

Call for papers

Academic conference | 20-21 October 2022

“Mapping regional involvement in EU affairs”

Danube University Krems, Austria

Deadline: 10.05.22

About the conference

The last decades have witnessed growing attention to the involvement of the so-called ‘third level’ of governance: the subnational or regional level, in EU affairs (cf. Keating et al. 2015; Abels/Battke 2019). Research focused, for example, on the emergence and activities of regional offices in Brussels (e.g. Marks et al. 2002; Tatham 2017), on the institutionalisation of regional involvement in domestic EU policy-shaping (e.g. Tatham 2011), the role of the Committee of the Regions (e.g. Hönnige/Panke 2013; Piattoni/Schönlau 2015; Tatham 2018), or, more recently, regional parliaments’ involvement in the Early Warning System (EWS) of subsidiarity control (Högenauer 2017; Borońska-Hryniewiecka 2017).

This increasing regional focus on the interplay of the EU and its member states is not surprising. The most recent EU treaty reform led to a strengthening of the sub-national dimension in multi-level EU governance – although not uniformly so (cf. Tatham 2014). Many exciting questions about regional involvement in EU affairs, however, remain to be addressed: how and why do regional level political actors actually engage in EU affairs? Are they currently just bystanders or do they actively get involved in shaping European policy? What form of participation would they like to see in a newly constituted Europe? And could they act as a link between EU citizens and institutions within the multi-level polity?

The aim of our conference is to study these and related questions concerning the participation of regional authorities in EU decision-making, whether via domestic or European structures and processes. The conference organisers are particularly interested in contributions that:

- broaden the geographical scope of empirical analysis to include the rarely studied and less powerful regions of non-federal, centralist member state, esp. in Central and Eastern Europe,

- consider not only institutional rights and opportunities but focus on actual behaviour and activities of regional level political actors and institutions,
- study various types of regional political actors, including governments, parliaments, and administrations, both at the collective (institutions) and individual level,
- review potential implications of political calls for stronger regional EU involvement, and/or
- examine the supposed closeness of regional actors to EU citizens in the multi-level context.

The conference program features an opening session with a short introduction of the *European Regional Democracy Map* (ERDM), a novel online portal for information and data on regional democracy in Europe. The keynote lecture “Regional voices in the European multilevel polity: towards a multilevel democracy?” is presented by Professor Simona Piattoni (University of Trento). Three academic panels will present up to five papers respectively. Both conference days will conclude with interactive sessions: an expert roundtable on day 1 and an informal scholarly workshop on day 2.

The conference will take place from 20 to 21 October 2022 at Danube University Krems, which is one and a half hours by train and one hour by car/cab from Vienna. Travel and accommodation costs will be covered by the conference organizer for all speakers and presenters.

Submit your abstract

The conference aims to attract senior scholars as well as early-career researchers. We welcome contributions from various disciplines, such as political science, European studies, regional studies, and sociology. If you are interested in giving a paper, please submit an abstract (in English) by email to info@regioparl.com no later than 10.05.22, containing:

- a paper title,
- an abstract of 300-500 words,
- author details, including name, email-address, institutional affiliation, and country.

There are no conference fees for participants.

For further information and questions, please feel free to contact the conference team at info@regioparl.com.

Panel details

PANEL 1: Regional actors engaging in EU affairs?

The first conference panel will discuss questions related to regional political actors' involvement in EU policymaking. The panel asks why and how regional actors seek to engage in EU affairs and to what extent institutional actors at the regional level have "Europeanized" their activities. The focus here is on actual behaviour rather than institutional rights. Activities may include participation in the Early Warning System (EWS) on subsidiarity control, lobbying activities towards Brussels' institutions, participation in domestic EU policy-shaping, and other mobilisation efforts. The panel invites single-case studies as well as comparative analysis. It especially welcomes contributions analysing EU-related activities of rarely studied regions from non-federal and centralist member states.

Chair: tba

Discussant: Prof. Dr. Anna-Lena Högenauer, University of Luxembourg

PANEL 2: What role for regions in the multi-level EU polity?

The second panel will address the broader political context of regions in the EU polity. It will focus on institutional and normative claims regarding a better involvement of regional actors in the EU multi-level structures and processes. Such claims may refer to specific (democratic) functions that regional-level political institutions perform and whether/how these could contribute to the strengthening of EU multi-level democracy. The panel will also discuss potential implications of (institutional) changes emphasised in various of such claims. It invites empirical as well as conceptual papers addressing these matters.

Chair: Dr. Kathrin Auel, Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS)

Discussant: tba

PANEL 3: Regional actors connecting EU citizens and institutions?

Calls for a better EU involvement of regions are often based on the (explicit or implicit) assumption that regional political actors are “closer to citizens” – compared to EU but also national actors and institutions. Whereas regional representatives may use this as a strategic argument, such assessments can also be found in the academic literature. Systematic empirical analyses of that question, however, remain scarce. The third panel will therefore take a closer look at the supposed linkage function of regional actors in the EU context. It also invites papers focusing on (second order) elections in the EU multi-level context, e.g. comparing electoral campaigns, voter turnout, and voting behaviour in regional and European Parliament elections.

Chair: Dr. Katrin Praprotnik, University of Graz & Head of the Austrian Democracy Lab (ADL)

Discussant: Prof. Dr. Arjan Schakel, University of Bergen

About the organizers

REGIOPARL (Regional Parliaments Lab) is a multi-annual international research project on the role of regional parliaments in the EU multilevel system of governance. REGIOPARL is hosted at Danube University Krems and funded by Forum Morgen (Austria). It cooperates with the following partner organizations: the European School of Governance in Berlin, the Jagiellonian University Kraków, the University of Tübingen, and the WZB Berlin Social Science Centre.

