



## WORCK Newsletter N° 7

Aalborg/Vienna, 2 February 2021

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

a new year has begun and even though Covid-19 will still continue to define the framework of our everyday life for a while, we are looking forward to a number of exciting projects and activities on the study of labour and coercion in 2021.

Most importantly, our **WORCK Meeting 2** will take place on Wednesday, **24 February 2021**. Similar to the first meeting we had last year in Lyon, this one-day workshop will be dedicated to an in-depth exchange between the working groups and among the larger community of WORCK members. Besides a mutual update on ongoing plans, we would like to use the workshop for feedback on pressing research questions and challenging methodological issues by creating an open space for brainstorming and discussion. After five time slots dedicated to the current work of the WORCK working groups, we will close the day by a round-table discussion with other COST Action representatives and our COST Science Officer Mickael Pero on the improvement of tools of international networking and collaboration in a time where we are all confined to work from home.

The WORCK Meeting, hosted by Gonçalo Melo da Silva (MC Member for Portugal) from the University of Lisbon, will **take place online**. Please note that the **attached workshop programme** contains the virtual access details and is designated for your personal use only. Interested colleagues who have not yet registered as WORCK members are kindly asked to register for the workshop by sending an email to [iem.geral@fcs.unl.pt](mailto:iem.geral@fcs.unl.pt). They will then receive the workshop programme with the access details. All WORCK members who have already actively participated in one of our WORCK events, will receive an **automatic eCOST invitation** within the next days and are kindly asked to confirm or decline their participation as outlined in this invitation. .

We are optimistic that our **WORCK Conference 2**, which will take place in cooperation with the European Labour History Network (ELHN) from **30 August to 3 September 2021**, can be organised as an on-site event in **Vienna**. Three days with almost 90 parallel sessions and authors' workshops organised by ELHN and WORCK working groups will be followed by a one-day discussion on social inequalities in Europe. Instead of paper presentations, this fourth conference day (2 September) will be based on joint readings and expert interviews and seeks to challenge the rather simplistic concept of Europe currently used in many debates of global history by pointing to historical and contemporary inequalities within Europe and between different parts of Europe and the rest of the world.

# WORCK

Besides these two major events planned for 2021, we will have numerous other meetings organised by the WORCK working groups. Apart from **regular online meetings**, we will have **on-site meetings in Aalborg, Amsterdam, Venice, Vienna and other places** as soon as the pandemic situation allows us to travel again. All meetings and workshops are listed and currently updated on our **WORCK Agenda** (<https://www.worck.eu/worck-agenda/>).

In the meantime, the working groups have issued several **calls for workshop papers and publication projects**. These calls are also attached to this newsletter. If you are interested in contributing, please get in contact with the responsible editors and coordinators.

Furthermore, we would like to inform you that WORCK has launched **two new post series for the WORCK Blog**. After having coordinated a first blog on “Covid-19 and the Workers of the World” last spring and summer with blog contributions from all over the world, we would like to invite you to a **discussion on convict labour**, coordinated by Fernando Mendiola (MC Member for Spain): <https://www.worck.eu/blog/>. In many countries, one way for prisoners to improve their situation in prison is to get a job. Convict labour, however, is often regulated in an ambiguous way. On the one hand, even in the countries where work is considered a right, it is often restricted, for example through “progressive application”– that is, delaying it until the later phases of incarceration. Prison authorities thus claim they do not have the obligation to offer jobs to all their inmates. On the other hand, prisoners, NGOs, and trade unions all over the world have reported cases of abuse and exploitation of prisoners through work. Although labour is usually not an obligation, through various coercive measures convict status is tied, in practice, to labour and discipline. Contemporary convict labour therefore seems to be a valuable testing-ground for our network’s efforts to analyse the degree to which coercion is involved in different labour relations. We invite NGOs, trade unionists, activists, media representatives, concerned citizens, and directly affected prisoners to enter into a debate with an international network of economic and social historians, anthropologists, sociologists, and philosophers of work. Please send your contributions to [fernando.mendiola@unavarra.es](mailto:fernando.mendiola@unavarra.es).

The other **blog discussion** we are launching this year deals with the **ambivalent effects of European funding tools on academic work in Europe**. This blog series, 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 homogenization 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 be sent to [p.baenziger@unibas.ch](mailto:p.baenziger@unibas.ch). If possible, the final text should be written in at least two languages.

Please note also that COST has prolonged the current grant period until the end of October 2021.

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 STSM Coordinator Clara Almagro Vidal ([stsm@worck.eu](mailto:stsm@worck.eu)). We will do our best to support and advise you for your mobility plans and cooperation projects.



Researchers from Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC) are encouraged to apply for **ITC grants covering conference fees for online conferences**. The individual application will be attended according to the respective pandemic circumstances. For more information please visit <https://www.worck.eu/activities/itc-grant/> and get in contact with ITC Conference Grants Manager Jakub Stofanik ([itc-cg@worck.eu](mailto:itc-cg@worck.eu)).

Stay safe and take care!

Johan Heinsen and Juliane Schiel

Attachments:

- Programme with access link of the online WORCK Meeting 2, hosted by the University of Lisbon
- Call for Paper Proposals for a Collected Volum entitled “On the Move. Historical Perspectives on Coercion, Labour, and Im/Mobility” (WG 3)
- Call for Paper Proposals for a Special Issue on “Intersectional Approaches to Coercion and Marginalization in Labour” (WG 4)