

FOREWORD

Lect. Oana - Andreea ION, *Europolity* Editor-in-Chief
National University of Political Studies and Public Administration
Bucharest
oana.andreea.ion@dri.snsps.ro

This volume contains the academic contributions elaborated and presented by researchers who participated at the conference *Research methods for analysing governance networks. Using academic research in the policy-making process* organized between the 27th of May and the 1st of June 2013 in Bucharest, Romania, by the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration through the Department of International Relations and European Studies and the Centre for European Studies¹.

The topic of the before mentioned event is of great interest for today's European and international scholars, and therefore the number of published studies and research on this topic is constantly increasing. However, within the Romanian higher education system, few courses are being currently taught in order to connect internal research with the new research methodologies developed abroad. Thus, since in the field of European Studies we can admit having (at least) a second-generation of research on governance networks and on how they have changed the traditional concept of public policy, in the field of domestic studies, efforts have to be made in order to simultaneously recover the first and second generation of debates, opening new lines of research by applying various aspects and implications of governance on domestic policies, which currently go through a process of Europeanization. From this point of view, a School for Advanced Studies on this subject was both innovative for the domestic academic debate and had a significant impact among the target audience: representatives of academia, on the one hand, and representatives of

¹ The event was financed by the Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding, School for Advanced Studies competition.

various categories of actors involved in the policy-making process through governance networks¹.

Governance networks are an indispensable tool for defining public policy in the context of today's society; therefore, researchers should be able to respond accurately to questions about how these networks operate, about the factors which ensure their success or that cause their failure, about the necessary elements for a good management of the entire process etc. The basis of accurate research is, of course, the methodology which is used. There is an exhaustive literature devoted to general aspects of the research methodology. However, in the domain of governance networks studies, there is a great need for further in depth analysis, but also for improving the communication between researchers in this field, especially regarding the exchange of experiences and knowledge resulting from conducting specific case studies. In addition, the analysis of governance networks varies from case to case, depending on the policy being examined; therefore, outlining research methods and techniques is an ongoing and flexible process, which has to take into account the specificities of each policy field, the features of the actors involved in the policy-making, the availability of information etc. At the European level, for example, there is a good knowledge and understanding of the methods and techniques that can be used – often, simultaneously and combined – for conducting research on governance networks. But the specificity of domestic policies and the difficulty to collect and provide data in a foreign language, in order for it to be analyzed by external researchers, indicates the need to train domestic specialists, which would be able to undertake such comparative and multi-level research.

Hence, the papers presented in these proceedings answer to the needs I already pointed: (a) establishing a link between the domestic and European/international new research methodologies (paper no. 1), (b) underlying the variety of new research proposals emerging from the application of governance approaches to domestic policy-making process (papers no. 2 – 5), and (c) proving the role of the academic research for the policy-making process (paper no. 6).

¹ I want to thank Mrs. Andra – Maria Popa, currently research assistant within the Centre of European Studies of the DIREI-NUPSPA, for her contribution to the academic design of this international event.

Therefore, our hope for this issue is to foster discussions on research methods for governance networks. There is a stringent need of adapting of the existing methodology / the identification of new tools that would ensure reflexivity for the research of democratic governance networks and of the ways of interaction between different forms of interest representation. Thus, one refers here to connecting the internal research to the new international trends in social sciences. Moreover, we want to underline the necessity of establishing of tripartite cooperation frameworks between Romanian researchers (suppliers of know-how), foreign researchers (advisors), actors involved in the policy-making process (beneficiaries). In this way, we will be able to talk about a significant international impact of the context of research (the development of the methodology applied to governance networks) and of the research results (more legitimate and effective domestic public policies; implicitly, a significant local input for EU policies).