

COST Action CA 16213

New Exploratory Phase in Research on East European Cultures of Dissent

## **NEP4DISSENT Virtual Networking Strategy in Grant Period 4**

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### **BACKGROUND**

The current strategy draws on two guideline documents the Action adopted in the course Grant Period 4: the *Open Letter to the COST Association* and the *NEP4DISSENT Digital Initiative*, as well as on the already substantial experience with virtual networking the Action accumulated in the course of Grant Period 4.

Written in April 2020 under the impact of the COVID-10 pandemic on the initiative of NEP4DISSENT, the [Open Letter](#) called for “a fundamental rethinking of our collaboration practices in order to protect our networks against erosion caused by the prolonged inability to meet in person. In this letter we suggest a pathway forward, what we are calling ‘Remediated Networking,’ which will enable us to reimagine the networking tools to fulfil the COST goals in the times of travel restrictions and beyond.”

By “remediated networking” the signatories of the letter understood the following ways of adapting COST networking tools to an online scholarly communication environment:

- Remediating dissemination practices: switching to digital forms of scholarly communication
- Remediating Short Term Scientific Missions: micro-grants awarded by Actions as a new way of teaming-up and streamlining resources.
- Remediating Training: mentoring schemes, e-courses, learning modules.

In this context NEP4DISSENT acknowledges with satisfaction that the recent introduction of the Virtual Mobility Grants (VM Grants) by the COST Association as a pilot scheme running

from April 2021 until the end of Grant Period 4, covers most of the modalities “remediated networking” postulated in the *Open Letter*.

Launched before the introduction of the pilot scheme in February 2021 *NEP4DISSENT Digital Initiative* aimed to set up an internal framework for digital networking, by making the activities and achievements more visible online, to improve communication between members, and to build better outreach to the larger public. It call upon the Action members to:

- Report on the activities, showcase new work, inspire discussion, and share relevant news through the Action website
- Produce original audiovisual content and use NEP4DISSENT YouTube channel to disseminate it

Finally, this strategy builds on an extensive pool of experience with virtual networking in Grant Period 4, during which the VNS Manager worked closely with the Action Participants, the CG and the COST Officers to support the Action MC in developing a work plan, that remediated the Working Groups Implementation Plans in a virtual environment. To date, working towards achieving the Action objectives and deliverables have included the following activities:

- Online Workshop *Solving the Shoebox Syndrome: “Digital” Oral History Content Management* (12 June 2020), supporting research coordination objective 4 and capacity building objectives 3,5 (see annex for details). Deliverable: training.
- Online workshop *Cultures of Surveillance* (23 October 2020), supporting research coordination objectives 1-2 and capacity building objectives 1 and 5. Deliverable: online recording
- Online workshop *Digital Storytelling as a new form of conveying information* (26 November 2020) supporting research coordination objective 4 and capacity building objectives 3,5. Deliverable: training, video recording
- Online workshop *Thinking Left Dissent* (15 January 2021) supporting research coordination objectives 1-2 and capacity building objectives 1 and 5. Deliverable: online recording
- Online Training School *Cultures of Dissent Cultures of Dissent in Eastern Europe (1945-1989). Research Approaches in the Digital Humanities* (18-22 January 2021),

supporting capacity building objectives 1-5 and research coordination objectives 3,5.

Deliverable: training, educational materials

- Series of online workshops (May, October 2020, April 2021) in preparation of the publication project *Creative Dissent* by WG3: supporting research coordination objectives 1-2 and capacity building objectives 1 and 5. Deliverable: drafts of publication papers
- Participation of Action members Jan Matonoha, Jessie Labov and Piotr Wciślik in the lecture series *Forum in Literary Studies* (February-May 2021), supporting research coordination objectives 1-2 and capacity building objectives 1 and 5. Deliverable: online recording.

In particular the training activities attracted ECIs and involved participants from NNC (Russia) and IPC (USA).

## THE STRATEGY

The virtual networking strategy of NEP4DISSENT builds upon guidelines and achievements mentioned above. It will take advantage of both the existing opportunities (virtual meetings, dissemination) and the newly announced VM grants. It will consist of four pillars:

- Remediating in the online environment the activities planned in the Working Groups Implementation Plans, and preparing virtual contingency plans for planned in person meetings
- Creating a digital scientific record of the Action activities to enrich the Action deliverables and build better public outreach
- Providing training (in particular to the ECI) in online environment
- Fostering NEP4DISSENT membership engagement in particular with respect to colleagues from Near Neighbour Countries and International Partner Countries.

The VNS Manager will support the implementation of the strategy by:

- Proactively seeking participant engagement with virtual networking tools
- Advising the interested participants on the right choice of tool for the virtual activity planned (VM grant, virtual meeting, dissemination), advise on eligibility of relevant expenses, assist in planning and implementing the activity

- Consulting with COST Officers on eligibility of relevant expenses and seek their formal approval when necessary
- In case of in person meetings, discussing contingency plans with the organisers in case need arises to cancel the meeting due to pandemics
- Encouraging organisers of all Action activities, whether in person or online, to create a digital scientific records of these activities
- Supporting the Action CG and MC in making decisions relevant to the implementation of the strategy, including coordinating meetings, preparing meeting materials, and minutes, and drafting updates of the Budget and Working Plan

## **WORK PLAN IN GRANT PERIOD 4**

Implementing the NEP4DISSENT Virtual Strategy, the VNS Manager proposes that MC adopts following Work Plan (adequate budget will be voted separately):

### **1. Virtual Mobility Grants**

VNS Manager will coordinate the VM grants in line with the rules and guidelines described in the COST Vademecum section 10. He will:

- Open the Call
- Disseminate the call and proactively seek engagement of the prospective applicants
- Manage the evaluation process
- Respond to queries from the applicants
- Support the beneficiaries in implementing the activities

In line with the Action's objectives, the awarding of the VM Grants should have the following priorities in mind:

- Provision of training (including mentoring), meeting Action capacity building objectives 3 and 5
- Implementation of research activities, content preparation and coordination of science communication activities conducive to creation of Action deliverables.

## 2. Dissemination deliverables

The VNS Manager will support the delivery of the following dissemination items:

- *Sources from the History of Feminism and Women's Rights in East Central Europe* - a collaborative digital scholarly edition project of Working Group 2
- *The Day after Tomorrow: Temporalities of Cold War Archives in East-Central Europe and Beyond* – online, open access publication by Working Group 5
- *The Underground Virtual Reality Exhibition* in cooperation between Working Groups 1 and 5

## 3. In person activities

Further, the VNS Manager will assist the organisers to create contingency plans in case onsite events can't be held, and encourage the organisers to create a digital scientific records for dissemination purposes.

The work plan will contribute to the COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy by promoting participation of researchers from NNC and IPC (COST Global Networking), and ECI from ITC.

## Annex

### ACTION OBJECTIVES

(source: NEP4DISSENT Memorandum of Understanding)

**Research Coordination 1:** To develop a shared understanding of how the consolidation of research agendas and relevant documentary legacies have hitherto shaped the field of research on dissent under communism across Europe and globally, and to set new research trends for the future.

**Research Coordination 2:** To expand the field of research on dissent in former socialist countries by identifying actors and phenomena which have been hitherto underrepresented and understudied.

**Research Coordination 3:** To give a higher research profile to the transnational dimension of cultural dissent in socialist Eastern Europe and in particular to give attention to the many ways in which a common European culture was forged before 1989 across the divided continent.

**Research Coordination 4:** To examine the manner in which memory of cultural dissent has been constructed and disseminated after the fall of state socialism in 1989.

**Research Coordination 5:** To serve as an intermediary and communication platform between the emerging transnational research initiatives.

**Capacity Building 1:** To overcome national and disciplinary isolation of scholarly communities active in the field of research on resistance and dissent under communism and create an integrated network.

**Capacity Building 2:** To create synergies between existing innovative projects and to incubate new initiatives that will continue after the end of the Action.

**Capacity Building 3:** To facilitate knowledge transfer of digital research methods, tools and infrastructures for humanities and social sciences to researchers working on pre-1989 opposition under state socialism.

**Capacity Building 4:** To strengthen the dissemination capacity of research in the field by designing more effective ways of incorporating knowledge about the material and intellectual legacy of cultural dissent into various art and cultural heritage curatorship initiatives throughout Europe.

**Capacity Building 5:** To introduce Early Career Investigators (ECIs) to a networked, transnational, multidisciplinary and technology-conscious research environment.