

HERA Joint Research Programme (HERA JRP)

CALL FOR PROPOSALS under the theme

“Cultural Encounters”

The Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) Network has launched a new Joint Research Programme under the theme “Cultural Encounters” (HERA JRP CE). We, therefore, wish to invite transnational consortia to submit proposals for humanities-led research into the causes, conditions and consequences of Cultural Encounters. Proposed research may draw upon insights and methodologies from a wide spectrum of arts and humanities disciplines. Although humanities-driven, proposals may involve contributions from other research domains where appropriate.

By launching the Programme, the national humanities funders involved want to create opportunities for collaborative, trans-national humanities-led research that will result in new academic insights relevant to major social, cultural, and political challenges facing Europe. The beneficiaries of this Call are eligible scholars located in the HERA JRP countries: **Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden and United Kingdom**, irrespective of their nationality. The Joint Research Programme is co-funded by the humanities funding agencies in 18 participating countries and the European Commission, with the total budget amounting to 18.5 M€. The European Science Foundation (ESF) will act as the Handling Agency managing the call and selection process on behalf of the HERA funding partners.

Collaborative Research Projects (CRP) proposals must involve three or more Principal Investigators based in **three** or more different HERA JRP countries. Each CRP proposal can apply for research funding up to a maximum amount of 1M€ (across all partners) and can be up to 36 months duration. The HERA JRP will also support a number of joint knowledge exchange activities across the funded CRPs. Proposals will be selected in a two-step process involving an international Review Panel. Outline Proposals must be submitted electronically via the HERA website by **4 May 2012, 14:00 CET (Central European Time)/13:00 GMT (Greenwich Mean Time)**. In July 2012, successful applicants will be invited to submit Full Proposals with the deadline in October 2012. Funded projects must start by June 2013 and end no later than June 2016.

Before applying, please read carefully the theme specification and guidelines for applicants provided below. If you have any questions regarding the application and selection process, please contact the HERA JRP Handling Agency. If you have any queries concerning national eligibility requirements, please contact your national funding agency. The contact details of HERA JRP Handling Agency and the national funding agencies that are participating in the HERA JRP are provided below (section 9).

HERA Objectives

Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) is a partnership of a growing number of national humanities funding agencies across Europe. The main objective of HERA is to

firmly establish the humanities in the European Research Area and to seriously engage the humanities in the Framework Programmes of the European Commission. HERA has been designed to deliver new levels of co-operative research policy and practice in the humanities by embarking on an ambitious programme of communication, enquiry and sharing of expertise.

All HERA partners are dedicated to:

- Exchanging best practice in funding mechanisms,
- Establishing quality and impact assessment methods for humanities research,
- Coordinating national research programmes,
- Planning and lobbying for important humanities infrastructure initiatives
- Identifying important humanities research priorities.

HERA's goal is to:

- Develop a new type of trans-national joint research funding programmes.

More information about HERA can be found on the HERA website www.heranet.info.

Cultural Encounters: Theme and Scope

1. The 'Cultural Encounters' theme

History shows that interactions between individuals and groups of people are among the most formative dimensions of human endeavour and social change. Involving dynamics of both synergy and friction, cultural encounters can be accompanied by profound displacements and reconfigurations at social and political levels, resulting in conflict, segregation, and the formation of Diasporas. Yet cultural encounters also enable new forms of community and collective identity, and have stimulated large-scale innovation and renovation across European and other societies. They have resulted in new forms of knowledge and profound transformations in cultural practices, as well as new forms of communication and creativity.

To understand cultural encounters is to understand the history and meaning of Europe and the world, from the earliest periods of human settlement to the present day. The ongoing processes of identity-making within Europe and elsewhere are fundamentally the result of various forms of cultural transformation, conflict and adjustment. These processes have arisen from and are influenced by a myriad of factors, including communication, intellectual exchange, ideological contest, technological change, economic development, trade, war, occupation and political consolidation. These processes of encounter and migration (of people, ideas, goods and objects) have impacts all the way from the 'micro' level of individual lives to the 'macro' levels of ideology and societal institutions.

This new HERA JRP Cultural Encounters invites project proposals that address the general historical and theoretical issues mentioned above, as well as those that investigate more specific and exemplary aspects of cultural encounters. The programme will seek to investigate the phenomenon of cultural encounters in spatial terms (i.e., cultural encounters within geographical frames) as well as temporal terms (i.e., in contemporary time, as well as in long-term historical perspectives).

2. European research context, methodology and added value

While existing research in the area of cultural encounters at individual, national and regional levels continues to provide significant knowledge, there is also a need for comparative and synthesizing research as enabled by transnational research programmes such as the HERA programme. Such large-scale investigations allow researchers to pool information, compare findings, share methodologies, and transfer knowledge and expertise across national boundaries. They can also stimulate the development of new theoretical approaches that may re-frame our understanding of cultural and societal processes on a global scale.

The deeper understanding of cultural encounters depends, in a special way, upon the knowledge and expertise provided by humanities research. Culture is bound up with some of the most fundamental aspects of our uniquely self-reflective human existence: values, beliefs, social practices, language, accumulated knowledge, and imaginative achievement. The humanities provide unique insight and knowledge about these areas in multiple ways –through rigorous attention to forms of communication and representation; through an articulation of historical perspectives that give depth to understanding; through close analysis of ideas and their societal impact; through the construction of appropriate tools for the analysis of cultural and artistic practices; and through an ability to model complex phenomena across time and space.

In terms of methodology, it seems clear that the attempt to understand the complex causes and consequences of cultural encounters benefits from the combined insights of comparative, multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary research across the humanities. If appropriate, other disciplinary perspectives may be included in proposals; however projects should retain a primary focus on the humanities. Projects should also demonstrate how their transnational and (if applicable) their multi-disciplinary/interdisciplinary aspects will add value to the projected research in fundamental ways; in other words, they should demonstrate how 'the whole will be greater than the sum of its parts.'

The previous HERA Joint Research Programme on the themes of Cultural Dynamics: Inheritance and Identity and on Humanities as a Source for Creativity and Innovation resulted in the funding of nineteen groundbreaking research projects (see www.heranet.info/hera-joint-research-programme-1). The range and excellence of these projects signals the deep value to the European research community of innovative interdisciplinary research projects on cultural themes, and the need to continuing to build a strong and comprehensive European platform for humanities research.

3. Potential focus areas

The following focus areas represent potential themes and questions that fall under the rubric of Cultural Encounters. The questions listed below are only an indicative guide for applicants; they are not intended to be prescriptive or exhaustive. Cross-cutting proposals will also be welcome.

(a) Cultural encounters over time and space

The focus here is on the role of cultural encounters from historical and geographic perspectives, where cultural change may have played a complex role as an agent of, and response to, encounters among people with different languages, literatures, religions, institutions and traditions. Key questions might include:

- 'What roles have cultural encounters played in the formation of social imaginaries and "imagined communities"? How are competing or conflicting cultural memories negotiated?'
- 'What have been the historical drivers of cultural encounters – e.g. economic change, ideological conflict and compromise, education, imperialism, migration, technological change, ecological change, etc.? How have these forces affected cultural encounters?'
- 'How have the performative and representational arts contributed to cultural encounters?'
- 'How do cultural encounters result in cultural transformations? How does this impact on cultural diversity?'
- 'What can we learn from historical cultural encounters with a view to successfully shaping contemporary and future social relationships as well as defining and refining societal concepts and values, e.g. welfare, tolerance, justice, democracy, liberty, faith?'
- 'What are the cultural consequences of globalisation processes?'

(b) Social and political dimensions of cultural encounters

This area focuses on how societies and policies have attempted to manage cultural encounters and diversity in different ways. This may include the analysis of concepts and models of the co-existence of cultural differences from historical, philosophical, theoretical and social perspectives, where phenomena such as migration, displacement, and the formation of multicultural communities will be important. It could include analysis of the cultural and political values that shape these concepts and models, and the institutional structures that support or challenge them. Key questions might include:

- 'Which historical models exist for cultural integration and how do these inform cultural encounters today? What conditions produced them, how did they succeed, why did they fail?'
- 'Which dynamics pertain between cultural integration and cultural difference?'
- 'What influence has policy had on intercultural relations and vice versa?'
- 'How have the concepts of tolerance and pluralism been enacted or utilised in situations of cultural encounter?'
- 'What are the cultural effects and policy implications of linguistic diversity and linguistic and cultural code-switching?'
- 'How can culture be used to understand identity and belonging across communities, regions and nations in multicultural communities for which integration and active citizenship are key questions?'

(c) Practices of translation, interpretation and mediatisation, in relation to cultural encounters

The third area focuses on how cultural expressions in different forms are interpreted, translated, and/or transformed across cultures, languages and sectors. This spans everyday life as well as professional and artistic practices, and includes virtual encounters on the internet as well as in encounters in real life (e.g., media, museums, literature, art, music). It embraces analysis of cultural texts as well as analysis of behaviour and professional practices in different cultural settings. Key questions might include:

- 'How do specific cultural and aesthetic practices adapt and change as a result of mediated encounters with others?'
- 'How is culture transformed in processes of translation?'
- 'How do cultural encounters stimulate different forms of creativity?'
- 'In what ways do literature, art, music, film, and other forms of media serve as a barrier or facilitator for cultural interactions?'
- 'How are digital media and communications affecting intergenerational equity and Diasporic communities and culture?'
- 'What are the relations between media and changing cultural interactions?'

4. Knowledge exchange and transfer

Knowledge exchange and transfer activities are a crucial dimension to any proposed research project. In addition to the networking that takes place among academic partners and broader dissemination activities aimed at wider academic audiences, projects should also develop links with stakeholders outside the academy in order to maximise the societal benefit of the research. For example collaborations may include the creative, cultural and heritage sectors, broadcasters, museums, galleries, business, the public sector, voluntary, community and charitable organisations, policy makers and practitioners (e.g. in the creative and performing arts). Collaborations should be meaningful for all partners involved and enable joint learning throughout the duration of the project and beyond. Public engagement activities may also be included, where appropriate, to promote a wide understanding of the nature and impact of cultural encounters.

Proposals should therefore include concrete plans for collaboration and knowledge exchange, demonstrating how these activities will add significant value to the research.