

European Group for Public Administration (EGPA)

Strategic Plan 2014-2016

Presentation

This document expresses the key lines of strategic development of EGPA for the period 2014-2016.

In adopting this document, the Steering Committee of EGPA is fully conscious that *'strategy' in a professional organisation like EGPA is to a significant extent made by all those who commit their time and energy to its development: the Study Group Directors, those having specific responsibilities in EGPA, and all the scholars and practitioners that partake to its activities.* Strategy is not something distinct from the multifarious activities and projects – conferences, dialogues, seminars, projects - that have made over many years and continue to make what EGPA has become; rather, strategy forms because of those initiatives, and all scholars and practitioners committed to developing EGPA contribute to it.

At the same time, *the Steering Bodies of EGPA (the Steering Committee and the General Assembly) are in charge of harmonising all the 'emergent' components of the strategy that stem from the many activities and learning processes; notably, the Steering Committee is in charge of providing 'direction' and 'perspective' to the whole of what EGPA does. This strategic plan outlines the key elements of the strategy of EGPA.*

EGPA institutional configuration

EGPA is a regional group of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS). EGPA strategy thus unfolds as part of the IIAS global strategy – indeed, *EGPA intends to support the development of the IIAS* and to provide a major contribution to the achievement of the mission of the institute: developing public administration and the public service worldwide. As the Institute is re-organising and further developing its Standing Groups, *it will be crucial that EGPA and IIAS harmonise the way in which the respective study groups develop.* Novel formats (e.g. joint, or twin, study groups) may also be explored.

In the development of the Institute, EGPA works together with the other regional groups and entities of the Institute: the Asian Group for Public Administration (AGPA), the Latin American group for Public Administration (LAGPA), the new Middle East and North Africa Group for PA (MENAGPA), and the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration (IASIA).

The contribution of EGPA to the field and the discipline of Public Administration

Public administration is an applied, interdisciplinary field which may properly be conceived as both 'science' and 'art' and 'profession'. Advancing knowledge in public administration and management needs the combination of the most rigorous research methods with the insights of the art and profession of the public administrator; it requires at the same time the detachment of the observer and the engagement that characterises a kind of wisdom which can never be entirely 'neutral', as it is always imbued with values, it is inherently 'know how': knowledge 'to improve' – to improve the public sector and public services for the citizens and for all individuals and communities at different levels.

EGPA Strategy reflects the very nature of the discipline whose development it aims to serve. To public administration as science, EGPA contributes by providing through the Permanent Study Groups (PSGs) platforms that are terms of reference for research in the various subfields and areas of inquiry in the discipline, and through the annual conference and the 'dialogues' unique events to advance science through dialogue and scientific critique. We believe EGPA has provided over four decades a major contribution to the discipline and the field, and it will strive to continue to be at the edge of research through its PSGs.

To public administration as art and profession, EGPA contributes by providing a unique platform for actionable knowledge that may support the work of administrators in Europe and beyond. The EGPA Policy Papers on European Governance intend to offer a major contribution to the debate on the development of European governance, public administration and public service.

EGPA mission is advancing knowledge in public administration, both the science and the art and profession of public administration.

Advancing knowledge in public administration, developing a thriving community for the study and the practice of public administration is a *vision statement* for EGPA.

A continued contribution to the field

Continuity in doing well the core tasks is for any organisation as important as innovating. The steering Committee of EGPA considers *the model of the Permanent Study Groups to be a very successful one, and this will be continued and further developed.* The PSGs are at the core of EGPA, and each Study Group has as its core tasks not just convening on occasion of the annual conference but also promoting all initiatives and projects deemed of value for the advancement of knowledge in their field of activity; this include leading on Dialogues, developing ad hoc initiatives, contributing to the EGPA Policy Papers on European Governance.

Each Permanent Study Group develops its own strategic plan, and its achievements are reviewed every three/four years by the Steering Committee. The overall portfolio of the Study Groups is systematically reviewed, to ensure the maximum of consistency and the widest coverage of the key areas of inquiry in the discipline. The Steering Committee operates to dynamically strike the best balance among: an expansion of the study groups (also to encompass so-far uncovered areas like 'Philosophy and Public Administration'), a continued renewal of the areas of inquiry (to ensure innovation), the accumulation of knowledge over the

time (granted by the continuity in the operations of the study groups), and the maximum of effectiveness of the works of the Study groups.

The Steering Committee *systematically evaluates the works of the Permanent Study Groups*, their effectiveness and adequacy, in view of supporting their development.

The EGPA Annual Conference is at the core of what EGPA does. At the same time, there is a need to diversify the products of EGPA (e.g. through the development of the Dialogues, ad hoc seminars and events, etc.) also in order to ensure that the Annual Conference of EGPA remains of a size that ensures it can continue to be hosted in universities or other research institutions as the preferred option (rather than in 'anonymous' hotels).

Dialogues are a crucial area of activities. The very conception and rationale of the dialogues lies at the heart of how EGPA conceives of its mission as 'the voice of Europe in the world of public administration'. The format of the dialogues is deemed to be a very successful one. EGPA thus aims at continuing and further developing the three ongoing dialogues:

- *TransAtlantic Dialogue (TAD)* in partnership with ASPA
- *TransEuropean Dialogue (TED)* in partnership with NISPAcee
- *The Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue on Public Management (MED)*, also in collaboration with the IMPGT Aix-Marseilles, the Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA), the Scuola Nazionale di Amministrazione (SNA), and the European training Foundation (ETF) and other key partners in the Mediterranean

EGPA is a bilingual organisation: the *French-Speaking Seminar* is another major initiative that is at the core of the portfolio of EGPA.

There is no future without engaging the new generations of scholars and supporting all the efforts that make it worth spending a professional life in the field of public administration. The *PhD Symposium* and a set of related initiatives for young researchers in the field of public administration in Europe are core initiatives that EGPA intends to further develop.

EGPA aims at ensuring the full involvement of scholars and practitioners from all over Europe (and beyond), ensuring that the invaluable richness represented by administrative diversity throughout Europe – one of the major legacies of history to the Old Continent – continues to represent a major source of intellectual stimuli to the development of administrative thinking. A special attention will be devoted to creating venues and opportunities to explore similarities and differences, convergence and divergence across Europe (North-South, East-West).

Developments of new dialogues

It is part and parcel of the EGPA strategy to be fully prepared for setting up new dialogues alongside the extant three, notably with AGPA, LAGPA and MENAGPA. This entails that EGPA needs to organise its works in such a way that the whole set of its PSGs be ready for running four or more dialogues every year (though specific formats like biennial dialogues will also be considered, in view of alleviating the organisational pressure).

External strategy

EGPA aims at consolidating a set of ambitious co-operations with key institutions in the field of public administration: these include first and foremost EUPAN and OECD (including both OECD and SIGMA projects); these activities are carried out in close coordination with the competent working groups of the IIAS.

EGPA is the natural interlocutors of EU Institutions for all affairs related to public administration, public governance and public service. To this purpose, the Steering Committee maintains a set of systematic relations with the European Commissioner in charge of public administration affairs; the European Administrative School, the competent committees of the European Parliament and the European Council; the Presidency of the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee; the European Central Bank; EU Agencies and decentralized bodies; and other pertinent institutions.

EGPA hosts and provides support to major European research projects on public administration, including COST Actions (like the action 'LocRef', Local Public Sector Reform) and Framework Programme Projects (like the project 'COCOPS', Co-ordinating for Cohesion in the Public Sector) or LIPSE ('Learning from Innovation in Public Sector Environments').

EGPA develops collaborations on major initiatives of research and education in the field of public administration with key partners, including ETF, ENA, IGPDE, SNA, ARADO.

EGPA and NISPAcee work together on two main programmes: the Trans-European Dialogue on Public Management and EAPAA, the accreditation body for formative programmes in public administration (MPAs, PhDs, others). Supporting the development of EAPAA is a core part of the EGPA portfolio.

EGPA aims at realising joint initiatives with the other main learned societies in Europe, including NISPAcee, ECPR, EUSA, UACES, IRSPM, and EES.

EGPA external communication occurs mainly through the EGPA Website. The development of the website is a strategic area of investment for EGPA, as part of the overall strategy of the IIAS to make its website "the portal of Public Administration".

Taking responsibility for practice: the EGPA Policy Papers on European Governance

It is central to the EGPA mission to take responsibility for practice: research and scientific knowledge is also required to have an impact on institutions and society. It is for this reason that EGPA promotes a series of policy papers addressing the key issues of the European Governance and public administration in Europe, called "EGPA Policy Papers on European Governance".

Prepared by EGPA scholars (be they active in the PSGs, in the projects hosted by EGPA, or other EGPA-related venues), the Policy Papers are discussed with practitioners and policy-makers, on occasion of major events promoted by EGPA (these include dedicated half- or one-day sessions within EGPA Conferences and Dialogues or specific events promoted by PSGs); discussion of the papers might also occur online in 'blog' format or other internet-enabled formats. Eventually, the papers incorporating the feedback from practitioners and policy-makers are published on the EGPA webpage. The EGPA Policy Papers on European Governance aim to constitute a repertoire of reflections on the key issues affecting European governance and administration. There is an expectation that over a few years this will become a major repository of policy papers on European governance, public administration and public service in and on Europe. Responsibility for the papers lies ultimately with the authors.

Alongside the Policy Papers, EGPA will continue its participation to practitioners' fora and other venues reporting on the main advancements of research and its policy implications.

Joint initiatives on European governance conducted together with the other major learned societies in the field will find in the EGPA Policy Papers a thematic and substantive input.

Financial and organisational strategy

EGPA operates according to the criterion of the long-term *sustainability* of its activities and in view of *positively contributing – in economic terms – to the overall activities of the IIAS*, of which it is part.

The *membership strategy* is part and parcel of both the external partnership and the financial strategy of EGPA, in turn part of the overall IIAS membership strategy. EGPA aims at providing its members with an adequate range of benefits and corresponding fee-level options, and to enlarge the overall base of its members.

The way in which *the EGPA Steering Committee organises its works and internally assigns responsibilities is embodied in its Strategic Portfolio*. Each member of the Steering Committee is responsible for one or more key areas of activity of EGPA, though the ultimate responsibility for the steering of the overall activities of EGPA lies with the Steering Committee as a whole.

The EGPA Community: a supportive and thriving environment

EGPA intends to be a community where the *attention to rigour in scientific research and the tension to reach excellence and be at the cutting-edge is always matched with the attention to each individual as a person. Creating a constructive and supportive environment where academics and practitioners, in all phases of their professional life, can feel 'at home', can feel that EGPA is the home of all those studying and practising public administration in Europe, is part and parcel of the strategy.*

Management and monitoring

The strategic plan for 2014-16 has been adopted by the Steering Committee of EGPA on 31 January – 1 February 2014.

The management and monitoring of the implementation of this plan and its adaption and development over the time is a core task for the Steering Committee.

Supporting tool: the SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats/Challenges)

In preparing the strategic plan, the Steering Committee also employed a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats/Challenges). We duly recognise that this commonly used tool has profound underlying implications and limitations. The very idea of the 'design school of thought in strategic management' - which is implicit in this approach - is one in which strategy is first formulated and then implemented: we instead consider that strategy, for a professional organisation like EGPA, to a very significant extent forms - through the continued engagement of all scholars and practitioners who commit their time and energy to its development - by means of learning processes that occur throughout the whole of the organisation, and implementation and (re)formulation occur in an interactive and flexible way (strategy *forms*, rather than being first formulated and then implemented). This plan is intended to support these learning processes by providing direction and perspective to the whole of the activities of EGPA.

The basic idea of the SWOT analysis is that it helps the appraisal of the conditions for attaining a match between internal capabilities and external possibilities. In the elaboration of the strategy, the Steering Committee has examined, amongst others, the following elements:

Internal capabilities	External possibilities
<p><i>Strengths</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognised standing of EGPA as Europe and world-leading learned society in the field of public administration - Well-developed system of Permanent Study Groups: platforms of expertise of world-wide excellence (Permanent Study Groups as a successful model of organisation) - Consolidated set of partnerships with all key institutions and actors in the field of public administration 	<p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Zeitgeist</i> after financial crisis as facilitating the re-establishment of the legitimacy/ultimate necessity of the public service and public services (opportunity/challenge) - Development of new communication technologies - Development of IIAS regional groups (AGPA, LAGPA, MENAGPA)
<p><i>Weaknesses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The very nature of public administration as interdisciplinary field determines that PA scholars are scattered throughout different departments (Political science depts, schools of management, government depts, law schools, economics faculties, ...), which may weaken our epistemic community in the university organisation 	<p><i>Challenges:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Toughening of competition on key areas/products of EGPA (e.g.: conferences and venues for presentation of scientific works) - Multiple crises (financial, economic, and notably fiscal crisis) affecting supporting institutions of EGPA (local organisers of conferences, active contribution of members and membership fees, ...)

