



PUBLIC POLICY MAKING AND ANALYSIS

Better analysis
Better public decisions
Better society
Interdisciplinary short cycle
programs in public policy
making and analysis



Co-funded By
The Erasmus+ Programme
Of The European Union

International Hybrid Conference "Science Meets Public Policies"

April 11-12, 2022
Novi Sad, Serbia



УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ У НОВОМ САДУ
UNIVERSITY OF NOVI SAD



GOVERNMENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
PUBLIC POLICY SECRETARIAT

International hybrid conference Science Meets Public Policy

International scientific conference Science Meets Public Policy was held April 11-12 2022 in Novi Sad under the Erasmus+ project PPMA. This two-day event was organized by the University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Sciences of the University of Novi Sad and Public Policy Secretariat of the Government of Serbia, gathering more than 60 participants from 11 countries, both face-to-face and online.

Experts from various scientific fields presented and discussed ways in which science can help decision makers better understand problems of society and find better solutions in policy making. Special focus was given to sustainable development, use of data science methods to make informed decisions, as well as to strengthening the link between education, science and public policy.

According to Jasna Atanasijevic, President of the Conference Scientific Board, decisions on public policy are usually very complex and require different knowledge, which the decision makers are not necessarily equipped with. Bad decisions, made contrary to indisputable truths, sooner or later, become problematic and controversial. "Scientists are a part of the society that nurtures values and competencies such as critical thinking, objectivity, openness to criticism and knowledge testing.



JASNA ATANASIJEVIC, UNIVERSITY OF NOVI SAD

All findings arising from scientific research can directly or indirectly contribute to decision-making, whether private or collective.

In other words, our society will progress as much as we allow talent and knowledge to drive our decisions. "If we keep them away from the decision-making process, we will give up the large part of the progress," Atanasijevic pointed out.

Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics in Novi Sad, Milica Pavkov-Hrvojevic, stated that the Faculty of Natural Sciences was an excellent base for the realization of this project, which made a step forward towards communication between science and public policy.



MILICA PAVKOV-HRVOJEVIC, UNIVERSITY OF NOVI SAD

"I think this is just the first step in establishing a good relationship between these two areas. Lifelong learning courses in the field of public policies have been created at the Faculty of Natural Sciences, which are jointly implemented by professors from our faculty and employees of the Serbian Secretariat for Public Policies.

We have shown that the Faculty of Sciences is an interdisciplinary faculty, with five departments under one roof,

which nurtures sciences and disciplines such as data science, biology, chemistry, environmental protection, physics, but also social sciences such as demography and economics.", Said Pavkov-Hrvojevic.



SANJA MESANOVIC, SERBIAN PUBLIC POLICY SECRETARIAT

Sanja Mesanovic, Deputy Director of the Republic Secretariat for Public Policies of Serbia, emphasized that responsible decision-making - based on evidence and scientific results - is a prerequisite for the successful functioning of a modern society.

"The application of scientific findings in the creation of public policies results in better decisions and measures that are in line with the challenges of modern society. Our common goal is to enable interaction between the state administration and the scientific community and to use more scientific achievements in policy making. On that path, it is important that scientists are well informed about the priority issues that are before the state administration", said Mesanovic.

Dejan Madić, Rector of the University of Novi Sad, said that through such programs, the University of Novi Sad gets the opportunity to present its capacities to the public and thus fulfill its role in society and contribute to the dialogue between the scientific community and public policy makers. "The University of Novi Sad has an excellent position, and that is to have two authorities interested in science, namely the Provincial Government with the Secretariat for Higher Education and Scientific and Technological Development, and the Republic Government with the Ministry of Education," Madić said.



DEJAN MADIC, UNIVERSITY OF NOVI SAD

In his keynote talk, David Mair of the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission, said that the Covid-19 period showed us there was an enormous demand for science. "Science is indispensable, it's necessary, but it's not enough. The science does not magically transform the political debate," said Mair and added: "Crises cannot be resolved by science for policy alone. Science cannot ask a political question, it can only answer a scientific question. There are real choices to be made in society and there will always be legitimate disagreements about what those choices are. Science cannot solve those disagreements between what we all want for the future, which is at the heart of making policy."

Another great and insightful keynote talk came from Dimiter Toshkov of the Leiden University. Talking about promises and

Erasmus + project PPMA

What we have achieved

The conference "Science Meets Public Policy", the first of its kind in Serbia, is held within the Erasmus + project Public Policy Making and Analysis (PPMA), which has developed lifelong learning programs in the field of public policy analysis. "We are almost at the end of the project, but on the other hand, at the beginning of a new journey, and that is connecting science and politics in Serbia and, hopefully, throughout this part of Europe. The first step in achieving this ambitious goal is to start creating a network of individuals and scientists from different disciplines who are interested in public topics and who share common values in terms of the importance of knowledge as a basis for good public decisions," said Jasna Atanasijevic speaking about the Erasmus+ KA2 PPMA project, whose results so far include:

- ⇒ 3 halls at 3 universities in Serbia (Novi Sad, Belgrade, Nis) equipped with a modern telepresence system that allows conferences, lectures and events held in a hybrid format to reach a much larger audience than the one physically present.
- ⇒ Nearly 50 professors and other teaching staff at EU partner institutions (Leiden University of the Netherlands, King's College London, University of Paris-Est Creteil, 27th Region - Paris NGO) were trained to teach public policy
- ⇒ At 3 universities in Serbia, 22 public policy courses have been developed and implemented. Each of them is available individually through 5 different lifelong learning programs. In that way, about 150 participants were educated, and this number will increase since the program courses remain available in the offer.
- ⇒ 9 textbooks were published, of which 7 translations of internationally recognized textbooks for teaching public policy
- ⇒ Developed web platform Policy Club intended for networking of practitioners in the field of policy analysis. The web platform also serves as a public repository of policy analysis.



pitfalls in the evidence-based policymaking, he said that “this kind of policymaking is necessary for improving the process of public policymaking, but it is not sufficient to guarantee good policymaking practices. Politicians and the public need to be willing and able to trust experts and work with evidence.”



SLOBODAN MARKOVIC, UNIVERSITY OF NOVI SAD

Within the Climate and Nature session, we heard several interesting talks including Slobodan Markovic’s from the University of Novi Sad and Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. In his rather provoking presentation about scientific approaches to climate change, Markovic emphasized the importance of this subject to the politicians, saying that the “complete policy making process regarding climate change is based on scenarios about what will happen in the future”. He also questioned the models on which these scenarios are made and said that climate change can also be



RATKO RISTIC, UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

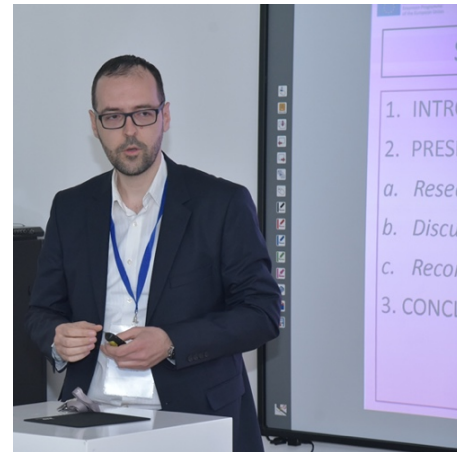
regarded as an introduction to a new global geopolitical order, as well as potential instrument to control economic growth of development countries during the 21st century

Closing his speech, he posed an important question: can scientists lose credibility to feed decision making in case of climate change problem?

Ratko Ristic from the Belgrade University spoke about environmental protection, public interest, academia and ecological activism, giving examples of two existing problems in the Serbian society today - small hydro power plants construction and project related to lithium explorations.

Ristic said that only those projects that reflect a clear public interest are eligible. The public interest is only what satisfies the interest of the majority of Serbian citizens. “We don’t want Serbia as a cheap resource base and victim of neocolonial concept,” concluded Ristic.

Aleksandar Mojasevic from the University of Nis presented a joint research, conducted with his colleagues from the University, about vaccination policy and human rights. The study started from the theses that the findings of behavioral science are not used at all or to a sufficient

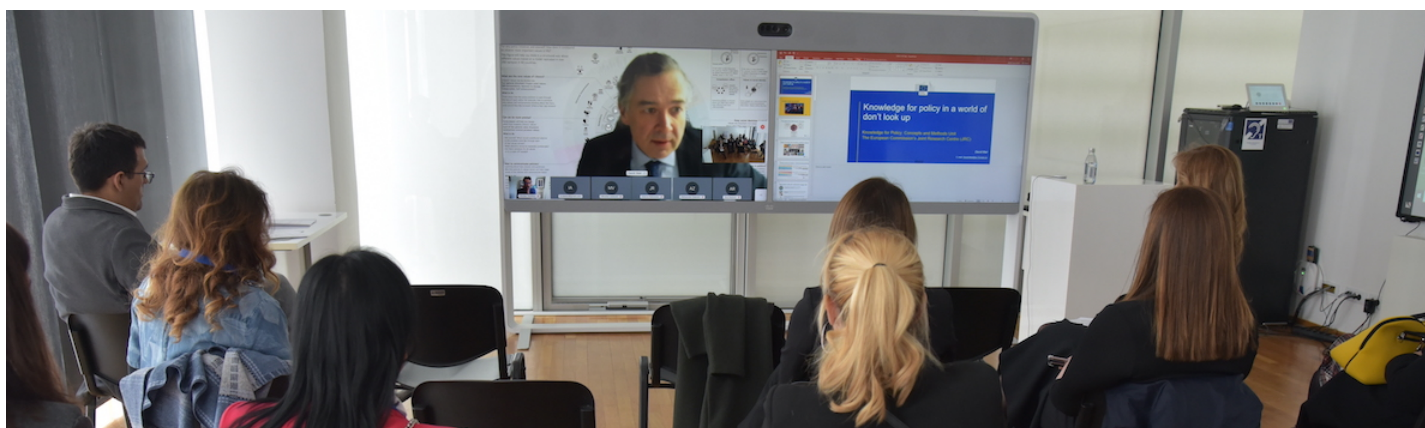


ALEKSANDAR MOJASEVIC, UNIVERSITY OD NIS

extent in the conception of vaccination policy, and that the dichotomy between the right to life and the right to choose is resolved in favor of the latter.

The session Environment Protection Technologies and Policies dealt with topics such as industry, science and policy symbiosis, as well as water pollution protection policy.

The Data for Policy session emphasized the lack of official statistical data that need to be used for different scientific researches in order to make better quality of public policy making.



Public Policy Club

A unique network for public policy experts and enthusiasts

On the second conference day, one of the project partners SeCons presented the website [Policy Club](#), which has been developed within the PPMA Erasmus+ project.

This web platform gathers public policy enthusiasts from different policy areas. The main objective of the Policy Club is to improve the practice of creating public policies based on facts and analysis by expanding and strengthening the network of people who deal with public policies from different angles.

Join us at this unique network, either as an ordinary unregistered visitor, which allows you to search, read and download all published analyzes, or by registering ([link](#)), so you can post your own policy analyzes. Here you can find the detailed instruction for authors - how to register, create a profile, submit articles and evaluate posted publications.

Check out the webpage at <https://policy-club.pmf.uns.ac.rs/en/homepage/> and find out more about the Policy Club.

Speaking within the Education and Science for Public Policy session, Patricia Pol of Université Paris-Est Créteil, France spoke about the importance of critical thinking in education. She quoted Jacques Derrida, a French philosopher who said that university should be a place of critical resistance to all dogmatic and unjust appropriation powers, and added that every citizen needs to engage on a regular basis in critical thinking.

“The role of educators, such as the role of the philosopher is not to postulate truths, but rather to provide systematic critic of the believes through every day critical thinking,” she concluded.

The two conference days also provided a lot of networking opportunities during coffee and lunch breaks, which helped participants to exchange ideas in a more informal way.

