



SCIPOG Student Conference  
PhD in Political Science and Public Administration

## **Right to the future: environment, sustainability, and innovation**

In a time marked by profound environmental, climatic, energy, digital, and social transitions, reflecting on the future is not only a cognitive challenge but also a collective responsibility. The growing institutional focus, at global and European level, on issues of sustainability and intergenerational justice, also in light of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, calls for a profound rethinking of the regulatory, political, and economic paradigms that guide contemporary transformations. In this context, the future ceases to be merely a hypothetical horizon and becomes the direct object of legal claims, historical awareness, political planning, and institutional responsibility.

The expression ‘right to the future’ therefore aims to emphasize the need for widespread responsibility, which should not be assessed solely as a set of rules and institutions, but should also be sought from an ethical, historical, economic, and social point of view through a variety of disciplinary proposals to redefine a new balance between development, the environment, and innovation.

The *Student Conference 2025* aims to provide a common ground for scientific discussion on the topic of the ‘Right to the Future’, which will be explored and rethought from interdisciplinary perspectives.

The ultimate goal of the Conference is to highlight the contribution of the new generation of scholars in rethinking the relationship between the **environment, historical knowledge, innovation, and social transformation**, in order to look at what has been done and guide the transitions underway towards sustainable models of coexistence and progress between generations. The PhD students in Political Science and Public Administration at the University of Messina are pleased to invite PhD students and young researchers to participate in the *2025 call for papers* ‘Right to the Future: environment, sustainability, and innovation’ to build a varied and comprehensive debate on the theme of the right to the future, highlighting the issues of **sustainability, innovation, intergenerational justice, and historical awareness**.



The thematic areas are indicatively as follows:

- **Intergenerational justice: foundations, tools, and perspectives**

Proposals relating to **ethical, legal, and economic principles** aimed at guaranteeing the **rights of future generations by guiding collective and institutional responsibility** in long-term planning will be accepted. In this sense, it can be achieved through regulatory, institutional, and financial tools capable of directing public policies in a manner consistent with the **2030 Agenda** and the dynamics of multilateral diplomacy. In this perspective, *climate change litigation* also emerges as a new frontier of legal protection for the future.

- **Governance of collective goods and environmental protection**

This theme highlights the need to guarantee the **right to the environment** through effective ecological protection tools. In the face of growing **environmental conflicts, ecological inequalities, and social vulnerabilities**, sustainable management of natural and cultural resources is essential, based on participation and shared responsibility. In this context, **energy communities** represent an innovative example of inclusive governance, capable of strengthening the collective and democratic dimension of the **ecological transition**.

- **Historical changes, collective imaginaries, and narratives of the future**

Transitions throughout history, including ecological and social ones, have shaped different visions of the future, oscillating between **ideals of progress, fears of decline, and utopian aspirations**. Collective **imaginings** construct narratives capable of guiding public choices, influencing policies, and shaping intergenerational expectations, including through **visual culture and the media**. Analyzing these representations means understanding how communities, but also politics, interpret change and plan their future.

- **Sustainable economy, green taxation, and corporate responsibility**

The theme of sustainable economy calls for fair and inclusive **development models** capable of combining economic growth, environmental protection, and social justice. **Sustainable finance and green taxation** play a central role in guiding private and public choices towards long-term goals. In this context, **ESG criteria** are redefining **corporate governance**, promoting greater integration between economic performance, environmental impact, and social responsibility. At the same time, the **fight against greenwashing** requires the adoption of robust accountability and regulatory tools.

- **Technological innovation and institutional transformations**



Technological innovation is profoundly redefining the organization of institutions, starting with the **digitization of public administration**, linked to the principles of efficiency, transparency, and administrative accessibility. The new prospects opened up by the use of **artificial intelligence** also raise new challenges in terms of the protection of fundamental rights, the **quality of democracy**, and **fairness in the workplace**. In addition, smart cities and the use of public data are also emerging as laboratories for advanced governance, where **digital sustainability** becomes a guiding principle to ensure that technological innovation is compatible with environmental protection and social inclusion.

- **Active citizenship: new models of participation**

Active citizenship is now expressed through new forms of democratic participation, which complement traditional tools with deliberative practices, co-planning, and co-production of public services. **Digital technologies** offer new opportunities to promote **sustainable, inclusive, and transparent democracy**, while local experiences and bottom-up participatory processes strengthen the link between institutions and communities. In this context, **ETS** (Third Sector Entities) play a key role in promoting civic engagement and social innovation. The traditional tensions between representation and direct participation are taking on new forms in relation to the growing interest in **democratization and decentralization processes**, aimed at greater citizen inclusion in decision-making processes related to the management of common goods.

- **Education, universities, and training for the future**

Education plays a strategic role in the ecological and digital transition, with the task of training **citizens to be aware and competent** in the face of the challenges of change. In this context, there is a need for **interdisciplinary teaching** that promotes a **culture of sustainability, integrating environmental, social, and technological knowledge**. The university, understood as a civic laboratory, is increasingly becoming an institution of the future, called upon to **connect research, territory, and innovation** to generate social impact and guide the transformations underway.


The *Student Conference 2025* will take place in person on **December 11, 12, and 13, 2025, at the University of Messina, Department of Political and Legal Sciences**. The Scientific Committee reserves the right to evaluate any requests for remote participation, if adequately justified and strictly formulated during the abstract submission phase.



## HOW TO PARTICIPATE

The *Student Conference* is open to doctoral students and PhD graduates who have obtained their degree no more than three years ago in Political Science, Law, Economics, and Humanities.

To participate, candidates must, by **October 12, 2025**:

- **send an abstract** (maximum 500 words in Italian or English) and a curriculum studiorum to the email address:  [conferencescipog@unime.it](mailto:conferencescipog@unime.it)

The results of the selection process, which will be carried out by the Scientific Committee, will be communicated by **October 31, 2025**. In addition, those whose applications are successful will receive (via the email address used to send the abstract) a **form to fill out**, which will be used to organize the event.

Contributions that have successfully passed the evaluation/review process led by the Scientific Committee will be published in the Proceedings of the *Student Conference* by the end of 2026. The **deadline** for submitting contributions for publication will be announced during the conference.

**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE:** Giuseppe Bottaro, Francesco Martines, Alessandro Morelli, Giovanni Moschella, Daniela Novarese.

### ORGANIZING COMMITTEE:

The conference is organized by PhD students in Political Science and Public Administration Sciences from the SCIPOG Department of the University of Messina ([conferencescipog@unime.it](mailto:conferencescipog@unime.it))