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EUROPEAN CENTER for POPULISM STUDIES

"Exercise yourself in these and kindred precepts day and night, both by yourself and with him who is like to you; then never, either in waking or in dream, will you be disturbed, but will live as a god among people. For people lose all appearance of mortality by living in the midst of immortal blessings." - Epicurus

SEPTEMBER 2022

EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS NETWORK (ECRN)

OUR APPROACH

What do we want?

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The European Center for Populism Studies (ECPS) is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, based in Brussels, for research on and analysis of challenges posed by increasing political populism. The international rise of populism can lead to democratic decay and authoritarianism around the world, endangering global peace, security, and stability. Therefore, we seek to promote an open society by adhering to the principles of liberal democracy, including the rule of law, human rights, pluralism, freedom of speech, gender equality, social and environmental justice, transparency, and accountability. We aim to observe and report on different manifestations of populism across countries and disseminate research-based knowledge.

We will do so by facilitating collaboration among networks of academic experts, practitioners, policymakers, media, and other stakeholders. We offer a platform for the exchange of policy solutions on issues relating to rising populism, by providing critical analysis and insights for policy-makers in order to raise broader awareness and engagement. We do this through research publications, policy reports, white papers, commentaries, interviews with experts, and the implementation of events, seminars, workshops, and conferences.

We want to take a bold step in combating some of the harmful effects that populism has brought about -such as misinformation, racism, xenophobia, polarization- without disregarding other contemporary global challenges, such as youth empowerment or climate change transition. We believe that the answer can be found in upcoming generations of scholars and intellectuals that are working on generating valuable evidence-based knowledge that will shed light on present and future dynamics. This is the reason why we have decided to start building the **Early Career Researchers Network** (**ECRN**): a PhD and post-doc network associated to the ECPS.

BACKGROUND

& Research Evidence

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There are multiple benefits embodied in establishing the **ECRN**. Researchers have found that integrating oneself into a network of like-minded academics working on similar projects may make a number of opportunities arise. These range from finding the suitable mentor, accessing new equipment, to meeting new fellows. Furthermore, belonging to a PhD Network can help create opportunities that develop one's long-term career, this can include getting a position via an industry contact or finding a post-doc job with a research group encountered during an organized event. Moreover, it has been found that PhD networks are good for learning through shared knowledge, meeting new friends, and promoting members' findings through engagement with peers. Furthermore, it will increase the researchers' confidence and provide them with new and different research tools that may help them improve their professional and academic profiles. Lastly, PhD and post-doc candidates are not exempt from experiencing mental health issues, which are usually exacerbated by the solitary nature of research work. In fact, recent studies found that more than one-third of PhD and post-doc candidates have sought help for anxiety or depression caused by their programs. With this in mind, further research concluded that interacting with others is now more important than ever in order to face and overcome feelings of loneliness and isolation.

A **study** surveying **1300 PhD candidates** that are pursuing their **PhD program** and find themselves doing their research has found that they are **seeking to satisfy** the following demands:

Source: Mahanti (2020)

AIMS

What are our goals?

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The ECRN ultimately aims to become a platform for PhD candidates and early-stage post-docs to enhance knowledge-sharing, carry out career advisory, and reinforce socialization among like-minded individuals. We intend to achieve these goals by facilitating events, research proposals, and collaborative investigations. Moreover, our goal is to make the ECRN an active, dynamic, multidisciplinary, and PhD-managed space where current global challenges and issues will be thoroughly approached, analyzed, and discussed. Thus, empowering the next generation of scholars by providing them with a comprehensive variety of tools and resources, mentoring from the ECPS, as well as with an interdisciplinary and international network. Furthermore, by belonging to the ECRN, PhD candidates and post-docs will have the opportunity to attend a wide variety of events, conferences, seminars, career fairs, and workshops specifically designed according to their interests, motivations, and inquisitiveness.

- Knowledge-sharing
- Event implementation
- Collaborative projects
- Career Advisory
- Mentoring & Youth Empowerment

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

What to expect from the ECRN?

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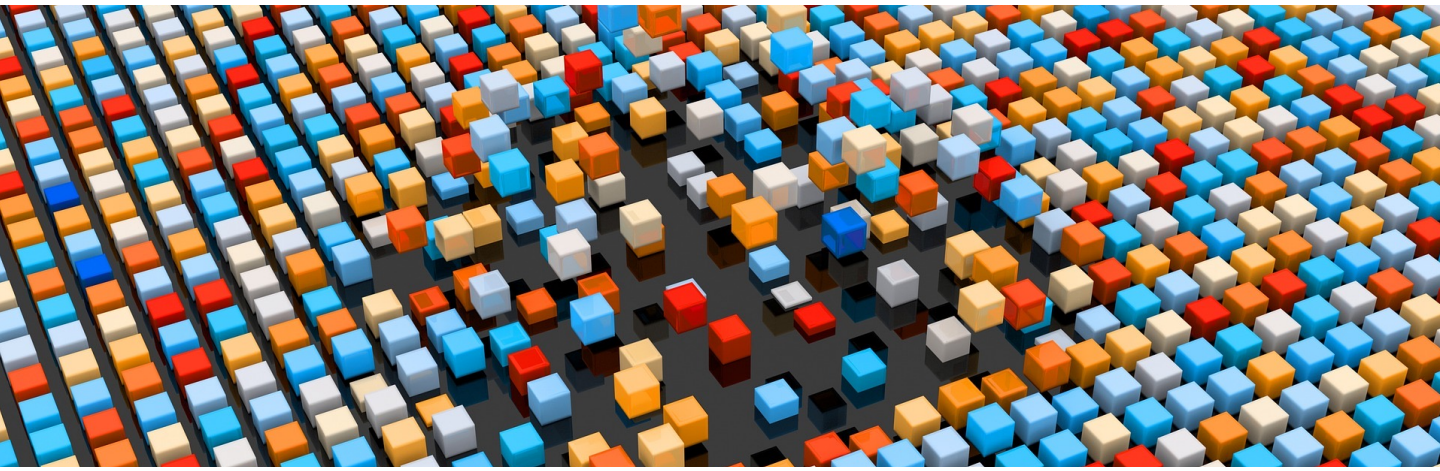

The empowerment of young PhD candidates and early-stage post-docs by providing them with a far-reaching and diverse network, at a point where their contacts may be more limited than other experienced scholars and professionals.

Creating an open space where PhD candidates and post-docs can alleviate common mental-health issues such as anxiety, loneliness, and depression, through discussion and community

Increase cross-disciplinary collaborations among PhD candidates and post-docs, which would consequently enrich existing knowledge on topics that are somehow tackling populism studies.

PhDs and post-docs are expected to enjoy greater accessibility to job opportunities -both within and outside Academia- as well as an ease of access to potential projects' information that may be of their interest.

PhDs and post-docs are expected to considerably increase their skills in networking and as a result expand their network of relevant contacts.

The ECPS and its partners will have a comprehensive, multidisciplinary, and international list of researchers that can be approached for tasks and projects, such as consultancy, advisory, and targeted research.

By increasing evidence-based academic research, misinformation and fake news are expected to be dismantled and revealed.

A better understanding of the impacts of populist parties on ordinary lives, how these parties are impacting climate, welfare, social, and economic policies.

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