamics?

Papers attempting to approach such questions from a comparative perspective are particularly welcome, even if they focus on a single empirical case but compare them with more general empirical patterns or theoretical expectations. Countries or regions with similar experience might be adequate anchors for interpreting CEE experiences, therefore the panel is open to contributors focusing on context beyond Central and Eastern Europe.

Practicalities

Important dates:

- ✓ Deadline for submission of Abstracts: April 30, 2021
- ✓ Deadline for notification to the authors: no later than May 25, 2021
- ✓ Deadline for online submission of full papers: August 10, 2021
- ✓ EGPA 2021 Conference: September 7-10, 2021

EGPA 2021 Conference Website: <https://www.egpa-conference2021.org/>

EGPA 2021 Conference Management System: <https://www.conftool.org/egpa-conference2021>

Convenors of the Panel

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