TENTH INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
on the topic:
The Trap of the 'Middle': Middle Income, Middle Way, Middle-of-the-Road Decisions
October 22, 2026, Sofia

9:00	9:15	Registration (coffee, tea, and mineral water will be available throughout the day in the Conference Hall)	
9:15	9:30	**OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE**	
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Albena Taneva, Head of the Department of Public Administration, and a welcome address by the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, Prof. Dr. Hab. Sonya Karabelova			
9:30	**10:30**	**Panel One: On the Middle-Income Trap – Economic Perspective, Digital Tools, and Policy Choices**	
Prof. Rumen Brusarski, PhD, UNWE Average and Median Wages: Two Key Measures of Central Tendency in Economics			**Moderator: assist. prof. Stoyan Panchev**
Prof. Kaloyan Simeonov, DSc, and Roksana Trifonova, PhD (Chief Assistant Professor), European Studies, Sofia University The Use of Artificial Intelligence in Public Administration and Financial Services			
Assoc. Prof. Albena Taneva, PhD, Public Administration, Sofia University Moderation as a Mask: The Narrative of the 'Middle' and the Dilemmas of Leadership			
Tsvetan Shishkov, PhD Candidate (Public Administration, Sofia University) and Expert at the Bulgarian National Bank (BNB) The Middle-Income Trap and the Bulgarian Reality: Overcome Challenges and New Structural Risks			
Assoc. Prof. Maria Kotseva-Tikova, PhD, Public Administration, Sofia University What Aggregate Indicators Hide in Smart Cities: The Case of Sofia			
Milkana Mochurova, PhD (Chief Assistant Professor), Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS) The Trap of 'Middle-Ground' Solutions: How Environmental Policies Do Not Always Lead to Sustainable Outcomes and Economic Results			
Lyubimka Andreeva, PhD (Chief Assistant Professor), Public Administration, Sofia University The 'Middle-of-the-Road Reform' Trap: When Administrative Change Is Presented as Reform – a Perspective Through Changes in Labor Relations			
Discussion			
10:30	**11:35**	**Second Panel: A Trap or a Balance? The Middle-of-the Road in Security, European Policy, and Public Governance**	
Prof. Alexander Marinov, PhD, Public Administration, Sofia University The Balance of Strategic Interests: Between Mechanical Equilibrium and Substantive Synthesis			**Moderator: Assoc. prof. Simeon Petrov**
Dr. Vesela Politova, MLSP Average solutions or average results – a managerial compromise or a lack of administrative capacity			
Chief Assist.Prof.Denitsa Hinkova, PhD, Public Administration, Sofia University Beyond the Traps of the "Average," the "Probable," and the "Extreme": Vision and Management Amidst Geopolitical Uncertainty			
Dr. Dimitar Pehlivanov, New Bulgarian University (NBU) Between Federation and National Sovereignty – Is There a Middle Path for the European Union?			

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Goran Stoykovski, Plovdiv University Attempts to Rediscover the Yugoslav Strategic Balance and Non-Alignment as a Possible "Middle Path" for Maneuvering in Contemporary Geopolitics		
Petros Arnaoutis, PhD student, Sofia University The Administrative Middle Trap: Reform, Compromise and Complexity in Greece's Public Administration (2009–2018)		
Michail Zarifopoulos, PhD student, prof. Aleksandar Marinov, PhD, Sofia University The Median Trap in Evidence-Based Public Decision-Making		
Discussion		
11:35	11:50	***Coffee break***
11:50	**12:55**	**Third Panel in English: Governance Trapped in the Middle: Reform, Accountability and Institutional Compromise**
Link to the Panel		
Assoc. Prof. Zurab Nasaraia, PhD, Georgian Technical University When Does Civil Society Exert Influence? A Comparative Analysis of Three Cases of Civic Mobilisation in Georgia		**Moderator:** **assist. prof. Stoyan Panchev**
José Miguel Mata Hernández, PhD student, Univesity of Granada Caught in the Middle: Transparency without Accountability? Administrative Grey Zones and Citizen Oversight in Mexico's Anti-Corruption Governance		
Rodrigo Muñoz-Mohedano Rincón, PhD student, CEU San Pablo University, Madrid, Spain The Protection of Renewable Energy Investment under Italy's Revenue Cap during the Energy Crisis: the Secab Case		
Albert R.C.E. Williams, Sulaiman Phoray-Musa, Office of the President, Sierra Leone Evaluating Performance Appraisal Practices in Sierra Leone's Civil Service: A Comparative Study of the Cabinet Secretariat and Human Resource Management Office through the Lens of Organizational		
Sunday Omosalewa Orefuwa, Crestland Global Link Ventures, Lagos, Nigeria The middle-income trap and administrative barriers to growth		
Georgios Vasileiadis, PhD student, University of the Aegean, Greece From ESG Reporting to AI-Enabled Monitoring: Digital Readiness in Logistics and Supply Chains		
Diamanto Ntemiri, PhD Student, Public Administration, Sofia University Breaking Institutional Inertia: Can Digital Transformation Accelerate Sustainable Practices in the Greek Civil Service?		
Serafeim Papaioannou, PhD Student, Public Administration, Sofia University ESG in Shipping: The Risks of Middle-of-the-Road Sustainability Strategies		
Dafni Proiou, PhD Student, Public Administration, Sofia University Bridging the Research Gap in the Administration of Special Education School Units: A Public Administration Perspective		
Дискусия		
13:00	14:00	***Lunch (catering, foyer in front of the hall)***
14:00	**15:00**	**Fourth Panel Online in English: Beyond Average Solutions: Education, Digital Transformation and Regulatory Adaptation**
Link to the Panel		
Erkin Ergeshov, LLC Mido in the Kyrgyz Republic Beyond Average Solutions: Legal Risk Management and Regulatory Compliance in Modern Organizations		**Moderator:** **Assist. prof. Denitza Hinkova**
Vasileios Patrinos, PhD Student, Public Administration, Sofia University Digital Transformation as a Tool for Addressing Administrative Inertia in the Public Administration Sector		

Muxhahid Ismaili, PhD student, European University of Tirana (UET) Beyond the “Middle”: Turkey’s Political and Economic Strategy in the Balkans			
Mehdi Ahmadlou, PhD student, University of Tehran Small Steps, Big Changes: A Review of Incremental Decision-Making in Public Organizations			
Jannatul Mawua Smirty, Public Administration, University of Dhaka Stuck in the Middle: Decentralization Without Devolution in Bangladesh’s Rural Local Government			
Godwin Osifo, PhD Student, Public Administration, University of Benin Good Governance and Sustainable Development in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and Policy Options			
Qingwen Gao, PhD student; Yulan Xing, PhD student; Prof. Jelena Davidova, PhD, Daugavpils University, Latvia Escaping the Governance Middle: Performance Accountability and Institutional Support in Public Higher Education			
Yulan Xing, PhD student; Qingwen Gao, PhD student; Prof. Jelena Davidova, PhD, Daugavpils University, Latvia Balancing Examination Accountability and Student Autonomy: School Management Challenges in Supporting Self-Directed English Learning in China			
Sak Yoeurng, PhD student, University of Debrecen General Mentoring Practices in School-Based Mentoring Programs			
Assist. Prof. Denitsa Hinkova, PhD, Sofia University, Gizem Dak, PhD, Marmara University, Türkiye, Prof. Münevver Çetin, PhD, Marmara University Beyond the Median: Digital Pedagogy, AI Competence and Organisational Learning in Bulgarian and Turkish Education			
Дискусия: 15 минути			
15:00	**15:50**	**Fifth Panel: Public Administration and Management Decisions of the Middle**	
Prof. Dr. Venelin Georgiev, New Bulgarian University (NBU) The "Average" Value in Security			**Moderator:** **Assoc. prof. Maria Kotseva-Tikova**
Dr. Venko Petkov, Independent Researcher The Trap of the Middle in Public Management: Between Strategic Generalization and Administrative Process			
Stoyan Georgiev, PhD Candidate, Public Administration, Sofia University The 'Average' Trap in Evidence-Based Governance: From Averaged Indicators to Averaged Policy			
Dr. Kremena Nikolova, Public Procurement Expert A Balanced Approach within the Public Procurement System			
Nora Dyankova, PhD Candidate, Public Administration, Sofia University The Balance Trap: The Middle Path Between Politicization, Administrative Autonomy, and Institutional Memory			
Valeriya Atanasova, PhD Candidate, Public Administration, Sofia University When Social Services Become an End in Themselves: Institutional Barriers to the Socio-Economic Independence of People with Disabilities and Their Families			
Discussion			
15:50	16:05	***Coffee break***	
16:05	**17:00**	**Panel Six: Education, Society, and the “Middle” Reality of Citizenship**	
Gergana Petrova-Tsatseva, PhD Candidate; Prof. Tsvetan Davidkov, DSc, Faculty of Philosophy, Sofia University CAF as a Tool for Overcoming 'Middle Management' in Municipal Healthcare: Opportunities for Organizational Improvement			**Moderator:** **Assoc. prof. Albena Taneva**

Teodora Temelkova, PhD Candidate, Public Administration, Sofia University From Crisis-Driven Participation to Partnership: In Search of the 'Middle Way' in Local Democracy			
Dr. Iskra Mileva The 'Middle Way' in Education – A Compromise in Search of Balance			
Kalina Petrova, PhD Candidate, Public Administration, Sofia University The 'Middle Way' as a Management Strategy: Political Leadership Amidst Political Instability in Bulgaria (2021–2025)			
Daniela Dimitrova-Dyeb, PhD Candidate, Public Administration, Sofia University The 'Middle Trap' in Educational Policy: Navigating Between Standardization, Equity, and Adaptive Public Governance			
Georgi Kirilov, PhD Candidate, Institute for Balkan Studies and Centre of Thracology (BAS) The 'Middle' Education Trap: A Compromise or a Lack of Vision?			
Dr. Lora Lyubenova, Researcher, Public Administration, Sofia University The EU Social Scoreboard: Between Averages and Social Rights – The ESSB and the European Semester			
Discussion			
17:00	**18:30**	**Round Table: The Trap of the 'Middle': Middle Income, Middle Way, Middle-of-the-Road Decisions**	
Plamen Donev, Tax Policy Expert Myths About the Tax System in Bulgaria: The Actual Characteristics and Burden of Various Taxes in the Country			
Arkadiy Sharkov, Economist Rapid Convergence, Weak Foundation: The Middle-Income Trap and Public Policy in Bulgaria			
Dr. Ivaylo Nikolov, Independent Researcher Stuck in the Middle: Bulgaria's Public Finances Caught in the Trap of Institutional Capacity			
Toncho Kraevski, PhD Candidate (Faculty of Law), and Kristian Tsonevski The Leap from Middle to High Incomes: An Attempt at a Scientific Approach to Market Regulation			**Moderator: assist. prof. Stoyan Panchev**
Georgi Vuldjev, Economist (EKIP) Labor Imports and the Middle-Income Trap			
Participants in the panel discussions and the Round Table include: Prof. Todor Tanev, Assoc. Prof. Kasen Stanchev, Assoc. Prof. Elena Kalfova, Assoc. Prof. Atanas Slavov, Senior Assistant Professor Snezhina Kalendzhieva, Dr. Pavel Ivanov (Director of the Institute of Public Administration), Dr. Aleko Dzhildzhov, and others. PhD candidates and students in 'Public Administration' are participating in all the panels			
18:30	**20:00**	**Closing of the conference - Cocktail and free discussion (lobby in front of the conference hall)**	

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE:

Assoc. Prof. Albena Taneva

Assist. Prof. Stoyan Panchev

Assoc.Prof. Simeon Petrov

Assoc.Prof.Krassen Stanchev

Inspector Anna Ivanova