



Call for Papers for the PADEMIA Annual Conference 2016

The PADEMIA Annual Conference 2016 will take place in the Fondation Universitaire, Brussels, on **19 and 20 May**. Please find below an overview of our panels. This year's panels are:

- 1) The influence of parliaments over public policies*
- 2) Explaining issue variation: which EU matters are scrutinized by national parliaments?*
- 3) Referendums and representative democracy*
- 4) Crisis management of European parliaments*

The panels will take place Thursday, 19 May, in the afternoon.

If you would like to present your paper at our conference, please send an **abstract of no more than 250 words** to alexander.hoppe@uni-koeln.de **no later than 15 March 2015**.

Reimbursement rules:

Travel and subsistence costs for all paper givers will be covered up to 500€. Should your estimated costs exceed this limit considerably or should you have any other questions concerning reimbursement, please contact alexander.hoppe@uni-koeln.de.

We are looking forward to your participation,

The PADEMIA team

Panel 1: The influence of parliaments over public policies

This panel deals with the influence of parliaments over public policies. As well-noted in the legislative studies literature, this influence is challenged in many ways related to the constitutional balance of the modern political systems, the development of bureaucracy or the communicational logics of political action. The process of devolution experimented in many states as well as the supranationalisation of public action, especially in the European Union, further restrict the capacity of modern legislatures to influence public policies. In several European states, the authority to legislate is indeed shared between regional and national assemblies.

Yet, parliaments still have large responsibilities in terms of legislation but also within public debates. The very principle that bills should be formally approved in parliament to become laws still holds in most cases (though not all). Some constitutional reforms have also aimed at empowering them. After decades of rationalisation of legislatures, it appears indeed in many cases that recent reforms of the constitutional texts or of the standing orders officially aim at giving back prerogatives to parliaments.

This panel therefore aims at questioning the influence of parliaments over public policies. It also seeks to establish a scientific dialogue between legislative studies and public policy analysis as both fields in the past tended to ignore each other.

Comparative contributions as well as methodologically innovative ones are especially welcome. The presentations will be occasions to discuss the very notions of 'parliamentary influence' as well as 'public policies' as many types and processes of impacts can be distinguished: amendment to governmental bills, private legislation but also oversight activities translated into laws.

Panel 2: Explaining issue variation: which EU matters are scrutinized by national parliaments

Which European issues receive attention among national MPs – and which do not? While there probably are major EU issues ranging from euro crisis to Treaty reforms that are salient for all domestic legislatures, the situation is most likely different with ordinary European legislation or other EU policy processes. The salience of such day-to-day EU matters can vary between member states, depending for example on the structure of the economy or the geographical location of the country. Recent empirical studies on issue selection by domestic legislatures in EU affairs suggest that, at least in some member states, the level of parliamentary scrutiny is explained by the importance of co-decision legislation or the incentives of government and opposition parties (De Ruiter 2013; Finke & Dannwolf 2013; Finke & Herbel 2015). Considering that national parliaments simply cannot subject all European matters to careful committee scrutiny or plenary debates, legislatures need to make choices and prioritize. This in turn leads to another highly relevant question: who – party groups, committee chairs, individual MPs, or parliamentary clerks – performs the filtering of EU issues, deciding which matters deserve closer inspection?

The panel welcomes papers that explain which EU issues are scrutinized or debated by national parliaments. Both case studies and comparative papers are welcome as long as they provide empirical evidence of issue selection. Papers can also focus on a specific policy area, such as CFSP, environmental policy, or economic governance, or on analyzing the relative influence of various parliamentary actors in deciding which EU matters are chosen for closer committee scrutiny or plenary debates.

Panel 3: Referendums and representative democracy

Public referendums constantly reoccur in discussions on overcoming democratic deficits in the EU and its Member States. Proponents of this directly democratic means stress its quality of involving the people in important political decisions and thereby increase their incentives to inform themselves and engage with political issues, potentially overcoming the disenchantment with politics witnessed in the past years. Critiques stress the danger of populist actors to capture public debates and strongly organized minorities to take advantage. While non-EU member Switzerland has arguably received most attention on its reoccurring referendums in the past years, EU member states alike have constantly held referendums.

The UK referendum on whether or not to remain in the European Union is the latest in a long line of national plebiscites on EU matters in European countries. Aside from those required for constitutional or conventional reasons as in the cases of Ireland and Denmark respectively, these include polls convened for domestic political reasons, such as the June 2015 vote in Greece on the proposed bailout. While ostensibly enhancing citizens' democratic rights, such ad-hoc referendums may offer politicians an opportunity to let the people decide on contentious matters that risk dividing their own parties (the UK case) or to try to strengthen their hands in negotiations (the Greek case). This panel welcomes empirical and theoretical papers on the relationship between representative and plebiscitary democracy. Questions to consider may include the impact of referendums on representative democracies. Do they undermine or strengthen political parties? Which political actors are involved in and can take advantage of initiating referendums? Do they allow national government to increase their leverage against the EU institutions?

Panel 4: Crisis management of European parliaments

While the Lisbon Treaty was meant to have reinforced the position of parliaments in European decision-making, these provisions were little prepared for the crises that the EU came to face in the subsequent years: first the Euro crisis and then the refugee crisis. By most appearances, executive actors took the lead in taking important decisions with limited oversight and leaving parliaments in a marginal role.

Still, parliaments have reacted to this perceived executive dominance in various ways. National parliaments partly adapted their scrutiny mechanism in order to be able to follow and influence their governments' activity in the European arena. A new inter-parliamentary conference for Economic and Financial Governance was set up to facilitate parliaments' involvement in the measures taken to combat the crisis, so far with disputable success. Apart from patterns of cooperation and exchange, the crises have arguably spurred a divergence in the strength and roles of parliaments, which raises important questions. Has the European Parliament departed from executing traditional parliamentary tasks and engaged in the informal and secretive crisis resolution politics of the European Council and the Council in order to secure its impact on crisis politics? Have single parliaments, prominently the German Bundestag with its rather far-reaching veto rights, exerted influence on overall EU politics to an illegitimately high degree? Another interesting question to investigate is whether parliaments have learned their lessons from the Euro crisis and apply different tactics in the current refugee crisis.

To apply, please send an abstract of no more than 250 words, indicating which panel you would like to apply for, to Alexander Hoppe, alexander.hoppe@uni-koeln.de, by **15 March 2015**.