

# EGPA Study Group on Ethics and Integrity of Governance – Progress Report 2007

## 1. Introduction

The EGPA Study Group on Ethics and Integrity of Governance was set up at the end of 2002, with its first meeting at the annual EGPA conference in Oeiras in 2003. It was established with the mission to lead to *a long-term network aimed at stimulating research on public sector integrity and ethics in Europe*. Such a network did not yet exist in Europe, in contrast with the US, where the Ethics Section of the American Society of Public Administration (ASPA) has a prominent position and important role. In the three years plan that was submitted to the EGPA steering committee, four aims were formulated. These were:

- 1. To establish a European network on public sector ethics and integrity*
- 2. To set up a systematic and close co-operation with other networks both within and outside Europe*
- 3. To establish "public ethics and integrity" as an important area of public administration research in Europe*
- 4. To provide research-based advice to practitioners and stimulate the dialogue between academics and practitioners*

It is fair to say that the Study Group has moved substantially closer to each of these goals.

1. The **European network** is clearly established, with an average of over 20 papers and an average attendance of over 40 people at the Study Group sessions at the annual conferences and an e-maillist with more than 100 members from more than 25 countries.
2. **Co-operation** with the ASPA ethics section has strongly increased with a climax in the jointly organised conference in Leuven in June 2005 and the next Transatlantic Workshop in Washington in March 2007. Moreover, to add a formal link between both organisations, a member of the Study Group management (Emile Kolthoff) is also member of the executive committee of the ASPA ethics section. Co-operation with other international networks (e.g. OECD and Transparency International) is sought through personal invitations of network members to the Study Group's events. Cooperation with other networks, such as a new group on corruption that is forming as a consequence of last year's ECPR meeting, is growing.

3. The significant and increasing interest in the Study Group's meetings suggest that we are indeed moving towards the establishment of public sector ethics and integrity as an **important field** of public administration research. We have the impression that the Study Group has proven to be able to achieve an established position within EGPA. Current and planned publications (see below) will also help to achieve this goal.
4. Many of the active participants in the Study Group are active as **consultants** for governments all over Europe and there has been a significant participation of practitioners in the annual meetings.

## 2. Main activities

### 2.1. Website and Mailing List

The website was set up soon after the establishment of the Study Group (<http://www.fernuni-hagen.de/POLALLG/EGPA/index.htm>). Since 2005 it is hosted by the Free University Amsterdam website and it was further improved with [www.egpa-ethics.eu](http://www.egpa-ethics.eu) as new address. It acts as a "virtual meeting point," where up to date information on activities and research results is provided. Of equal importance is the emailing-list, which can be considered as a proxy for the "membership" of the Study Group. The list of subscribers has steadily been growing with members from 25 countries, most of them European, but also a few in Northern and Latin America. The list includes researchers as well as practitioners and representatives of other networks such as Transparency International or of international organisations such as the OECD. A clear indicator of the need for a network on public sector ethics is the fact that a significant number of subscribers was not directly invited by us, but approached us, having learned about the Study Group through its website.

### 2.2 Conferences

The Study Group had its first meeting at the EGPA annual conference 2003 in Oeiras (Portugal), followed by Ljubljana, Bern and Milan. A joint conference with the ASPA Ethics Section took place in June 2005 in Leuven (Belgium).

The first three workshops (2003-2005) started with a broad call for papers that was widely distributed, welcoming all kinds of contributions related to the Study Group topic. At the annual conference of Milan in 2006, an extra and specific track on Research Methods was introduced. The Study Group management decided to combine this specific track with a more open general track because the Study Group continues to aspire to be the place where European innovative research on public sector ethics is presented. The same model with a combination

of a general track and a specific track on research methods will be used in Madrid in 2007. The papers presented on methods will be the starting point for working on an edited volume.

The transatlantic **international conference** "Ethics and integrity of governance: a transatlantic dialogue," in Leuven, Belgium (June 2-5, 2005) was a success and formed a starting point for more EGPA – ASPA initiatives. . More information on the conference can be found on the conference website <http://www.soc.kuleuven.ac.be/io/ethics/>. A similar model will be used for the Transatlantic Workshops on Ethics and Integrity, starting in Maryland in March 2007 (see: <http://www.uakron.edu/colleges/artsci/depts/paus/tad.php> ). At the core are workshops, jointly chaired by an American and European convenor, with a constant and internationally mixed audience of participants.

### *2.3 Publications*

The first publications resulting from the 2003 and 2004 meetings of the Study Group are the special issues of *Public Administration Quarterly* of winter 2006 and spring 2007 (Eds. Nathalie Behnke and Jeroen Maesschalck).

A third and fourth publication are planned on the basis of the contributions to the Leuven conference. This will be a book, published by Edward Elgar and edited by Carole Jurkiewicz, Leo Huberts and Jeroen Maesschalck (expected for mid-2007). A special issue of *Public Integrity* edited by the same editors is expected to be published in the course of 2007 as well.

Almost all papers that were presented during the Study Group workshops, as well as several additional papers of interest, are available for download at the Study Group website.

### *2.4 Committee*

The Study Group is chaired by Leo Huberts (Free University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands) and Jeroen Maesschalck (Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium) but at the centre of its activities is the executive committee with as members: Emile Kolthoff (Free University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands) Alan Lawton (University of Birmingham, UK), Jolanta Palidauskaite (Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania), Patrick Von Maravic (Zeppelin University, Germany)

### **3. Further plans**

Having launched an international network of researchers and practitioners on administrative ethics, the Study Group will now concentrate on stabilizing the core of active participants, expanding the membership, further intensifying the cooperation with practitioners and with other networks and deepening some aspects of research in order to carry on the development of the academic discipline. The annual EGPA meetings will of course continue, but with more focused calls for papers, highlighting important aspects of the topic. After 'methods' another topic will be chosen. These focussed conferences will also increase the opportunities for publications. Yearly, the publication of either a book or a journal special issue are foreseen.

New plans concern the improvement of the functioning of the website and in particular the mailing list, the organization of comparative international research projects within the boundaries of and stimulated by the Study Group, and strengthening the relationship with networks like for example ECPR and NISPACee, also to encourage comparative research and to facilitate the possibility of external funding for those initiatives.

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