



## CALL FOR PAPERS

PUBLIC SECTOR ECONOMICS 2026 CONFERENCE

# FIFTY YEARS OF PUBLIC SECTOR ECONOMICS

23 OCTOBER 2026 ■ ZAGREB, CROATIA

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To mark the 50th anniversary of the journal *Public Sector Economics* (PSE), our annual conference in 2026 will be devoted to a perspective on the evolution of the discipline since the mid-1970s and a discussion of where public finance research and practice might take us next.<sup>1</sup> When the **Institute of Public Finance** launched the predecessor of this journal in 1976, capitalism was in its deepest crisis since the Great Depression, and socialist economies entered a long period of decline that presaged their disintegration in 1989. On both sides, the public sector had expanded beyond the limits of economic sustainability and government failure was omnipresent. A change in the scope and financing of the public sector was inevitable, but the extent of its transformation surprised everyone.

Since then, we have witnessed a major overhaul of tax systems (lower income tax progressivity, introduction of the VAT), privatisation of state enterprises, withdrawal of the state from many public services and outsourcing of others, efficiency-driven reshaping of social insurance systems, the spread of transparency and service delivery norms, and more recently, a digital transformation of government practices. And despite its initial retreat, the state expanded into new areas as the society confronted challenges such as climate change, population ageing, and, lately, global security threats.

Many aspects of this transformation were covered in the past ten **PSE annual conferences**. But many were not, and we have not had the opportunity to take a longer-term perspective on the development of the public sector. The conference will aim to provide clarity on what has been achieved in the theory and practice of the public sector, what remains to be done, and to assess the current trends in scholarly research and public sector practices. We invite historical, theoretical, empirical and policy-oriented submissions from all branches of public sector economics and related disciplines, including other social sciences.

## CONFERENCE OUTLINE

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The conference will feature keynote lectures, paper presentations, and a panel on the future of public sector economics research and practice. Relevant topics include but are not limited to:

- Government and market failure in perspective, size of the public sector in perspective
- Evolution of tax systems and individual taxes - achievements of optimal taxation, missed opportunities, remaining gaps
- Evolution of social insurance systems, current tensions and sustainability challenges, political economy of reforms
- Interplay of public and private sector in health care, long-term care, education, R&D, culture

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<sup>1</sup> PSE was first published in 1976 in Croatian as *Financijska praksa*. It came of age in 1995 when it was renamed *Financijska teorija i praksa*. From 2005 to 2010, it was also published in English (as *Financial Theory and Practice*), and from 2010 only in English. In 2017, it was renamed *Public Sector Economics*.

- Perspectives on old and new economic roles of the public sector – public investment, climate change mitigation, defense, economic and social infrastructure, new industrial policy
- Macro fiscal policy then and now – and its likely future
- Development of empirical methodology, causal identification methods, big data and machine learning, combination of microsimulations and administrative data, insights from behavioural economics
- Modernisation of public sector practices – data and service delivery digitisation, modernisation of tax administration, potential and risks of AI in the public sector
- Institutional developments – spread of fiscal transparency, accountability, responsibility, citizen participation, civil service reforms.

## KENOTE SPEAKERS

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**George Kopits** (*tbc*), Member, *European Fiscal Board* (since 2025); member, *Public Finance Council, Portugal* (2012–22); founding chair, *Fiscal Council, Hungary* (2009–11); member, *National Bank of Hungary Monetary Council* (2004–09); assistant director, *International Monetary Fund* (1974–2003); financial economist, *Office of the Secretary, US Treasury* (1969–74)

**Imran Rasul**, Professor, *University College London*; co-director, *Centre for the Microeconomic Analysis of Public Policy, Institute for Fiscal Studies*; co-director, *Entrepreneurship Research Group, International Growth Centre, UK*

## SUBMISSION

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Please **submit electronically** summaries (200–500 words) or finished papers of original, unpublished work in English by **30 April 2026**.

Authors of accepted abstracts/papers will be notified by **31 May 2026**.

Final papers will be due by **30 September 2026**.

Authors are encouraged to submit their papers to the journal *Public Sector Economics* (see below).

**There is no conference fee.** Organisers will provide logistics information on the [conference website](#), but participants will have to cover travel costs and accommodation in Zagreb on their own.

## PROGRAM COMMITTEE

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Maja Bašić, Senior Research Fellow, *Institute of Public Finance, Croatia*

Vjekoslav Bratić, Director, *Institute of Public Finance, Croatia*

Mihaela Bronić, Editor-in-Chief of *Public Sector Economics, Institute of Public Finance, Croatia*

Dubravko Mihaljek, Co-editor of *Public Sector Economics and Croatian National Bank, Croatia*

Katarina Ott, Co-editor of *Public Sector Economics, Croatia*

Andreas Peichl, Director, *ifo Center for Macroeconomics and Surveys*; Professor, *Faculty of Economics, University of Munich, Germany*

Joachim Wehner, Associate Professor, *The London School of Economics and Political Science, UK*

## PUBLICATION

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Conference participants are encouraged to submit their papers to *Public Sector Economics*, published quarterly and indexed in the Web of Science Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI), SCOPUS, DOAJ, EconLit, RePEc, and other databases. The journal uses a double-blind peer review process, ensures a quick turnaround, and follows the highest [publication ethics](#) standards.