



Dear ESA members,

Amid a third wave of this pandemic, while all citizens we are expectant of how the situation will evolve in the next months, we are also excited to see how sociologists across Europe have not stopped making relevant contributions to our academic institutions, research projects and society, moving the European sociology forward, and alongside the ESA.

On December 18th, for the first time in ESA history, we organized a meeting of the Council of Research Networks to gather their insights and expectations in relation to next conference. It was a very successful meeting, with high attendance and strongly dialogic, in which everybody could talk, as well as listen from the LOC the wonderful possibilities they had been working on for multiple possible scenarios. As we promised in that meeting, the Executive Committee has been working intensively with the LOC to announce the format of the ESA2021Bcn Conference on February 1st.

So far, there are 731 sociologists registered in Conftool, what is comparable at this stage to past conferences, despite the pandemic. 547 of them are willing to travel to Barcelona to participate face-to-face in the Conference. Since the second week of January, the website has been frequently updated, and the office has been in constant communication with coordinators of the different sessions to motivate the registration of reviewers and assign their roles on a daily basis. As well, ESA's account on Twitter has been daily active and an ESA Hackathon has been presented for the first time in ESA's history to welcome new ideas towards the preparation of the conference and to increase engagement among delegates. All these measures have propelled a registration increase: from 16.10.2020 to 06.01.2021 we had 168 registrations; from 07.01.2021 until today, 563 sociologists have registered.

Based on these data and the excellent work that is being done by the LOC, the Executive Committee has decided that the 15th ESA conference will be celebrated in a hybrid mode, which means that all delegates will have the possibility to participate in the conference either online from their homelands or on-site in Barcelona, following all the sanitary measures of the moment. The LOC is doing a great job in offering beautiful spaces in the city centre, streaming for all plenaries and semi-plenaries, and an affordable way for ESA to guarantee both online and on-site participation. Furthermore, ESA Conference and Finance Committees have worked intensively to provide the diverse possibilities and flexibility that RN Chairs asked for due to uncertainty.

For 2021, ESA proposes a fee structure that will allow delegates to have time to decide if they want to travel to Barcelona until June 10th. When you visit our website, you will see that there are several options, both for early bird and standard registration, which include online and on-site registration. In addition, those opting for online registration (both early bird and standard) will have the opportunity to upgrade to on-site registration up to that date. Furthermore, the conference fee has been reduced to the one ESA had in Athens, aware of the economic consequences of this pandemic for many delegates. The finance committee is doing a great job, with a clear commitment towards transparency and all details will be presented at the Conference Assembly.

We are very happy to share this good news with you and we will continue working towards the success of the ESA2021BCN conference.

Best regards,

Marta Soler
President of ESA