

Proposal for a panel, special session or roundtable at ESREL SRA-E 2025:

### **Risk and responsibility: What can we learn from managing COVID-19?**

When COVID-19 hit in early 2020, a distinct Nordic crisis management principle known as the responsibility principle (a principle of decentralized preparedness planning and crisis management stating that whoever is in charge during normal times also has the responsibility in extraordinary situations) was submitted to its hitherto most dramatic test: managing a full-scale crisis response across virtually all societal sectors and with an open-ended timeline which stretched for months and, as it turned out, years. After the pandemic, Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian government commission reports all concluded that the responsibility principle had to some extent been challenged by either strong or absent political leadership, centralized as well as decentralized decision-making and strategic, top-down direction-setting competing with local autonomy in various combinations and measures in the three countries. Ad-hoc crisis management organizations were established and responsibility was shifted around – but what was and can be learned from managing the most severe societal crisis since the Second World War? Taking our point of departure in current research being carried out in RESECTOR, a NordForsk-funded project 2023-26, we invite scholars from all disciplines and backgrounds to share insights and problems from studies in risk assessment, emergency preparedness and emergency and crisis management related to COVID-19, emphasizing the intricate relationship between risk and responsibility as abstract and practical concepts.

We envision 3-4 presenters from the RESECTOR project group and welcome an equal number of other researchers to the session.

On behalf of the RESECTOR consortium

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