

EGPA - PERMANENT STUDY GROUP

LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRACY

CALL FOR PAPERS 2016

For the EGPA Conference

24-26 August 2016, Utrecht (Netherlands)

The directors of the Permanent Study Group on Local Governance and Democracy invite papers addressing the following theme:

**GOVERNANCE IN BETWEEN
THE MESO-LEVEL IN TRANSITION**

In 2013 (Edinburgh), 2014 (Speyer) and 2015 (Toulouse) we discussed the ‘essence of local democratic governance’ and the problem of ‘local autonomy in the governance era’. Our focus was always on the lower “municipal” level of local self-government. We also had some discussions on multi-level governance and the – apparently - changing role of public authorities at the meso-level (the levels between the municipal and the national levels). At the meso-level a number of different types of institutions have developed: city-regions, inter-city agencies, inter-communal associations, special districts etc. In 2016, we therefore want to focus on the specific role of the meso-level in both top-down decentralisation or devolution processes and voluntary bottom-up cooperation activities and especially how meso-level governance effects democracy.

We welcome papers addressing the following questions:

- A. Do we witness a reappraisal of the meso-level within the multi-level governance system? If so, how does that manifest itself, in the creation of a new tier of government, or the strengthening of existing tiers by ways of decentralization and devolution, or in the emergence of multi-actor co-operations?
- B. For what reason is the meso-level being rediscovered: to address policy problems, as a response to perceived incapability of national and/or local authorities, or for other reasons?
- C. Which actors are playing a significant role at the meso-level? What power relations and decision-structures exist in sub-national governance, with special focus on the meso-level?
- D. Which role can the meso-level play in devolution and decentralization processes in general and in specific policy fields?
- E. What are relevant reform processes at the meso-level?
- F. How does the supposed reappraisal of the meso-level change multi-level governance arrangements? How do networks between meso and micro-level of local government work? Which networks are relevant; what policy field are important?

The directors will give priority to **empirical and evaluative papers, preferably of a comparative nature**. We will also accept excellent papers on non-theme related topics.

The directors also like to stimulate discussions between academics and practitioners. Joint papers and papers by practitioners are therefore welcome too.

ORGANISATION AND TIME TABLE

The meetings will take place under the responsibility of the 2016 team, which consists of:

- Tomas Bergström (lead director 2016), Lund University (Sweden)
- Colin Copus, De Montfort University, Leicester (England)
- Jochen Franzke, University of Potsdam (Germany)
- Linze Schaap, Tilburg University (The Netherlands)

Depending on the quality and number of papers, the study group directors will propose the publication of an edited volume on the 2016 theme, containing a selection of papers and additional chapters.

Please respect the following deadlines:

For online submission of abstracts proposals through the submission web-side	April 15 th , 2016
For decision and selection by the co-chairs	May 5 th , 2016
For submitting the complete papers	July 31 st , 2016

NB. Since the number of sessions is limited and we strive for having constructive discussions, we reserve the right to reject papers that do not deliver what the author(s) promised in the paper proposal, or to label them 'tabled papers' (no presentation nor discussion during the panels).