

# **European Labour History Network - ELHN**

## **Working Group “Labour in Mining”**

### *The European Labour History Network (ELHN)*

The founding meeting of the ELHN took place at the International Institute of Social History (IISH) on 12 October 2013. The forty scholars who gathered in Amsterdam, belonging to research institutions, archives and journals based in various European countries, felt the need to increase the cooperation among labour history scholars, share knowledge and (digital) material, create a platform for future collective research, and organize conferences and seminars. The Network includes Europe-based scholars (professors, post-doc and PhD researchers, post-graduate students) but seeks to connect with scholars based outside Europe.

The 1<sup>st</sup> ELHN Conference was held in Turin in 2015 and 2<sup>nd</sup> ELHN Conference was held in Paris in 2017. In order to structure the network and overcome fragmentation, the key-role of working groups was underlined. Some working groups were proposed and took shape. Among others: Long term perspectives on remuneration; Pre-industrial Labour; Feminist Labour History; Industrial heritage and structural change; workers politics and social movements; Imperial labour history; Labour in mining.

### *The ELHN Working Group “Labour in Mining”*

The ELHN working group “**Labour in Mining**” aims at creating and expanding existing, more or less formal and informal contacts and networks of scholars with an interest in labour in mining sector in Europe and around the world.

Mining has special characteristics not only for its kind of jobs (typically in the underground), its morbidity and workplace accidents, its location linked to the existence of resources and migratory phenomena, the high potential for conflict and harsh working conditions. Its peculiarity has given to labour markets of the sector a kind of isolation in relation to other productive activities.

These characteristics have given a particular evolution, reproducing itself internally (through the own families), and perpetuating cultural moulds that have continued along time. The study of the evolution of the labour relations in mining is useful not only for knowing the transformations of labour in this sector, but also for elaborating more our knowledge of labour history in general, and in some labour markets, characterized by some grade of isolation, in particular.

On the labour activities in mining, we have a wide literature in the past and in the present. It is a topic on which it has been done an important work compiling sources and research. But above all it suffers from having been focused in a local scope and having formed several cliché on the miner’s behaviour. Besides, there are some elements hardly studied. As some examples, the role of the women in the direct activities and in the preservation of the living conditions in the mining hubs; the incidence of professional illnesses (silicosis, hydrargirism, hookworm, lead poisonism, etc.) and, specially, a European’s lack of vision about the sector as a whole, relating the evolution of the more relevant mining countries and hubs.

We would like to discuss research related to a broad range of themes and concepts in economic, social and cultural labour history of mining including but not limited to the following:

- **The intersection of class, race, gender, age, global inequality, etc. in labour in mining; Dual work (agricultural and mining), migrations, discrimination.**
- **Labour relations: labour organisation, developing of the wage earner work, wages and remuneration systems, hiring and scientific organisation of labour.**
- **Technological development and evolution of the job markets: from the steam to the electricity, from the gravimetric concentration systems to the differential flotation, the underground work and the open-cast work, labour problems, incidence in the health and conflicts, technological change and mining conjunctures.**
- **Living conditions and inequality. Occupational health and safety in mining: mortality, morbidity, pollution and sanitary institutions.**
- **Mining communities: characteristics, problems, urban penalty.**
- **Strategies of the management, working movement, industrial paternalism, truck system, conflicts, trade unions.**
- **Industrial archaeology of mining activities, immaterial patrimony, culture.**
- **Archives of mining activities.**

We wish to contribute in the relations between the researchers in this field, in the establishment of research lines and a frame to exchange information and knowledge, publications and other initiatives in this field. Moreover, we are offering a support to databases download and consultation on the mining labour, accesible for the Academy. We also aim at the exchange of knowledge about primary sources, archives, and literature related to the history of labour in mining.

The WG on “Labour in Mining” wish to exchange knowledge, to organize meetings and workshops, to organize and design collective projects, to participate with sessions in the next ELHN Conference in Uppsala 2024.

*The coordinators of the Working Group are:*

Francesca Sanna (francesca.sanna10@gmail.com), Post-Doc at Université Paris Est Créteil-UGE. Her research focuses on scientific management, labour and business history, particularly in the domain of contemporary mining industry. She holds a PhD in History and Civilisation (Université de Paris – Paris VII Diderot) and a Specialisation degree in Industrial Heritage Management (Università di Padova). Find more information: [here](#)

José Joaquín García Gómez (josejgg@ual.es) Degree in Economics (University of Valencia, 2003), M.Sc. in International Business Management (Escuela de Organización Industrial, 2005) and PhD in Economic History (University of Alicante, 2013). From September 2009 to May 2015 he was Associate Professor in the Department of Applied Economic at the University of Alicante. He is currently Full Professor in the Department of Economics (area

of Economic History) at the University of Almería. His main research interests are living standards during the industrialization and the history of Spanish mining. He is the main researcher (IP) in a research project for the Ministry of Science.

Gabriele Marcon (PhD, EUI). I am an early modern historian whose interests lie at the intersection between labor history and the history of science. My research offers new insights into the mobility of workers and the construction of scientific expertise in early modern Europe. My doctoral dissertation – titled Transnational Expertise. German miners in Renaissance Italy – builds on a comparative study of the mobility of German miners to the Republic of Venice and the Duchy of Florence with the aim to uncover the relationship between labor mobility and the circulation of knowledge across early modern extractive economies. The challenge moving forward is to explore the circulation, adaptation, and contestation of scientific expertise across Europe, the British Empire, and the Iberian World from a global and comparative perspective in the period 1500-1800.

If you are interested in joining the Working Group on “**Labour in Mining**”, please fill in the below attached form.

All good wishes,

Francesca, José Joaquín, and Gabriele

6 June 2022

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“Labour in Mining”**

**Questionnaire**

Name and Surname	
Affiliation	
Academic position (if any)	
Personal webpage	

Research interests (in general):

Research interests related to the topic:

How would you like to be involved in the Working Group on “**Labour in Mining**”?  
Please, tick all relevant responses:

- Receive information
- Take part in seminars, conferences, and other events.
- Organize seminars, conferences, and other events.
- Organize and design collective projects
- Other:

Would you like to suggest any topic for future workshop or conferences?

Please, add any further comments and suggestions here.

*Do you consent the circulation of these information within the working group members?*

*Do you consent the publication of these information, e.g. on the future website of the ELHN?*

**Please, return this questionnaire to: Francesca Sanna,**  
francesca.sanna10@gmail.com