



**Standing Group
on Southern
European Politics**

**ECPR GENERAL CONFERENCE 2021
University of Innsbruck, 31 August-3 September 2021**

Conference Section
A DECADE OF CRISIS AND RESILIENCE IN SOUTHERN EUROPE

CALL FOR PANELS AND PAPERS

The Section has been proposed on behalf of the ECPR Standing Group in Southern European Politics and welcomes proposals for panels and papers from members and non-members of the Group. The deadline to submit is **10 February**.

- Panel proposal:
Guidelines - <https://ecpr.eu/Events/Event/Content?ID=915&EventID=151>
To submit your proposal -
<https://ecpr.eu/MyEcpr/Forms/PanelProposalForm.aspx?EventID=151>
- Paper proposal:
Guidelines - <https://ecpr.eu/Events/Event/Content?ID=916&EventID=151>
To submit your proposal -
<https://ecpr.eu/MyEcpr/Forms/PaperProposalForm.aspx?EventID=151>
- To create a MyECPR account (if you don't already have one):
<https://ecpr.eu/Login.aspx>
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A DECADE OF CRISIS AND RESILIENCE IN SOUTHERN EUROPE

Crisis seems to have become a way of life in Southern Europe. In states which have traditionally been regarded as weak, the major public health and economic crises generated by the coronavirus pandemic of 2020 are severely testing their administrative and policy capacity, affecting their societal cohesion, and providing a new source of political division. Already visible is the developing climate crisis, which is expected to strike Southern Europe particularly hard. These challenges follow a decade in which the South European members of the EU repeatedly found themselves in a crisis frontline, facing eurozone turmoil, externally-mandated austerity, large-scale migrant arrivals and all the resulting political fallout including electoral shocks, party system fragmentation and the rise of political extremism. Meanwhile for Turkey, the last decade marked a tumultuous period of democratic backsliding including an attempted coup and regime change.

This Section aims to explore how the new generation of multiple and multi-faceted crises is playing out in an already sorely tested region. It seeks to understand their form, depth and consequences, how these may differ from previous crisis rounds and how the latter's cumulative effects may be shaping the current impact on Southern Europe and its ability to respond. Of particular interest are patterns of resilience and the ways in which states and societies have adjusted and innovated in the face of difficult situations.

The Section offers a forum for original empirical research, and encourages a range of disciplinary perspectives and methodological approaches. Preference will be given to papers presenting novel and theoretically grounded empirical work. Regarding geographical scope, the Section accepts country case studies of Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Cyprus and Malta. Intra-South European comparative studies are particularly welcome. A non-exclusive list of possible areas for investigation might include:

Facing the Pandemic

How effectively have South European states responded to the political, policy and public administration challenges generated by the pandemic? To what extent has this response revealed strengths and weaknesses of South

European government systems (including multilevel governance)? Has the pandemic fostered interparty cooperation or conflict in the political institutions? In which ways have the political dilemmas posed by the pandemic - such as public health versus economy, safety versus individual rights - played out in this region? How have the politics of lockdown and the levels of political compliance differed across national contexts? What kind of political change might the pandemic produce?

Facing the Climate and Environmental Crisis

What kinds of challenges does the climate crisis pose for Southern Europe? Are national and subnational actors, institutions and economies prepared to meet these challenges? What are the dynamics of climate politics in the various South European countries? How much of a game-changer could the climate crisis be for South European states, politics and political systems?

The Political Economy of Crisis and Resilience

To what extent has the pandemic impact (including tourism decline, small business closures) highlighted issues of sustainability in Southern European economic models and what kinds of structural alterations might it be bringing about? Do current developments appear to be consolidating or diverging from those triggered by earlier crises? How far has the decade of crises nourished innovation and change in economic or social policy? Or, has it rather revealed deficits? Have successive crises altered patterns of economic winners and losers, and have different crises altered them in different ways?

Societal Resilience, Backlash and Mobilisation

What kinds of grassroots initiatives have emerged in response to the decade of crises and in which sectors have they been active? How are current pandemic conditions, including social isolation, impacting on the societal response and forms of mobilisation? From the Indignados to anti-mask protests, which issues have triggered popular mobilisations? And how effective have the latter been in influencing political change?

Cumulative Crises and Political Representation

To what extent have cumulative crises limited the ability of political actors to meet popular demands? Has this generated or deepened a crisis of political

representation in Southern Europe and, if so, in which ways has this manifested? How has the decade of crises impacted on party system characteristics and trends in political participation? To what extent is the pandemic aggravating the problem of representation, and what are the prospects for the future? What are the consequences of the crisis of representation for South European democracy?

Political Trust and Public Attitudes

Has the decade of crises generated a deficit of trust in elites, institutions, public policies and even democracy itself? Or, has public opinion withstood the negative tide? What has been the role of social media and fake news in undermining political trust? How much volatility has there been in public attitudes as they evolved in response to successive crises? Has there been a qualitative difference in the attitudinal response to the coronavirus pandemic? In what areas can we talk about stability of public attitudes over time?

Facing Political Extremism

To what extent has the decade of crises offered an opportunity structure for political extremism in Southern Europe? What kinds of extremist parties and movements has it nurtured and how successful have they been? In turn, how far have they provoked counter-movements, including anti-racist, migrant solidarity and anti-fascist groups? Have the political authorities been effective in countering extremism in different South European contexts? Can the outcome of the Golden Dawn trial in Greece be seen as a pathbreaking precedent? Is the pandemic revitalising South European political extremism? Are ideas formerly perceived as extremist now becoming mainstream (e.g. welfare chauvinism)?

Varieties of Contemporary Populism

Have the cumulative crises strengthened or weakened populism? What have been the responses of populist actors to these crises? What is the outcome of the competition from new types of populist actors? What has been the public response to the emergence or advance of populist actors from the left and the right of the ideological spectrum? What challenges do the varieties of contemporary populism pose to the democratic establishment in Southern Europe?