

Call for Papers: Open Panel at the 30th DVPW Convention, 7 - 10
September 2027, Leipzig University

991: “Governing with Flexible Majorities in Times of Fragmentation and Polarization: Political Practice and Societal Expectations”

Convenors

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Abstract

The increasing fragmentation and polarization of European party systems are making it more difficult to form viable majority coalitions. Additional constraints arise from the exclusion of populist parties or parties considered unsuitable for cooperation. This not only reduces the number of possible coalitions but also limits the pool of potential parliamentary partners available to minority governments. The question of how governments can maintain political effectiveness without a permanently secured parliamentary majority is therefore becoming increasingly pressing. This brings different forms of flexible majority-building into focus, ranging from minority governments with formal support agreements to shifting parliamentary majorities.

The panel examines the conditions under which such arrangements emerge, how they are organized politically, and how citizens respond to them. Particular attention is given to countries in which minority governments and flexible processes of majority-building have not traditionally been part of established political practice. Which institutional, strategic, and communicative mechanisms enable cooperation in the absence of a permanently secured government majority? How are responsibility and political compromises negotiated and organized? And what role does the exclusion of so-called pariah parties play in these processes?

At the same time, the panel examines voters' preferences. Do citizens continue to prefer clearly delineated government and opposition blocs, or do they accept shifting forms of cooperation based on specific policy issues? How do they evaluate minority governments compared with majority coalitions, new elections, or alliances with ideologically distant parties? And how do they respond when maintaining political effectiveness requires direct or indirect cooperation with excluded parties?

Proceeding

- There will be 80 panels, each lasting 90 minutes and distributed across eight time slots throughout the conference
- The panel chairs will select four to five contributions for their panel by the end of 2026
- Application requirements
 - ⇒ The proposal must include the **title, all authors and a short abstract** of no more than 2,000 characters
 - ⇒ The panel will be held in **English**, the proposal should therefore also ideally be submitted in English
 - ⇒ Maximum of **two contributions per person**, as author or co-author
 - ⇒ **International participants** are welcome
 - ⇒ Submission deadline: **31 October 2026** via [meineDVPW portal](#); registration is required
- **Further information:** [DVPW 2027 – Call for Papers](#)