

Minutes Coordinators Meeting ELHN September 2019, Amsterdam

Present: see under 2.

Minutes by Jacqueline Rutte

Wednesday 18 September 2019

1. **Opening and agenda**

No extra items added to the agenda

2. **Minutes previous meeting:**

No meeting has taken place since April 2018 and present.

The minutes of the previous meeting are accepted.

The 2019 conference had no more space for open calls, therefore no intermediate meeting was organized.

➤ Round of introductions

Matthias van Rossum (organizer)

Christian Wicke (Industrial Heritage)

Tibor Valuch (Industrial Heritage + East Central Europe)

Gorkem Akgöz (Factory History)

Jeannine Bishoff (Military Labour)

Eloisa Betti (Feminist Labour History)

Timothy Ashplant (Workers Writing)

Juliane Schiel (Free and Unfree Labour)

Matt Perry (Working Class Politics)

Christian de Vito (Free and Unfree Labour)

Jenny Jansson (Workers Education)

Jonas Soderqvist (Workers Education)

Fia Sundevall (Military Labour)

Stefano Bellucci (Remuneration and Bargaining)

Jordi Ibarz (Maritime Labour History)

Enrique Garcia (Maritime Labour History)

Johan Heinsen (Free and Unfree Labour)

Xavier Vigna (Working Class Politics)

Claude Roccati (European Trade Unionism)

Matt Perry (Working Class Politics)

Donald Weber (website, organizer)

3. **Proposal ELHN Network structure**

The proposal tries to capture the existing practice and the conclusions of the discussion at the ELHN coordinators meeting in April 2018. This proposal is intended as a first document that can be improved based on the discussion and input.

There are improvements possible regarding the general structure; details and phrasing and other issues.

The next coordinators meeting should be announced earlier seen the needed travel arrangements.

There should always be a coordinators meeting preceding the conference.

Below an overview of the comments made by several coordinators:

Christian Wicke:

How to formalize membership (WG vs Network)? Membership fee?
Freedom / workshop structure – get together > virtue of panel structure

Timothy Ashplant:
Three/four speakers per session is too much for in-depth discussions

Johan Heinsen:
General Assembly – how to meet, where and when?
We need a guideline for how to organize GA in accessible city?

Jonas Soderqvist:
Will there be a permanent secretariat?

Christian Wicke:
Structure of the document > WGs should be at the top
Order: WG, GA, Steering, Secretary, Website, Conference

Juliane Schiel:
Membership question raised
Openness is crucial and important – bottom-up is central. Free/Unfree
network is open and keeps in contact with their members via a mailinglist.

How to communicate > mailaddresses not to secretary, remains at WG >
then WG inform / communicate to members/ mailing list

Eloisa Betti:
WG as point of information and in control of email lists
Open system allows people to stay in touch with other work groups.

Jonas Soderqvist:
Network as a network of working groups, rather than a network itself

Matthias van Rossum:
Memberships are not formalized. The secretariat communicates with the
coordinators. We depend on the coordinators to communicate with the
network members.

Juliane Schiel:
Newsletter point
Network as first contact point of entry.
Registration form on the website (Donald says that is possible)

Timothy Ashplant:
Formulate guidelines:
How members/WGs should proceed and work (WG vs ELHN) for
clarification

Stefano Bellucci:
Make clear distinction between conference and network (and then ELHN-
WG)
Network fully based on WG – with small centralized ELHN newsletter
Centralize the organization

Christian Wicke:
Create time and space for working groups to meet.

Matthias van Rossum:
one general newsletter for all ELHN members. Working groups can have their own newsletters and (part of) their information could also be published in the general newsletter.

Görkem:
The network coordinators should reply to inquiries. She has not much comments on the proposal, it roughly takes down to the current practices.

Corinne:
We need a proposal for the next conference with the conference place, the format etc.

Practical things to do:

- Mailing lists – collecting information for central newsletter
- CfPs for conference by WGs – communicated by WGs themselves and ELHN newsletter
- Registration form – register for ELHN newsletter/updates – and then for WG + contact info members for this newsletter / emailing list
- One central newsletter from ELHN itself – once a year – not replacing WG lists – but including info / cfps of WGs
- How members/WGs should proceed and work (WG vs ELHN) for clarification
- Put standard statement in email to anybody – on how to communicate – include / respond to WG coordinators

**The meeting decides to accept the formulation of the structure as captured in the proposal text as general guideline for now;
The meeting decides to appoint as steering committee Silke Neunsinger (chair), Matthias van Rossum (vice-chair), Jacqueline Rutte (secretary), Donald Weber (website), and the local conference host member (to be discussed);
The meeting decides to continue this discussion and improve the structure document in the next meeting after this conference (during the ESSHC 2020).**

4. Status of the free/unfree group

The Free/unfree group have received a cost action grant, congratulations with this success in obtaining funding for (part of) the WG activities <https://socialhistoryportal.org/sites/default/files/Newsletter%20No.%202015.pdf>

The question is if this changes the status of the working group? We will explore how we can organize and collaborate in such a way that this strengthens the discipline of (global) labour history as a whole. The Free/unfree will keep their status as working group in the ELHN network.

5. Next conference (host candidates)

Criterion for future conference: the costs should be low so that as many people as possible can attend
Option for Vienna - Juliane

[Budapest – Tibor – political uncertainties – answer on possibility or not in first half of next year – around March 2020]

We have to continue the discussion on this; please consult your Working Group on this point so we can continue the discussion and come to a decision.

6. Website

- Cost Action information grant is posted on the website (see 4)
- Working groups Industrial Heritage and Labour/Empire don't have a page yet on the Socialhistoryportal (<https://socialhistoryportal.org/elhn/wg>). Please contact Donald.
- Donald needs more input from the working groups about events, calls, news, conferences etc.
- Working groups are asked to communicate with newsletters on their workgroup pages.

Follow up Saturday 21st September

Present: Matthias van Rossum, Silke Neunsinger, Stefano Bellucci, Marcel van der Linden, Nico Pizzolata, Görkem Akgöz, Esther Bartha, Tibor Valuch, Christian de Vito, Isabelle Lespinet, Eric Geerkens, Christina Borderias, Christine de Matos, Enric Garcia, Christian Wicke, Leda Papastefanaki, Francesca Sanna, Judith Therhorn, Miquel Perez Perceval, Jordi Ibars, Mercé Renom, Eloise Betti, Stefan Moitra, Timothy Ashplant, Olli Siitonen, Nathalie Ponsard, Luisa Veloso, Jonas Söderqvist, Jenny Jansson

1. Next conference

How to move forward with the choice for Vienna or Budapest? Tibor states that seen the political situation in Hungary, organizing a conference will be very difficult. Better to go to Vienna, and Tibor offers help in organizing the next 2021 conference there. If the situation changes we might organize the 2023 conference in Budapest.

We must include Hungarian scholars in the 2021 conference, we must not abandon threatened colleagues. Juliana agreed to organize the next conference in Vienna

Invite a democratic Hungarian to give a key note in Vienna.

Labour Historians in Europe must become a topic in the ESSHC in Leiden, NL 2020.

Juliane (not present during this meeting) will ask her university if they agree to host the next conference in 2021. The terms start in October so there will be more space in Vienna, which means that more people can participate in the conference, ergo more sessions. So we can grow.

However Vienna is not yet certain. The Free/Unfree cost action grant finances during 4 years travel grants for their members. There is a lot of administration involved. 2 cost meetings must be organized annually of which one is a conference. We should avoid to have duplicate conferences.

Proposal> do not merge the conference but link them. Organize ELHN conference of 2 days followed by a Cost conference 1,5 days. ELHN members can also attend the Cost conference. This option is better for the environment, saves money and strengthens both ELHN and Cost. Juliana can organize both conferences in Vienna. The working Groups organize their own sessions and ELHN will not organize Cost.

Working Groups can have a day that overlaps with Cost but this has to be agreed upon with Cost and to be discussed with Juliane

Next coordinators meeting: There will be the Nordic conference in Copenhagen in November 2020 and there will be the ESSHC in March 2020.

We will surely meet in Leiden and then decide if we will (or not) meet in Copenhagen.

All coordinators should be informed about the date and place for next meeting plus the agenda.

Discussion points next meeting:

1. The structure ELHN (proposals for revisions can be submitted on forehand)
2. Implications of changing academic and political environments
3. How to relate to GLHN?

All working groups that have items to be put on the agenda, please do send them in on time to Jacqueline.

Also keep her informed about changes in the working groups etc.

Proposal ELHN Network structure

Judith speaks on behalf of R&B, MIN and FAM and she refers to the email send to the coordinators on 21 September by Corine Maitte. They want a flexible network, they have questions about the new status and they want not a steering committee but rather an advisory board.

If the structure changes they want to have a vote and they are afraid to loose flexibility and become institutionalized.

Matthias responds and states that there is no intention to centralize the network. At the same time there is a need for a structured organizational/administrative processes. The proposal for the structure aims to formulate the current practice and the state of the discussion after the Belfast meeting. This can be improved during future meetings. He stresses that there will not be a top-down structure. The working groups are key in the network and they are free how to function. The power for decisions lies with the representatives of the working groups in this meeting (general assembly). In Belfast the steering committee was called 'coordinating committee' – this reflects its role better, but leads to confusion with the title of the general assembly which consists of all the coordinators of the working group. Rotating the members of the committee is a good idea and important.

Reaction Timothy: use another name, not steering committee.

Reaction Eloise: rotation is a good idea. Silke is no longer in the feminist group so there will be no conflict of interest.

Reaction Christian de Vito: there is no need to worry. Working groups are key in this network.

Reaction Jonas: administration is important to keep loose ends together.

The decisions of the first meeting are confirmed. The committee is Silke (chair), Matthias (vice chair), Donald (website) and Jacqueline (administration). The hosts of the following conference are included. The positions of chair and vice chair can rotate. The current proposal for the organizational structure is taken as a guideline for now, and will also be discussed during the next meeting in Leiden.

Next Meeting

please do send in your items for the agenda in time to Jacqueline