

Call for Papers for the ESSHC Theory and Historiography Network

The 16th European Social Science History Conference will be held in Lyon, France, from 21 to 24 April, 2027. The ESSHC aims to bring together scholars interested in explaining historical phenomena using interdisciplinary approaches to the study of the past. 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 a certain topic (e.g. criminal justice, family, social inequality).

The Theory and Historiography Network is interested in proposals for panels (consisting of three papers and a comment), roundtables (more oriented to discussion than the formal presentation of panels) and 'meet the author' sessions (where there is a pathbreaking publication of a monograph, not older than two years) on theoretical and historiographical topics.

Although reflection on a wide set of theoretical and historiographical issues are welcome, in 2027 we would like to encourage proposals in particular on the topic **of the role of history and historians in times of crisis**. As the concept of polycrisis quickly took hold on public and scholarly debates on the challenges of contemporary societies, historians – as well as human and social scientists in general – have begun to contemplate their role and the role of their scholarship in understanding and responding to a cascade of intersecting crises – (geo)political, social, economic, environmental, technological. As contemporary societies navigate polycrisis, can historical knowledge be of any help? If no, why not; if yes, how? Is there a social responsibility encoded in the professional ethics of the discipline? Do turbulent times demand historians to speak up or act in times of crisis? What responses to such a demand are considered specific to history, and what added value do historians' contributions have? Among many others, these questions are at the heart of assessing the role of the discipline and its practitioners in times of crisis.

We are also looking for panel/ roundtable/'meet the author' sessions on past crises and the positioning of historians during past crises. In this way we are hoping to be able to historicise the contemporary notion of 'polycrisis' in order to see what is genuinely new in the current situation and where we can identify patterns in the reaction of historians in times of crisis.

At a time that most certainly calls for self-inspection on the value of historical scholarship, we encourage submissions that address any aspect of the role of history and historians in crises periods – or their lack thereof – its historical underpinnings, its individual examples and globally diverse instances, as well as its general outlines.

The **deadline** of submissions is **April 15, 2026**. For submission guidelines, please consult the general guidelines at the ESSHC website:

<https://esshc.iisg.amsterdam/en/guidelines>

Network chairs

Zoltan Simon, Bielefeld University

Stefan Berger, Ruhr University Bochum

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