



WORCK Newsletter N° 8

Aalborg/Vienna, 10 May 2021

Dear members of the COST Action WORCK,
dear colleagues interested in the study of labour and coercion,

while the European Commission discusses the details for a Digital Green Certificate to facilitate safe free movement inside the EU during the Covid-19 pandemic, we are happy to announce the **opening of the registration period** for our WORCK Conference 2. The conference, taking place from 30 August to 3 September 2021 in Vienna, is organised together with the European Labour History Network (ELHN).

The **European Labour History Network** was established at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam in 2013. It consists of sixteen working groups focusing on specific themes such as factory labour, women's labour, military labour, maritime labour etc. and organises a biennial international conference. The COST Action WORCK has emerged from one of the ELHN working groups in 2019. The University of Vienna, the grant holder institution of the COST Action WORCK, is now organising the joint conference of both networks.

Thanks to this cooperation, you will find a **rich 5-day programme of plenary events and parallel sessions**, organised either by the ELHN committee and the ELHN working groups or by the WORCK network and its working groups (see attachment). The first three days will be dedicated to the activities and individual projects of the working groups of both networks, framed by a joint opening event, a keynote lecture and a roundtable discussion organised by the ELHN committee, and an exhibition on labour and coercion organised by the WORCK network. The last one and a half days are devoted to a specific topic of the WORCK network and realised in a plenary setting. Under the title "**Historicising the Concept of Europe in Global History**", the WORCK network invites for a conceptual discussion on the place of Europe in global labour history debates. Over the last three decades, global history has fostered a number of key contributions to the ongoing rethinking of the temporal and spatial constructs that underpin historical writing. This has led to a widening of horizons and has opened up new research agendas, in labour history as well as in social history in general. Today, it is no longer feasible to write the history of the world as a history of European expansion. And the history of work is no longer automatically framed as the history of supposedly Western models and their contribution to modernity. Yet, global history has only rarely confronted the highly unstable historical construct we call "Europe". Therefore, these last one and a half conference days are dedicated to the need to historicise Europe as a conceptual frame in global history and discuss social inequalities in Europe – both in past and present. The respective discussions will be led by invited experts on the basis of a joint reader.

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The conference will be carried out as a **hybrid event**. This means that all programme items will either be streamed or set up via Zoom. Conference participants decide upon registration whether they would like to participate on-site or online. Please note that due to the COST regulations, there will be **two registration links**. **WORCK members and invited guests** receive an individual registration link via email, while **ELHN members and external participants** need to register through our website: <https://www.worck.eu/conference-2-2021-vienna/>. The **registration period takes place from 17 May to 15 July**.

WORCK members and invited guests will receive partial or full reimbursement by the COST Action WORCK. Yet, all travel and hotel arrangements are to be made by the conference participants themselves. However, as the current pandemic remains a challenge for the planning and organisation of bigger events involving traveling and accommodation, we kindly ask you to check the cancellation policies for your travel and accommodation options and please don't make **any definite travel arrangements before the end of July**. We will confirm the realisation of the conference in the planned format by 26 July.

Besides the planning for the conference, we are happy to report on the **second WORCK Meeting**, organised online by Gonçalo Melo da Silva (MC Member for Portugal) and the University of Lisbon on 24 February 2021. About 70 people participated in the one-day event. The working groups gave brief overviews of their ongoing activities and publication projects and contributed conceptual issues for discussion. At the end of the day, the participants discussed the role of the WORCK Publication Platform (<https://data.worck.eu/>) for continued collaboration across the working groups. As a consequence of this discussion, we are currently setting up a **conceptual group brainstorming on a potential “archive of coercion”** and its requirements and values. Anyone interested in joining this discussion, please get in contact with Johan Heinsen (heinsen@dps.aau.dk).

The working groups continue to organise online workshops and to work on their respective publication projects. All past and upcoming activities of the WORCK working groups are listed here: <https://www.worck.eu/worck-agenda/>.

The Public Outreach Group is working on an illustration project. Selected papers from the WORCK Conference 1 last September are currently transformed into illustrated stories. The results of this project entitled “Stories of Work and Coercion: Scientific Contributions Depicted in Illustrations” will be presented in the form of an on-site travelling exhibition, launched at the WORCK-ELHN Conference in Vienna this summer, and in the form of an edited volume, planned for 2022.

We conclude this newsletter with a few announcements:

1. The next **Management Committee Meeting** will take place online on Monday, 4 October 2021, 12pm to 3pm (CEST). At the MC Meeting, we will discuss the budget for the upcoming grant period, decide on the venues of upcoming WORCK events and vote for responsible core group positions. For all votes and decisions each COST member country has one vote. Each member country should send at least one MC member or MC substitute to the meeting. The link for the meeting and the agenda will be sent out after the WORCK Conference 2 / ELHN Conference 4 in early September.

2. WORCK is now on **Instagram** (https://www.instagram.com/worc_k/). As we not only aim at advancing the scholarly discussion on labour and coercion but also seek to engage in public debates, we would like to use this medium to interact with non-academic communities and communicate the outcomes of our research to a broader audience. Therefore, we not only advertise current news regarding our network activities but we also would like to offer insights into the history of coercion in labour and communicate these stories via our public channels. Thus, we warmly **invite you to contribute** to these exchanges and propose ideas for **Instagram posts on (hi)stories of coercion**. Your proposal should include an image related to your research and a very brief and simple text explaining the image and its meaning (up to 2,000 characters). Please send your post proposals to Teresa Petrik (teresa.petrik@univie.ac.at).
3. The Think Tank Group is launching a new **WORCK Blog discussion** dealing with the **ambivalent effects of European funding tools on academic work in Europe**. The blog, coordinated by Peter-Paul Bänziger (MC Member for Switzerland), aims at providing a space for sharing experiences with European funding policies and invites for a critical reflection on implicit hierarchies and exclusion mechanisms. The dominance of the English language in the academic world, the homogenisation of proposal and review processes or the ambivalent effects of well-intentioned incentive measures may be part of this blog discussion on the constraints to which academic work itself is subject. Proposals can still be sent to p.baenziger@unibas.ch. If possible, the final text should be written in at least two languages.
4. If you are planning to apply for a **mobility or collaboration grant**, you can do so any time until 1 September. For more information, please visit <https://www.worck.eu/activities/stsm/> and get in contact with the STSM Coordinator Clara Almagro Vidal (stsm@worck.eu). We will do our best to support and advise you for your mobility plans and cooperation projects.
5. If you are based in an Inclusiveness Target Country (ITC) and would like to apply for a fee-based (virtual) conference, we invite you to apply for the ITC Conference Grant. Please get in contact with Jakub Stofaník (itc-cg@worck.eu).

Stay safe and take care!

Johan Heinsen and Juliane Schiel