

Call for sessions and papers on Labour and Working Class History for the Twelfth European Social Science History Conference (ESSHC), Belfast, 4-7 April 2018

On 4-7 April 2018 the 12th European Social Science History Conference will take place at Queen's University in Belfast (Northern Ireland) – <https://esshc.socialhistory.org/esshc-belfast-2018>. The ESSHC brings together scholars interested in explaining historical phenomena using the methods of the social sciences. The conference is characterized by a lively exchange in many small groups, rather than by formal plenary sessions. It is organized in a large number of networks that cover specific fields of interest.

One of the largest networks is Labour. We think that progress in Labour History is being made by analysing global developments in labour relations and labour struggles, including the influence of these global developments on specific contexts and vice versa. It also remains essential to take into account other constituent elements of working class identities besides class, such as gender, ethnicity, religion, age and nationality. Furthermore, we see the emergence of substantial new areas of study within Labour History, for example: the connected histories of colonial and metropolitan labour across the early modern and modern periods; the “provincialization” of Atlantic slavery vis-à-vis the emergence of new research on the experiences of enslavement in the medieval Mediterranean and the early modern Indian Ocean, Asia and the Pacific; a renewed approach to the question of free and unfree labour; the entanglements between the management of slave, indentured, convict and wage labour; the entanglements between the study of labour relations and workers' individual and collective agency; and the focus on single sites of production and reproduction (plantations, factories, mines, households, manufactures, docks, railways etc.). Moreover, we witness a growing tendency to foreground labour history in order to understand pressing contemporary issues, such as globalization, social inequality, migration, labour precariousness, mass incarceration and citizenship.

The Labour Network welcomes any session or paper proposal dealing with all topics and periods in labour and working class history. **For a detailed list of the criteria that we will follow in our selection, see the annex 1 below.** Please, read it carefully when preparing your proposal.

As part of the Labour Network programme, at the ESSHC 2018 we aim to organize three ‘Methodological Sessions’. These are sessions where methodological issues in the study of Labour History are explicitly foregrounded (this does not prevent the papers to be also empirically based). For example, you may think of sessions on new perspectives in comparative labour history, on the role of petitions in the study of workers' agency, on the archives for global labour history, on the alternativeness or complementariness of macro- and micro-analyses in labour history, etc. If you wish to propose one such session, please use ‘Methodological Session’ as a subtitle to your session. If your panel will not be selected for the ‘Methodological Sessions’, we will of course still take it into consideration for our regular sessions.

In order to broaden the chronological scope of labour history, we will also reserve at least two time-slots for sessions that focus on labour in the Antiquity and the Middle Ages, and/or with longer-term perspectives including the centuries prior to 1500. For these sessions we will seek alliance with related ESSHC networks.

The conference language is **English**.

Since the coherence of sessions will be an important criterion, propositions of **full sessions** with three to five papers will be easier to accommodate in the conference programme than single papers. However, we do accept single paper proposals, both in order to include them in proposed sessions and to compose a limited number of new sessions. Moreover, while most sessions choose the panel format, other types of sessions are encouraged. We also have a preference for sessions with a **comparative** character, geographically and/or chronologically. Also, we advise you to seek alliances with other ESSHC-networks and propose **joint sessions**.

We heartily encourage **young scholars**, such as PhD and master students, to involve in organizing sessions and propose papers within the Labour Network. We remind you that the Jan Lucassen Prize for the best paper at the ESSHC of a junior scholar will be awarded again in Belfast (see <http://esshc.socialhistory.org/award>).

Proposing sessions or papers only works by pre-registering on our website. To propose a panel session (2 hour timeslot): panel organizers need to pre-register for 3 to 5 participants. Add full names and addresses of all paper authors, and of a chair and/or discussant. To propose an individual paper: pre-register through the conference website, indicating 'Labour' as your network of preference. See for full details: <http://esshc.socialhistory.org/guidelines>. The deadline for proposing abstracts is **1 May 2017**.

Further information on the ESSHC is available from the conference website at <http://esshc.socialhistory.org/>.

For specific questions about the Labour Network, please contact the chairs: Christian G. De Vito (christian.devito@gmail.com), Görkem Akgöz (akgozgorkem@yahoo.com) and Matthias van Rossum (mvr@iisg.nl).

Annex 1. Criteria for selection

At the ESSHC 2018, the Labour Network will be allocated 25 time-slots (i.e. approximately 30 sessions), thus confirming itself as one of the biggest networks at the ESSHC. In the past editions, as chairs of the Labour Network we received on average twice the number of session proposals and three times the number of individual paper proposals that we were allowed to include in the final programme. We are expecting similar ratios for the ESSHC 2018. As a result, selection is hard. Final decisions result not only from the evaluation of individual session and paper proposals, but also from the need to construct a balanced and representative programme.

For the purpose of transparency, and as guidance to your submissions, please find below here a list of the key criteria that will guide our selection.

We will:

- accept session proposals with a minimum of three and a maximum of five speakers.
- accept single- and double session proposals, but no triple session proposals. Double sessions may include from a minimum of six to a maximum of ten speakers.
- not accept sessions that stem from single institutions, single research projects and/or single countries.
- not accept session or paper proposals which substantially overlap with those presented at previous conferences or at previous editions of the ESSHC. If your session or paper proposal is a sequel of a session or paper you have presented earlier on, please state it explicitly in your submission and tell us how the new proposal will differ from the previous one(s).
- prioritise session proposals, but reserve some time-slots to sessions stemming from paper proposals. We will also actively seek to place individual papers in appropriate session proposals.
- prioritise session proposals with the maximum level of internal coherence. To this end, in some cases we may have to accept only some of the papers included in a session proposal and/or ask the proponents to include extra individual papers in their proposed session. When a session is accepted that is formed out of individual paper proposals, we will send a collective email to all speakers on that session at an early stage, and ask them to discuss together in order to improve the internal coherence of the session. They will be also asked to choose a chair and a discussant together.
- prioritise sessions that address multiple spatial contexts, rather than single countries.
- prioritise sessions using a comparative approach.
- reserve three time-slots for sessions that explicitly address methodological issues in labour history (for more details, see “Methodological sessions” in the CfP above).
- reserve at least two time-slots for sessions that focus on labour in the antiquity and the middle ages, and/or with longer-term perspectives including the centuries prior to 1500.
- seek to balance themes, approaches and time-frames within the field of labour history.
- seek to balance between senior and junior researchers (including PhD and master students).
- seek to have a balanced gender representation among speakers, chairs and discussants.
- welcome proposals for sessions that do not follow the panel format. You may think of roundtables, workshops, discussions around one or two volumes, etc. Be creative!
- ask you to decide about the chairs and discussants in your accepted session. If you don’t provide us with any name by the time the final programme is due to be published, we or the ESSHC organizers will assign one chair and one discussant to your session. As a standard, sessions with five speakers have one chair, but no discussant.

In case you have any doubt regarding these criteria, please do not hesitate to contact us prior to your submission.