

# Toine Paulissen

**Address:** Parkstraat 45, 3000 Leuven (BE)

**Nationality:** Dutch

**Date/Place of Birth:** 02/12/1994 – Maastricht (NL)

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## RESEARCH INTERESTS

Comparative Politics; Political Communication; Polarization; Political Parties; Political Finance; Campaign Regulations; European Politics; Referendums and Initiatives

## ACADEMIC POSITIONS

**Part-time Lecturer** | Dublin City University School of Law and Government

**2025-present**

- Principal teacher of two undergraduate modules:
  - o Money, Power & Democracy
  - o Comparative European Politics
- Responsible for module design, assignments, and grading

**Postdoctoral Researcher** | KU Leuven Voting & Democracy Research Group

**2025-present**

- Conducted research on effects of referendum campaigns - 1 publication under review, 2 in progress
- Finished supervision of 3 MSc students, currently supervising an additional 7 MSc students
- Collaborating on COST application

**Research Foundation Flanders (FWO) PhD Fellow in Fundamental Research** | KU Leuven

**2022-2025**

- Conducted research on party spending in referendum campaigns - 4 peer-reviewed publications, 1 in R&R
- Supervised 11 MSc students (including 3 mentioned above)
- Collaborated on large data collection project regarding referendum campaign finance regulations
- (Co-)Authored 5 reports regarding Belgian elections in 2024 (local, regional, federal and European)

**PhD Researcher and Teaching Assistant** | KU Leuven

**2021-2022**

- Conducted research on lobbying and EU politics - 1 peer-reviewed publication, 2 book chapters
- Prepared successful funding application for FWO PhD fellowship mentioned above
- Provided assistance to courses on academic writing and presenting, European politics, party politics, and introductory courses to political science
- Led multiple seminars
- Provided editorial assistance on edited volume with Cambridge University Press
- Supervised 4 MSc students

## VISITING POSITIONS

**Affiliated Scholar** | School of Politics and International Relations (SPIRe), University College Dublin, Ireland

**Nov 2024 – Oct 2025**

**Visiting Scholar** | Trinity Research in Social Sciences (TRiSS), Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

**Feb – May 2023**

## EDUCATION

**PhD in Social Sciences (Passed without corrections)**

**2021-2025**

KU Leuven | Leuven, Belgium

- Thesis: “What Ends Justify the Means? Explaining Party Campaign Spending in European Referendums”
- Supervised by prof. Bart Maddens & prof. Steven Van Hecke (co-supervisor)

**MSc: Comparative & International Politics**

**2017-2020**

KU Leuven | Leuven, Belgium

- Thesis: “‘Bildung’ in Brussel. De organisationele vorm van hoger onderwijsrepresentatie in de Europese Unie” [Bildung in Brussels. The organisational form of higher education lobbying in the European Union]
- Supervised by prof. Steven Van Hecke

**MA: Western Literature**

**2015-2017**

KU Leuven | Leuven, Belgium

- Thesis: “‘Engagement in crisis? Een studie van Van den Broecks Terug naar Walden (2009) en Lanoyes Gelukkige Slaven (2013) in het licht van het thema ‘crisis’” [Engagement in crisis? A study of Van den Broeck’s Terug naar Walden (2009) en Lanoye’s Gelukkige Slaven (2013) in the light of the theme ‘crisis’]
- Supervised by prof. Dirk De Geest

**BA: Linguistics & Literature – Specialisation Dutch-English**

**2012-2016**

KU Leuven | Leuven, Belgium

**PUBLICATIONS**

**Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles (9)**

- **Paulissen, T.** & Maddens, B. (Forth.) What Ends Justify the Means? Explaining Party Campaign Spending in Referendums in Europe. *European Political Science Review*. Pre-print: [https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/t7phk\\_v1](https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/t7phk_v1)
- **Paulissen, T.** (Forth.) Why do Parties Participate in Referendum Campaigns? Evidence from Switzerland. *Party Politics*. Pre-print: [https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/qu8c3\\_v1](https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/qu8c3_v1)
- Jansen, L., **Paulissen, T.** & Van Hecke, S. (2026). Riding the Wave? The Impact of the Russian Invasion on MEP behaviour regarding EU Enlargement to the Western Balkan countries. *Journal of European Integration*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2026.2623429>
- **Paulissen, T.**, Jansen, L., & Van Hecke, S. (2025). Depoliticizing Transnational Cleavage-Related Issues Through Social Media Advertising: The 2022 Danish Defense Referendum Campaign. *Politics and Governance*, 13, Article 9229. <https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.9229>
- Jansen, L., **Paulissen, T.**, & Van Hecke, S. (2025). Power beyond borders? Analysing formal and informal tools of the European Parliament in EU enlargement policy. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, OnlineFirst. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2024.2448257>
- **Paulissen, T.** & Horncastle, W.R. (2024). Introducing the RefCFRI: A continuous indicator comparing referendum campaign finance regulation in 143 countries. *Politics*, OnlineFirst. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02633957241303708>
- **Paulissen, T.** (2024). Direct democracy and party behaviour in the Republic of Ireland: a campaign finance perspective. *Irish Political Studies*, 39(4), 570-593. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07907184.2024.2371780>
- **Paulissen, T.** & Maddens, B. (2023). Referendum campaign financing by political parties: the case of the United Kingdom. *Political Science*, 75(1), 25–46. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00323187.2023.2238715>
- **Paulissen, T.**, Fraussen, B. & Van Hecke, S. (2022). Individual and collective representation: the organisational form of higher education lobbying in the European Union. *European Journal of Higher Education*, 14(1), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21568235.2022.2105372>

### **Book Chapters (2)**

- Van Hecke, S., Wolfs, W. & **Paulissen, T.** (2023). The Life and Death of the Spitzenkandidaten: What Role is Left for European Political Parties? In: Costa & Van Hecke (eds.), *The EU Political System After the 2019 European Elections* (pp. 83–89). Palgrave Macmillan; Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-12338-2\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-12338-2_5)
- Van Hecke, S., **Paulissen, T.** & Vande Walle, B. (2023). How Covid-19 Hit Brussels and Beyond: The EU's Crisis Management Tested by a Pandemic. In: Costa & Van Hecke (eds.), *The EU Political System After the 2019 European Elections* (pp. 381–400). Palgrave Macmillan; Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-12338-2\\_18](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-12338-2_18)

### **Miscellaneous (1)**

- **Paulissen, T.** (2025.) Summary: What Ends Justify the Means? Explaining Party Campaign Spending in European Referendums. *Politics of the Low Countries*. <https://doi.org/10.54195/plc.24497>

### **Outreach (5)**

- **Paulissen, T.** & Van Hecke, S. (2024). Referendum Moldavië: zelden zal een overwinning zo als een nederlaag hebben aangevoeld. *Knack*. Opinion Piece. <https://www.knack.be/nieuws/wereld/europa/referendum-moldavie-zelden-zal-overwinning-zo-als-een-nederlaag-hebben-aangevoeld/>
- **Paulissen, T.** (2024). Referenda? Bezint eer gij begint. *De Standaard* 14.03.2024. Opinion piece. [https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20240314\\_97128710](https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20240314_97128710)
- **Paulissen, T.** (2023). Indyref2? Rejoin EU? Consider first reforming regulations on referendum campaign finance. *UKandEU*. Blog post. <https://ukandeu.ac.uk/indyref2-rejoin-eu-consider-first-reforming-regulations-on-referendum-campaign-finance/>
- **Paulissen, T.**, Fraussen, B. & Van Hecke, S. (2022). How higher education institutions seek to influence EU policymaking. *LSEBlog*. Blog post. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2022/09/02/how-higher-education-institutions-seek-to-influence-eu-policy-making/>
- **Paulissen, T.** (2021). Orbans referendum is geen democratisch instrument, maar een politiek geladen wapen. *Knack*. Opinion piece. <https://www.knack.be/nieuws/wereld/europa/orbans-referendum-is-geen-democratisch-instrument-maar-een-politiek-geladen-wapen/>

### **Editorial Contributions (1)**

- Segers, M. & Van Hecke, S. (2023). *The Cambridge History of the European Union*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108780865>

### **Working Papers (4)**

- **Paulissen, T.** Direct Votes, Deepening Divides? Negative Campaigning and Affective Polarization in the 2023 Australian Voice Referendum.
- **Paulissen, T.**, Vande Walle, B., Maddens, B. & Van Hecke, S. Inequality, Investment and Consumption in Direct Democracy: A Network Analysis of Donor Behavior in UK Referendum Campaigns
- **Paulissen, T.** & Jansen, L. Digital Party Competition and EU Enlargement: The Case of the 2024 Moldovan EU Membership Referendum.
- McMenamin, I. & **Paulissen, T.** When is Political Speech Political Finance?

## RESEARCH FUNDING

Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO) PhD Fellowship for Fundamental Research. **2022-2026**  
Grant 1119125N: Referendum Campaign Finance & Political Parties in Europe. 130 000 EUR.

Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO) Long Stay Travel Grant. **2023**  
Grant V412823N: Ireland 2023. 4 950 EUR.

## AWARDS

Part of third cohort of the Europaeum Scholars Programme, a two-year leadership and policy course spread out over eight week-long modules hosted at different top European universities. ([LINK](#)) **2022-2023**

Laureate of Third Prize of Wilfried Martens Thesis Prize 2021 ([LINK](#))

## INVITED TALKS

Political Finance Regimes in Comparative Perspective: Belgium vs. The World. **November 2024**  
Guest Lecture, KU Leuven, Leuven

Charting the European Referendum Finance Landscape: Comparing Referendum Political Finance Régimes. Guest Lecture, KU Leuven, Leuven **November 2023**

Regulated Equality or *Laissez-Faire*? The Political Finance of Referendum Campaigns. **February 2023**  
Monday Seminar Series, Trinity Research in Social Sciences (TRiSS), Trinity College, Dublin

What is the use of Referendums? Guest Lecture, KU Leuven, Leuven **April 2022**

Referendums: Democracy *pur sang* or political instrument? Guest lecture, KULAK, Kortrijk **December 2021**

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

**2025** (3): Council for European Studies Conference for Europeanists, Philadelphia, USA; International Political Science Association (IPSA) General Conference, Seoul, South Korea; Polarization in Contemporary Politics, Lisbon, Portugal.

**2024** (7): APSA Virtual Conference; ECPR Joint Sessions, Luneburg, Germany; Political Parties and Referendums, Glasgow, UK; Belgian-Dutch Political Science Conference, Maastricht, The Netherlands; Biennial Conference of the ECPR Standing Group on the EU, Lisbon, Portugal; European Political Science Association (EPSA) General Conference, Cologne, Germany; ECPR General Conference, Dublin, Ireland.

**2023** (2): American Political Science Association (APSA) General Conference, Los Angeles, USA; Belgian-Dutch Political Science Conference, Leuven, Belgium.

**2022** (1): Düsseldorf Graduate Conference on Party Research (GraPa)

## SERVICE AT CONFERENCES

Co-organizer of Politics (the journal) workshop on “Polarization in Contemporary Politics” at Lisbon University **2025**

Chair & co-organizer of the panel “Direct Democracy in the Digital Age: Navigating Party and Voter Dynamics in Digital Referendum Campaigns” at ECPR General Conference, Dublin **2024**

Chair of the panel “Digital Authoritarianism: Trends and Practices” at ECPR General Conference, Dublin **2024**

## NON-ACADEMIC WORK EXPERIENCE

**Project Manager** | European Service @ Province of Vlaams-Brabant, Leuven, Belgium **Sep – Dec 2020**

- Managed INTEREG-project Housing 4.0 Energy
- Responsible for achieving deliverables and tasks, contact with project partners, and setting agenda of and leading monthly steering group meetings

**Marketing & Sales Manager** | Begijnhof Hotel, Leuven, Belgium **Sep 2018 – Dec 2020**

- Digitalisation of internal processes
- Change management
- Design and build website and communication campaigns
- Provide training materials for staff

## SKILLS & COMPETENCES

- **Technical skills:** Programming (R, RStudio), structured framing & thematic analysis, website building
- **Soft skills:** project management, leadership, teamwork, writing, public speaking
- **Languages:** English (near-native), Dutch (native), French (moderate), Spanish (beginner but learning)

## REFERENCES

- **Prof. Dr. Bart Maddens** | Full Professor @ KU Leuven – [bart.maddens@kuleuven.be](mailto:bart.maddens@kuleuven.be)
- **Prof. Dr. Sergiu Gherghina** | Full Professor @ Glasgow University - [Sergiu.Gherghina@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Sergiu.Gherghina@glasgow.ac.uk)
- **Prof. Dr. Iain McMenamin** | Full Professor @ Dublin City University - [iain.mcmenamin@dcu.ie](mailto:iain.mcmenamin@dcu.ie)