

## EGPA STUDY GROUP ON LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

### CALL FOR PAPERS

7-9 September 2011, Bucharest, Romania

#### *'Restructuring Sub-Central Government in Europe: Convergent or Divergent Paths?'*

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#### Context and background

The focus of this call for papers is on internal state reforms and the reorganisation of sub-central governments. A range of questions arises from these reforms. Broadly there have been two main waves of reform in North-West Europe – the first largely involved local governments during the 1960s-1970s and the second wave involved the greater devolution to the regional levels. Meanwhile, in Eastern Europe an initial series of reforms have taken time but are already under serious challenge. A new debate, then, is presently taking place across Europe over the distribution of powers and responsibilities between the different levels of government. This debate has even involved a questioning of the appropriateness of the existing governmental territorial units to cope with the new external challenges – especially those of maintaining economic competitiveness and reducing public expenditure – and of the sub-central distribution of functional responsibilities between the different levels of government.

#### Questions to be asked and answered

Accordingly, the EGPA Study Group on Regional and Local Government calls for papers which explore recent functional and territorial reorganisations at the sub-central level, the resulting tensions between the levels of government and the new challenges to existing territorial settlements and processes of government. Amongst the questions to be asked and answered in these papers are:

- What sub-state territorial and/or functional reforms are currently in progress and which remain just on the political agenda?
- What is the nature of those reforms? Do they involve significant structural reorganisations, comparable with the earlier reform waves in North-Western Europe, or are European policy makers now avoiding major structural reorganisations and relying on mechanisms such as partnerships, inter-municipal agreements and informal cooperation?
- Are they creating more policy uniformity or greater diversity?
- Do these reforms reflect a predominantly administrative or political logic?

- Are policymakers responding to changing environmental factors such as maintaining economic competitiveness (either of the national or sub-national governmental units) or new fiscal pressures?
- Do these reforms involve greater centralisation or greater localisation? Are the service-based or functional interests re-asserting themselves against territorial identities (especially as a result of new fiscal pressures)?
- How are the reforms being implemented? Through consensus-building or top-down direction?
- Is there a pattern to these reforms in Western Europe and/or across the whole of Europe and does this involve increased convergence or do historically ingrained institutions sub-central organisations persist or even enhance their roles?
- What are the impacts of the territorial and functional re-organizations? Did performance improvements occur? Which reform solutions have led to demonstrably improved performance and which have not?

We are particularly keen to welcome papers which seek to build a theoretical understanding of these issues and an understanding which has (potential) comparative relevance across European countries.

#### Abstracts and papers to be submitted

We welcome **abstracts** (1 page maximum) to address one or more of the issues/questions mentioned above. Abstracts should be sent no later than **30 March 2011**. They should include the following elements:

- Title of paper
- The argument and contents of the paper
- The research methods used and (if applicable) the empirical data used
- The research results and findings (to be expected)
- The name, affiliation and contact information of the author(s)

Abstracts should be sent to the three conveners of this EGPA Study Group i.e. to Ellen Wayenberg ([ellen.wayenberg@hogent.be](mailto:ellen.wayenberg@hogent.be)), Sabine Kuhlmann ([kuhlmann@dhv-speyer.de](mailto:kuhlmann@dhv-speyer.de)) and Martin Laffin ([martin.laffin@durham.ac.uk](mailto:martin.laffin@durham.ac.uk))

**Notification of acceptance** will be no later than **the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2011**. Those authors whose abstracts have been accepted should **dispatch** their **paper** to the convenors as well as to Fabienne Maron ([f.maron@iiasiasa.org](mailto:f.maron@iiasiasa.org)) by **July 31<sup>st</sup> 2011** at the latest.

Paper-givers will be asked to act as discussants for other papers.

### Further practicalities

The EGPA SG on Regional and Local Government meets up during the 33<sup>rd</sup> conference of the European Group of Public Administration. This conference takes place from the 7<sup>th</sup> until the 9<sup>th</sup> of September 2011 at the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, located in Bucharest, Romania.

More information about this conference and its practicalities can be found via:

<http://www.ias-iisa.org/egpa/e/conferences/upcoming/Pages/default.aspx>

### Background of the EGPA Study Group on Regional and Local Government

The EGPA Study Group on Regional and Local Government was founded in 2010. Its focus is on the internal structures and processes of both local and regional governments and the relationships between these two levels. Recent years have seen the spread of regionalization across most European countries. Consequently, there is now a pressing need to assess how far those structures and processes have changed within local and regional governments and how regional governments have defined their roles and accommodated or suppressed the interests of local government. Further information on this EGPA Study Group is available on:

[http://www.ias-iisa.org/egpa/e/study\\_groups/regional/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.ias-iisa.org/egpa/e/study_groups/regional/Pages/default.aspx)

This EGPA Study Group met for the first time in September 2010. Twelve papers were presented, all focussing on the central theme 'Regional and Local Governments Territorially Challenged'. These papers will be made available via an additional webpage (currently under construction).

The Study Group aims for publication of high-quality papers according to three main lines:

- by activating special issues of peer-reviewed journals;
- by creating opportunities for the publication of single papers and/or
- by activating contacts with top level publishers for thematic edited books.

### Convenors:

**Sabine Kuhlmann** is Professor at Speyer University, Germany.

#### Contact details:

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