

CfP: “Disparities and Inequalities in Transformations of Labour Migration: Historical Shifts and Historiographical Debates” (Working Group Labour Migration History, ELHN Conference Barcelona, 16-19 June 2026)

The Labour Migration History Working Group of the European Labour History Network (ELHN) invites submissions for its sessions on the theme of “Disparities and Inequalities in Transformations of Labour Migration: Historical Shifts and Historiographical Debates” to be held at the 6th European Labour History Conference in Barcelona, 16-19 June 2026.

The working group aims to build an interdisciplinary network of scholars studying labour migration from a historical perspective. Although migration currently receives great attention in political and academic debates, it is often discussed as a humanitarian emergency, a social and a security problem, but very rarely as a labour (history) issue. Similarly, research sympathetic to the struggles of migrants tends to denounce the violation of human and civil rights experienced by migrants but very rarely refers to the ways in which migration management policies have historically contributed to the creation of unfree and precarious working conditions. Our network seeks to generate scholarly debate about the interconnectedness of labour and migration history and stresses the importance of labour to analyse change in migration patterns and policies across time and space. We are interested in both empirical and theoretical analysis, and in various types of labour migration, perspectives, chronological and regional foci.

We invite papers addressing labour migration history including (but not limited to) the following topics of interest:

- Labour mobility in domestic, regional and transnational policies and patterns
- Intra-bloc and East-South labour migration in the Cold War context
- Labour migration beyond normative and methodological nationalism
- Organised migration schemes (e.g. “Guestworkers”) in a comparative perspective
- Labour precarity and coercion in historical perspective
- Entanglements between forced and voluntary migration
- Methodological considerations and innovations in labour migration history
- Historical shifts in intersections of gender, race, and class in migrant labour flows
- The impact of migration in sending societies: Remittances and the financialization of migrants

Please send a 300 to 500-word abstract and a short academic CV (max 300 word) in one MS word file to the WG coordinators listed below by **15 July 2025**. The proposal should include your name, current affiliation and contact details. The subject of the email needs to be: “Labour migration history ELHN 2026”. If you think your paper fits well with CfP by other working groups (to be found here <https://socialhistoryportal.org/>) please add their names and we will consider your suggestions in cases it will be possible to organise joint panels.

Please send your proposal and any queries to the following email addresses:

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