

Panel 10: Analyzing 'Everyday Politics' in the European Union

Organizers:

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Programme panel 10

The European Union has an increasing impact on the lives of European citizens. Its 'everyday politics' determine an increasingly wide range of issues in the relationship between citizens and public policy. Consequently, scholarly work in the fields of political science and public administration has produced a large literature on the inner workings of the European Union. Theories of integration have been complemented by studies of the European Union as a political system. In the proposed panel we would take stock of and critically evaluate this literature, discuss its links to the literature in Comparative Politics and Public Administration and examine the effects of recent developments.

Since the end of the Cold War, the European Union has undergone a number of transformations, most notably a further extension of competences (e.g., monetary policy, common foreign policy and justice and home affairs), a change of its decision-making procedures (e.g., increased involvement of the European Parliament and more qualified majority voting) and a change in membership (e.g., Eastern enlargement). In parallel, the previous 'permissive consensus' for further integration has been eroded. The further development of European integration was, for example, brought to a grinding halt with the Dutch and French 'No' in the 2005 referendum. Contrary to the hopes of many EU scholars, a European demos which would lend input legitimacy to European integration and policies via the traditional democratic channels of elections has yet to emerge. This puts the strain on output legitimacy: Does the European Union deliver policies which are beneficial to its citizens in an efficient manner? It also calls into question the direct application of notions of democratic governance familiar from politics within EU member states. What, for example, is the role of political parties and electoral competition in the making of EU public policies? Do interest groups effectively replace political parties as the transmission belt of political representation in the EU? How can accountability and responsiveness of the European political elites be ensured in the Byzantine system of European multi-level governance?

We invited proposals for theoretical and empirical papers on all steps in the making of European public policy:

- Interest formation vis-à-vis EU policies at the national level (e.g., elections, interest group activity)
- The influence of transnational and national political parties and interest groups on European legislators
- The effect of institutions on decision-making within and across EU legislative bodies
- The effectiveness of the implementation of EU policies

We were also interested in papers on questions of theory development and methodology in European Union studies. Papers that addressed recent developments in the European Union were particularly welcome.

Link to NIG research program

The panel relates to the NIG research theme "Citizens and Governance". The goal of this research theme is to describe and analyze the relationships between citizens and governance organizations at different hierarchical levels and with different jurisdictions. In line with this goal, the panel focuses on the influence of citizens on EU policy through national and European governmental and non-governmental organizations. The panel considers all aspects of the EU policy-making process, including the formulation of policy problems, the decision-making process leading to the adoption of a policy, and their implementation on both the European and national level. Special attention is given to the impact of citizen and organizational interests on the positions of legislative actors and on how legislators transform their positions into collective policy proposals and decision-making outcomes. Furthermore, the panel focuses on the way citizens, interest groups and politicians are able to change the actual policy outcome post hoc by exerting influence on the application and enforcement of EU policies. By studying the intricate relationships between citizens, interest groups, and legislators in EU policy-making the panel contributes to a better understanding of the multi-level governance system of the European Union and its member states.