Concept Note for Discussion Panel on the Occasion of the EGPA 2024 Conference: "Strengthening Democratic Governance for Better Public Policies and Services"

4-6 September 2024
Athens, Greece

Inclusive and Transparent Policy-Making in a Digital World

The Discussion panel will focus on the following indicative topics:
- To present current practices from the Western Balkan region in using digital tools for more inclusive and transparent policy-making.
- To identify challenges and barriers in using digital tools in policy processes.
- To discuss future trends and innovations in policy-making, such as using behavioral insights to help design better policies

The digital revolution is reshaping governance and policy-making processes worldwide. Digital tools and technologies offer unprecedented opportunities to enhance inclusivity and transparency in policy-making, fostering greater civic engagement, accountability, and trust in government institutions. This panel discussion aims to explore the current landscape, challenges, and best practices associated with inclusive and transparent policy-making in the digital age.

The discussion will focus on several key themes. First, the use of digital tools for civic engagement will be explored, including platforms and applications that facilitate citizen participation in policy-making, case studies of successful digital engagement initiatives, and challenges in ensuring equitable access to digital tools. Second, the panel will examine how digital technologies can enhance transparency in governance through open data and digital reporting, while balancing transparency with privacy and security concerns. Third, the panel will also address the challenges and risks associated with digital policy-making, such as the sustainability of digital solutions, internal coordination among government institutions, digital divide, misinformation, and legal and ethical considerations. Additionally, future trends and innovations will be a key focus, including the integration of emerging technologies like predictive analytics, AI, and big data in policy-making. These technologies have the potential to revolutionize how policies are designed, implemented, and evaluated by providing more accurate and comprehensive data insights.

A particularly exciting area of innovation is the use of behavioral insights to design better policies. Policy-makers can create more effective and targeted interventions by understanding how people make decisions and what influences their behavior. Behavioral insights can help develop policies that address immediate issues and promote long-term positive behaviors and outcomes. The role of social media and online platforms in providing real-time policy feedback and engagement will also be considered, highlighting how these tools can be used to gauge public opinion and adjust policies accordingly.

The panel discussion will begin with opening remarks to introduce the topic and objectives. This will be followed by presentations from representatives of public administrations in the Western Balkans, sharing effective practices related to the discussion topics, along with a representative from the National Centre of Public Administration and Local Government (EKDDA). An OECD representative will also present on the integration of behavioral science in policymaking. Each panelist will then share their perspectives and experiences on the discussion themes during the panel presentations. An interactive Q&A session will allow the audience to engage with the panelists through questions and discussions. The session will conclude with closing remarks that summarize the key takeaways.