

“Italy under Giorgia Meloni: A ‘Vanguard’ in the Management of Migration and Security Challenges?”

LSE, 15 May 2026

A one-day workshop followed by a roundtable featuring Barbara Serra (Skynews), Professor Tim Bale (Queen Mary University) and Caterina Mazzilli (ODI Global)

Call for papers

This one-day workshop will examine the **policies and influence** of Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, whose leadership of Brothers of Italy - widely classified as a populist radical right party - has positioned her government as a potential pacesetter for Europe’s radical right and beyond.

Central to her ‘vanguard’ role is a migration strategy prioritising deterrence, externalised asylum processing, and repatriation. Key policies include:

- Italy-Albania Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), establishing offshore migrant processing centres in Albania;
- Bilateral Agreements with North African Countries, such as the EU-Tunisia MoU, seeking to curb irregular departures through financial aid and cooperation;
- The Security Bill (Legislative Proposal No. 1660), tightening so-called “security measures”, including requiring residence permits for migrants to purchase mobile SIM cards.

These policies, whose compliance with fundamental rights is debated, have influenced migration strategies **across the European Union**. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has endorsed the Albania model as “out-of-the-box thinking” and advocated for “return hubs” outside the EU. Governments in EU countries including the Netherlands, Germany and Greece have started exploring similar deals with

African countries. The EU-Tunisia MoU, co-supported by von der Leyen, mirrors Italy's externalisation approach, despite human rights concerns. Both the EU's and the UK's migration discourses now emphasise fortified external borders, anti-smuggling measures, and partnerships with countries of origin and transit, shifting from earlier internal solidarity priorities, and raising concerns about Europe-wide policy implications and minority protections.

The event will analyse Meloni's policies since her appointment in September 2022 and assess their influence on other European governments and the European Union's leadership.

We welcome analyses that approach the workshop theme from different interdisciplinary perspectives. **Suggested topics** are:

- The role of courts in contesting or enabling migration externalisation
- EU–Africa relations and aid conditionality
- Convergence of populist framing of migration, security, and sovereignty in Europe
- Divergent national responses to Meloni's agenda
- Alternative approaches to migration governance and asylum protection
- Human rights implications of offshore processing and externalised asylum systems
- The impact of security-driven migration policies on racialised minorities and migrants
- Comparative perspectives on radical right leadership and governance strategies
- Mainstreaming of radical right discourse within EU-level politics
- Comparative analyses of Italy, the UK, and other EU member states adopting deterrence-based models

We welcome presentations from **academics, journalists and practitioners from think tanks, NGOs and foundations**, working on migration, asylum, and security. By addressing Meloni's influence and its broader implications, the workshop will contribute to critical debates on European governance and migration policy.

Organising committee

The event is sponsored by the **Political Studies Association Excellence and Impact Fund**, and it is organised by the **Italian Politics Specialist Group**, in collaboration with the **LSE European Institute**:

- Convenors: Prof. Daniele Albertazzi (University of Surrey) and Dr Donatella Bonansinga (University of Southampton)
- Chairs: Dr Marta Lorimer (Cardiff University) and Dr Marianna Griffini (Northeastern University London)

Logistics and travel grants for early careers

The event will consist of three panels for scholars and practitioners (from NGOs, think tanks, foundations), followed by a roundtable.

Lunch and coffee breaks will be provided and early career scholars (PhD students and those within 5 years of PhD completion) will be offered travel grants of up to £110 to cover travel/accommodation costs. Early careers receiving the grants must be members of the PSA.

Abstract submission and deadline

Please submit an abstract of up to 250 words to d.bonansinga@soton.ac.uk by **15 March 2026**.

If you are an early career scholar and would like to apply for a travel grant, please indicate this in your email, and confirm whether you are (or are planning to become) a member of the PSA. Early career membership costs £20 and can be purchased [here](#).