

## **International Symposium "Crises and Multi-Level Governance"**

Between May 29 and 31, 2024, the three-day international symposium on "Crises and Multi-Level Governance" was successfully held. The symposium was organized by the Department of Political Science in collaboration with the National Observatory of Athens, the Center for Democracy and Law Research of the University of Macedonia, and the Region of Crete. The symposium commenced on Wednesday, May 29, with a keynote speech by Professor Sabine Saurugger, Rector of Science Po Grenoble. In her very interesting speech titled "Crises, Universities and Governance in the Evolving European Knowledge Economy," Professor Saurugger compared the French and European experiences, highlighting the challenges faced by the governance structures of European universities within the contemporary knowledge economy framework.

The symposium's proceedings continued on Thursday, May 30, and Friday, May 31, spanning a total of five thematic sessions.

The first session thoroughly discussed the recent crises faced by European health systems using very modern public policy analysis methodologies, such as the relationship between politics and the emotion of fear, the analysis of policy actor networking and their behavior in the public sphere, and public policy for pharmaceuticals.

The second session focused on the role of policy entrepreneurs in shaping public policies at both national and local levels. Research findings were also presented regarding the role and capabilities of street-level bureaucracy in adapting the implementation of public policies to their respective environments.

In the third session, different ways in which crises reflect within the structures of multi-level governance were discussed and analyzed. Topics included the EU's democratic deficit in light of the new environment created by the Eurozone crisis of the past decade, the challenges faced by citizens' digital rights and the effectiveness of recorded responses, the importance of evidence-based policymaking, and the emerging issue of revisionist tendencies in existing international space law due to pressures from private interests and competitive state policies for space resource control.

The fourth session addressed the relationship between multi-level governance and natural disaster management as events that produce focusing events. Challenges generated by these events for political leaderships, which are now called to readjust their response methods both in terms of their policy nature and the communication tools they use, were analyzed. Additionally, the relationship between produced scientific data and tools and the extent and manner in which they are utilized by political authority was discussed, raising the fundamental question of whether observed irregularities are due to science surpluses or governance deficits.

The fifth and final session of the symposium dealt with two major issues faced by multi-level governance at the European level. Firstly, the current state of the European integration project was discussed, along with the extent and manner in which applied policies incorporate policy learning processes that feedback into decision-making and policy formulation. Secondly, the current state of social policy in the EU and the new challenges it faces were deeply analyzed. Research questions and findings regarding how continuous and successive crises (permacrisis) redefine the issues of social policy, in conjunction with intensifying inequalities and vulnerabilities that threaten the sustainability of existing social policies in the EU, were developed.

The conference took the form of an intensive workshop where each paper was subjected to exhaustive but constructive critique and discussion. The symposium was honored by the presence of researchers from the USA and Europe with a strong presence in international literature and citations, such as, indicatively, Tom Birkland, Claudio Radaelli, Evangelia Petridou, Nissim Cohen, Alison Harcourt, Stella Ladi, Manolis Plionis, Nils Bandelow, Sabine Saurugger, Chris Weible, Reimut Zohlnhoefer, and of course Nikos Zahariadis, who, in addition to being the president of the organizing committee, has developed a very productive scientific relationship with Greece and the Department of Political Science of the University of Crete.

At the end of the symposium, the guests presented various ideas for strengthening the cooperation created on the basis of this symposium, aiming to consolidate it in the future through various networking and collaboration actions.

The organizing committee of the Symposium consisted of Professors Nikos Zahariadis (Rhodes College), Ilias Georgantas, Aris Alexopoulos, and Nikos Papadakis (University of Crete), Giannis Papadopoulos, and Dr. Alexandros Kyriakidis (University of Macedonia).