Dear Colleagues,

The year 2020 has undoubtedly been an enormous challenge not only on a personal level but also for academic exchanges and communication. Conferences have been cancelled or postponed in large numbers, including the 6th European Congress on World and Global History, which we had planned for June 2020. At the end of the year, it is still not clear how the situation will develop, yet it seems obvious to us that two experiences of this year are worth considering when we think about the future of our events.

On the one hand, many people emphasize that personal contact is essential for a truly lively and inspiring exchange of opinions, for developing new projects and cooperation, and for building trust between researchers and research groups across institutions, countries, and generations. Direct contact is indispensable for innovative science. On the other hand, however, we have learned that technical tools such as video conferencing can make our daily routines much easier, not only by reducing travel and CO2 emissions but also by freeing up time for creative work at the desk and for family life, which all too often suffer from weekend meetings and conference travel.

In 2020, we thus not only faced the regretful cancellation of academic events but also experienced interesting new formats in which scientific exchange took place. In particular, we have observed that videoconferencing makes it possible for people to meet over much greater distances than was possible in a world of events based on physical presence alone. Particularly this last aspect is extremely important for an organization such as ENIUGH, which is concerned with world and global history, because one of our major aims is to bring as many different voices and views as possible from around the globe into a sustained dialogue.

**A New Format for the Sixth ENIUGH Congress and Beyond**

Against the background of these experiences, we would like to initiate a discussion about what the congresses of the future will look like. We assume that the transformation of our forms of communication will be a longer process, the end of which cannot yet be foreseen. However, we are already prompted to decide about the format for our own congresses – the European Congress of World and Global History hosted every three years – if only in regard to the congress that is to take place in Turku in June 2021.

We therefore plan for what we believe to be a sustainable experiment, a format where we do not have to decide between only preparing an on-site congress with face-to-face meetings – which might end up being empty due to ongoing travel restrictions and precautions concerning infection – or setting up a congress held online – with limited space for informal exchange – nor that we have to opt for a hybrid event that would imply the preparation of parallel technical requirements and physical logistics, and could turn into a stressful situation for both the organizers and participants.

As a consequence, we propose to hold the congress in an extended period from June 14 to 20 June 2021 during which the first three days will offer online sessions and the remaining days will take place in situ in Turku as originally planned, but now with online video streaming. We believe that such a format has at least two merits. On the one hand, it gives all those who – for whatever reasons – do not want or cannot travel next June the opportunity to nevertheless participate in our congress by presenting ideas and research and by discussing them with like-minded people. On the other hand, it offers the opportunity for a more intensive exchange with our colleagues in the Americas, Asia, and Africa since we can schedule the timeslots of the online sessions in such a way that the challenge of different time zones can be met or at least mitigated.

We believe that many of you would be happy to meet in person at the Sixth ENIUGH Congress, but we also want to make participation as open and broad as possible, including all who do not want or cannot travel to Turku.

**Programme Planning and Preparation Schedule**

This format, approved by the Steering Committee of ENIUGH at a meeting on 27 November 2020, allows us to prepare the congress in a concentrated manner and to not have to deal with the uncertainty of a later decision. It further allows you to start again the content-related preparation of your panel, while a decision about online or in situ participation for each panel can be left open for the time being.

We will contact you again in December to inquire if you are planning to convene your panel/give your paper as originally planned or if you are considering changes in terms of the topic and planned participants. As the conference registration will reopen on **15 February 2021**,we ask you to notify us by that date at the latest **if your panel remains as it stands or if it changes**. Please note that we are only including those panels that were already confirmed for the conference.

The new panel programme will be scheduled according to your decision on whether you want to participate during the online days and during the days in situ. We hope that in the next three months the epidemiological situations in many affected countries have improved or can at least be better assessed than today. Therefore, we request that you inform us about **definite decision about how your panel will take place (online or in situ) by 31 March 2021 at the latest**.

For the special events of the congress such as the opening speech, the general assembly of ENIUGH, and the joint plenary discussion we will organize online video streaming. We will also try to hold an virtual publishing exhibition. And we sincerely hope that in such a way we will all have a pleasant and inspiring experience at the Sixth ENIUGH Congress.

As announced in spring this year, we are going to publish an extended call for panels and papers to make room for new research topics that have come up in the last months related to pandemics, especially when they concern the central theme of the congress, namely minorities and processes of inclusion and exclusion with a focus on transnational and transregional constellations as well as comparative perspectives. Furthermore, the extended call gives us the opportunity to invite scholars from other regions than Europe to participate. This call will be published in early December (with the deadline 15 February 2021).

**Congress Fee**

Without a doubt, the organization of a conference with an online and in situ programme requires both logistics and organization that are not less complicated than what we needed for our previous congresses. We therefore ask for your understanding that we have set a congress fee that allows ENIUGH to organize the congresses without financial risks.

We are aware that many online events held this year were often offered free of charge for participants, being paid by universities or other organizations in order to maintain scientific communication in general and to try out new tools. We deliberately decided against following this pattern. On the one hand, the agreements with our partner and hosting institution Åbo Akademi University in Turku do not include such a financial solution. On the other hand, this is not sustainable for an organization that finances all its activities through the payments of its members of congress fees. Of course, this is also an experiment and we welcome and will evaluate thoroughly the response from our members.

We therefore propose a staggered participation fee:

*Online participation only (14–16 June 2021)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Full fee | ENIUGH member | MA/PhD student |
| **Early bird rate (until 31 March 2021)** | 50 €  | 40 €  | 40 €  |
| **Standard rate** | 70 €  | 60 €  | 60 €  |

*Online and in situ participation (14–20 June 2021)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Full fee | ENIUGH member | MA/PhD student |
| **Early bird rate (until 31 March 2021)** | 100 €  | 80 €  | 80 €  |
| **Standard rate** | 140 €  | 120 €  | 120 €  |

In case that you registered for in situ participation and you are unable to come to Turku due to Covid-19–related preventive regulations, the congress fee will be reimbursed. In case you need an individual letter of invitation that confirms that you are traveling to Turku for academic/business reasons, please let us know and we will provide you with one.

According to the outlined conference structure, and this has been particularly important for us in making this decision, we can try out a format that we can perhaps use again for future congresses, where participation is not hindered any longer by a virus but may have to take into account changes in the general character of scientific gatherings.

For the time being, we remain with best regards and please stay healthy,

Katja Castryck-Naumann, Matthias Middell, and Holger Weiß