

CALL FOR PAPERS AND PANELS

SOUTHERN EUROPE AS A LABORATORY: INNOVATIVE PRACTICES AND CHANGE AFTER A DECADE OF CRISES

Section convened by the Standing Group on Southern European Politics

<https://ecpr.eu/Events/Event/SectionDetails/1630>

EUROPEAN CONSORTIUM OF POLITICAL RESEARCH
GENERAL CONFERENCE

JAGIELLONIAN UNIVERSITY, KRAKOW, 8-11 SEPTEMBER 2026

Call deadline: 9 January 2026

How to submit a proposal

All proposals must be submitted electronically through the ECPR website.

- To submit a proposal for a panel (minimum 3 and maximum 5 papers)
<https://ecpr.eu/MyEcpr/Forms/PanelProposalForm.aspx?EventID=349>
- To submit a proposal for a paper
<https://ecpr.eu/MyEcpr/Forms/PaperProposalForm.aspx?EventID=349>
- If you do not already have one, you will need to register for a MyECPR log in account (the process is very simple and only takes a few minutes)
<https://ecpr.eu/MyEcpr/Account/Create>

Please note that you do NOT need to belong to an institution which is a member of ECPR in order to participate in the General Conference

For further information, please contact the Section Chairs:

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SOUTHERN EUROPE AS A LABORATORY: INNOVATIVE PRACTICES AND CHANGE AFTER A DECADE OF CRISES

It is well known that Southern Europe has experienced a long series of multiple crises with serious political and social consequences, from a prolonged economic crisis to the migration crisis to the pandemic crisis that hit this region first and harder than others in Europe. Analyses of the effects of these regional crises are numerous and, in part, still prolific. More generally, the literature on polycrises has assumed great importance in studies on Europe, as the entire continent has been hit by multiple crises, at different times and with varying intensities across regions. Southern Europe has been very prominent in this type of literature.

In this section, we take a different perspective and attempt to advance the study of this region and how it can illuminate political evolutions taking place on a broader scale. **After a decade marked by challenges and constraints due to focusing on the current crisis, what legacy remains? And what new perspectives are opening up in terms of change and innovative practices in the region, now it has overcome the most acute crises and returned to non-emergency politics?**

Southern Europe has long been seen as a laggard, associated with delays in economic development, administrative capacity, and its ability to update the content of political competition and public policies in line with the most pressing issues of contemporary times. In many respects, Southern Europe has been associated with an image of resistance to change and a conservative spirit.

The question we seek to answer in this Section is whether this remains the case. Or **have the shocks caused by a series of crises liberated the forces of change**, in a direction not limited only to addressing crises, but also to developing new awareness, new processes, and innovative practices? We would like to understand if the traditional structures and forces of inertia have been subverted by a decade marked by emergencies in the region, and whether this has opened up pressures for change, making Southern Europe a privileged observation point for understanding, and perhaps even anticipating, changes underway on a larger stage.

This Section aims to analyse change and innovative practices in the countries of Southern Europe in terms of politics, policy and polity. We aim to attract descriptive and causal contributions addressing the dynamics of change and innovation practices within the region, with attention paid to their main explanatory factors. **Geographically, the Section covers Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain and Turkey.**

We are open to panels and papers proposing theoretical-conceptual elaborations and original empirical analyses on processes of change and innovative practices in single countries, or intra-South European comparisons, or comparisons of Southern Europe with other regions. The Section welcomes contributions employing a range of disciplinary approaches (political science, political economy, sociology, social psychology, policy analysis, communication studies, ethnography, IR) as well as interdisciplinary perspectives. Papers and panels may adopt quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods approaches.

The Section is organised on behalf of the ECPR Standing Group in Southern European Politics and **welcomes proposals from members and non-members of the Group.**

Panels and papers addressing one or several of the **following topics** particularly fit in the Section:

- The drivers of change and innovation in the political and social context.
- Discourses, rhetoric and programmatic offers about change and innovative practices.
- Strategy and political competition on the issues of change and innovation.
- Preferences, attitudes, and political behaviour.
- The actors of political-social change and innovation.
- Democratic innovation.
- New rights, demands, values.
- The politics of sustainability
- New ideas on migration
- Institutional and organisational change.
- Change and innovations in party politics in the post-crisis era.
- Policies oriented towards change and innovative practices.
- The effects of innovation in the political and social context.

Preliminarily approved panel topics are listed below, **all with potential for the inclusion of additional papers**. Other panels will be organised on the basis of the proposals for panels and papers that we receive.

- Political Trust in Europe's Poly-crises: Evidence from Southern Europe (Panel chair: Theofanis Exadaktylos)
- From Transformative to Reactionary: The Shifting Tides of Discontent and Populism in Southern Europe (Panel Chair: Roni Koppers)
- Affective Polarization and Democratic Erosion: Lessons from Turkey in Comparative Perspective (Panel Chair: Ali Çarkoğlu)
- Digital Participation and Democratic Change in Southern Europe: Electoral and Attitudinal Shifts in the Digital Era (Panel Chair: Carolina Plaza-Colodro)
- Cooperation, Crisis and Democracy: Mapping the Re-politicisation of the Market in Southern Europe (Panel Chairs: Francesca Forno, Michela Giovannini, Paolo Graziano)
- Trajectories and Political Consequences of Inequality in Southern Europe (Panel chair: Manos Tsatsanis)
- The South European Radical and Extreme Right in Comparative Perspective (Chair: Mattia Zulianello)
- South European Party Politics: A Laboratory for Resistance to or Resilience of Gender Equality Measures? (Chair: Bonnie Field)