

## **Call for Papers: Working Group “Labour and Coercion” at the European Labour History Network (ELHN) Conference 2026**

The ELHN Working Group “Labour and Coercion” invites proposals for papers and sessions at the upcoming 6th ELHN Conference. The event will take place from **16 to 19 June 2026** in Barcelona.

The present call for papers seeks contributions that address the interplay between labour and coercion, focusing on any geographical location or period. Contributions should embrace a conceptualisation of coercion as a relational concept and an analytical framework that can be applied to any type of work relation. This approach challenges the establishment of an analytical dichotomy between ‘free’ and ‘unfree’ labour.

The objective is to advance the study of labour and coercion by bringing together scholars specialising in diverse forms of labour relations. Examples include chattel slavery, wage labour, debt bondage, convict labour, indentured work, sharecropping, household labour, and military service. Thereby, the sessions should aim at going beyond the analysis of differences and commonalities between different types of labour and instead aim to historicise coercion and coercive social practices in different contexts.

We are currently reflecting on the co-construction of different coercive dynamics through the relationship between the materiality of work, its social representation and workers’ self-perception, thereby reflecting on the ambivalent relationship between norms and practice when it comes to the role of coercion in work relations.

Consequently, we warmly welcome submissions that address the following aspects:

- **Material practices** that bring forward, reproduce or challenge coercion;
- **Social representations** of coercion at work, i.e. how coercion is represented, perceived and discussed;
- Processes of **subjectification**, i.e. how workers perceive themselves in relation to their work;
- Coercive relational dynamics within work and social relations which involve all the aforementioned aspects of coercion.

We accept both proposals for sessions and individual papers. Session proposals should include 3 or 4 papers and include abstracts for the session as a whole (i.e. what is the concept/common thread of the session), as well as for each individual paper.

Each abstract should be max. **500 words** excluding bibliography.

**Proposals should be sent to [elhnlaborandcoercion@gmail.com](mailto:elhnlaborandcoercion@gmail.com) until 1 June 2025.**

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