

## Winter School on Federalism and Governance 2026

# Federalism and Innovation

**Innsbruck (A) and Bolzano/Bozen (I)**  
**2 February – 13 February 2026**



### WHAT IS THE WINTER SCHOOL ABOUT?

The Winter School is a two-week international postgraduate program on federalism, regionalism and multilevel governance. Through an interdisciplinary and comparative approach, the school explores how federalism can contribute to multilevel, integrated and pluralistic decision-making.

A wide range of lectures gives participants the opportunity to broaden their knowledge of multilevel governance and government, especially from the perspectives of law and political science. The Winter School provides a cutting-edge international learning environment with world class scholars of various academic disciplines.

The 2026 Winter School will focus on **federalism and innovation**. From 2 February to 13 February 2026, participants of the Winter School will focus intensively on the innovative aspects of federal systems. The program will shed light on how federalism can serve as a driving force for innovation in political and legal structures. Experts will provide practical insights into the innovative potentials of subnational constitutional autonomy and constitutional case law, examine the use of digitalization in multi-layered bureaucracy as well as the promotion of innovation in areas such as environmental policy, integration, public health and economy.

In addition to a theoretical examination of these topics, concrete case studies and best practices from around the world will also be presented. Visits to local and regional institutions in Tyrol and South Tyrol will provide direct insights into different models of federal governance and their innovation potential.

Besides numerous opportunities for discussion with leading experts on multilevel governance throughout the lectures, a variety of interactive sessions will provide the chance to share knowledge and experience. Lectures, workshops, Q&A sessions, and a round table will take into account multilevel systems from different continents.

### The Winter School will examine:

- how federalism can be used as a driver of innovation in policy-making
- the role of constitutional courts in the innovation of federalism
- the extent to which subnational constitutions serve as innovation hubs in a federal context
- the challenges and opportunities digitalization offers for a multi-national and multi-level bureaucracy
- how the innovative power of federalism differ between federal countries with either common law or civil law systems
- specific innovations in the field of environmental and climate policy which can be promoted by federal structures

The 2026 Winter School examines these and other topics by combining theoretical expertise and relevant case studies. As such, the program is a unique opportunity for young academics, postgraduate students, civil servants and practitioners to receive enhanced training on the theoretical and practical aspects of federalism and multi-level governance.

### WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

The Winter School is designed for those who wish to increase their knowledge of federalism through an interdisciplinary and comparative approach

- young researchers and academics
- post-docs, postgraduate and graduate students
- civil servants from local, regional or national governments
- employees of international organizations or NGOs

*Please note that the program requires previous basic knowledge of federalism.*

## WHAT TO EXPECT OF THE WINTER SCHOOL?

The two-week program will take place in an international learning environment in Austria (Innsbruck, Tyrol) and in Italy (Bolzano/Bozen, South Tyrol) and includes:

- lectures by distinguished academics;
- discussions and case studies with top experts in the field;
- interactive workshops;
- study visits to political institutions.

*The Winter School will be held entirely in English.*

## SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

- **Prof. Dr. Anna Gamper**  
Professor at the Department of Public Law, State and Administrative Theory, Faculty of Law, University of Innsbruck and Substitute Judge of the Constitutional Court of Liechtenstein.
- **Prof. Dr. Francesco Palermo**  
Head of the Institute for Comparative Federalism of Eurac Research in Bolzano/Bozen and Professor of Comparative Public Law at the Faculty of Law, University of Verona.
- **Em. Univ.-Prof. DDr. Günther Pallaver**  
Emeritus Professor at the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, University of Innsbruck and Senior Researcher at the Institute for Comparative Federalism of Eurac Research in Bolzano/Bozen.

## LECTURERS

- **Dr. Elisabeth Alber** – Eurac Research, Bolzano/Bozen, Italy
- **Dr. Mariachiara Alberton** – Eurac Research, Bolzano/Bozen, Italy
- **MA, LLB Jakub Babuska** – University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom
- **Prof. Dr. Eva Maria Belser** – University of Fribourg, Switzerland
- **Assoc. Prof. Vito Breda** – University of Southern Queensland, Australia
- **Dr. Ana Tereza Ribeiro Fernandes** – Government of the State of Minas Gerais, Brazil
- **Prof. Dr. Anna Gamper** – University of Innsbruck, Austria
- **Dr. Georg Grote** – Eurac Research, Bolzano/Bozen, Italy
- **Dr. Jonas Kaschka** – University of Innsbruck, Austria
- **Prof. Dr. Marcelo Jenny** – University of Innsbruck, Austria
- **Mag. Petra Malfetherthner** – Eurac Research, Bolzano/Bozen, Italy
- **Dr. Emilia Melossi** – Eurac Research, Bolzano/Bozen, Italy
- **Prof. Dr. Francesco Palermo** – Eurac Research, Bolzano/Bozen and University of Verona, Italy
- **Dr. Sara Parolari** – Eurac Research, Bolzano/Bozen, Italy
- **Prof. Patricia Popelier** – University of Antwerp, Belgium
- **Dr. Francisco Javier Romero Caro** – Eurac Research, Bolzano/Bozen
- **Dr. Sophia Schönthaler** – Eurac Research, Bolzano/Bozen, Italy
- **Prof. Dr. Nico Steytler** – University of the Western Cape, South Africa
- **Dr. Alice Valdesalici** – Eurac Research, Bolzano/Bozen, Italy
- **Prof. Dr. Jens Woelk** – University of Trento and Eurac Research, Bolzano/Bozen, Italy



The **Institute for Comparative Federalism** carries out comparative and applied research on governance trends in federal, regional and supranational systems both within Europe and around the world. The Institute is part of Eurac Research, Bolzano/Bozen, an innovative center for research and training based in South Tyrol, Italy. Founded in 1992 as a private institution, Eurac Research is composed of eleven research institutes and five centers.



The **University of Innsbruck**, Austria, founded in 1669, has gained a long-standing reputation for studies on federalism. It serves as the main academic centre of Western Austria and its neighboring regions. Its sixteen faculties, among them the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, offer a wide range of studies. The University is situated in the heart of Tyrol.

## DATES AND VENUES: 2 February – 13 February 2026

The School's first week will take place at the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Leopold-Franzens-Universität in Innsbruck, Austria. The second week will take place at the Institute for Comparative Federalism, Eurac Research in Bolzano/Bozen, Italy.

## Application deadline: 12 October 2025

For further information, a detailed program, enrolment procedure, costs and scholarship opportunities, please visit: [winterschool.eurac.edu](http://winterschool.eurac.edu)

### Eurac Research

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