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**LABOUR IN MINING**  
**european labour history network**

**Fourth Conference of the European Labour History Network (ELHN)  
&**

**COST Action “Worlds of Related Coercions in Work” (WORCK)**

**Vienna University, Vienna, 30 August - 3 September 2021**

**Working Group “Labour in Mining”**

**Call for Papers for a Session**

**Impact of mining:  
economic activities, labour markets, living conditions, environmental problems  
(18th-21st century)**

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Mining as an extractive activity has a major impact on the environment and socio-economic structures. As, in fact, mining depends on non-renewable resources, which are progressively consumed, both artisanal and industrial mining have a life cycle, whose development is not to be seen as geologically or geographically determined. Undoubtedly, however, the non-renewable nature of mineral resources strongly affects the performance of companies, the labour market, the economic and ecological development of the environment, etc. The purpose of this session is to gather historical

studies about the impact of mining activities in different moments of its life cycle, combining environmental perspective to the economic and social analysis, etc.

Both the beginning and the end of mining activities show similar but reverse dynamics on other essential "resources" of the extractive processes. There are movements of attraction or expulsion of labour; training or destruction/reorganization of the labour market; migration flows affecting living conditions (with a high impact on mortality and morbidity); environmental effects, which are increasingly taken into account when these resources are exploited, and which transcend the closure of mines; socio-political conflict, which is most evident in the moments of mine closure, that have had dramatic tints in some areas.

This temporary facet of mining is emphasized by some singularities of mining work, in which specialization and selection are necessary (especially for underground mining). To this extent, labour markets are often developed with a certain degree of isolation. This situation creates difficulties both to the recruitment of labour and to the adoption of other economic activities when the mines close.

Another consubstantial feature of mining activity is the strong environmental impact of extraction, which transforms the landscape, directly influencing the physical conditions of workers (occupational diseases) and the population of the environment and that leaves its mark on an ecological footprint that lasts over time. The possibilities for adapting the economy and employment are limited in mining areas by these factors.

Around these two moments of analysis are knotted multiple elements, but they are often determined by common characteristics of mining and its forms of work, which naturally develop with technological progress. The study of these stages of mining activity has a historical interest, but they are also of undoubted topicality. Finally, it helps us to understand the particular characteristics of labour and the labour movement in mines.

This session aims to bring together researchers working on the historical impact of mining activities in the beginning and finishing of the basin's exploitation, exploring macro-spatial as well as micro-historical approaches. The session encompasses a broad range of topics, but preference will be given to contributions that combine environmental approach to the analysis of social effects of mining, the economic impact of the activity, the living and working conditions.

### **Deadline for abstracts submissions**

Please send an abstract (max. 400 words) **before September 25, 2020**. The outcome of the selection will be communicated by October 2020.

### **How to apply**

Please send an abstract (max. 400 words) and a short academic CV (max. 400 words) to [labourinmining@gmail.com](mailto:labourinmining@gmail.com). The proposal should include name, surname, current affiliation and contact details of the proponent. The subject of the email needs to be: "Impact of mining \_ELHN2021". If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact us.

### **Location**

The Fourth Conference of the European Labour History Network (ELHN) will take place, from **30 August to 3 September 2021**, in Vienna, at Vienna University.

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