

Brussels, 17 May 2024

COST 050/24

DECISION

Subject: Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of the COST Action “Print Culture and Public Spheres in Central Europe 1500–1800” (PCPSce) CA23137

The COST Member Countries will find attached the Memorandum of Understanding for the COST Action Print Culture and Public Spheres in Central Europe 1500–1800 approved by the Committee of Senior Officials through written procedure on 17 May 2024.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

For the implementation of a COST Action designated as

COST Action CA23137
PRINT CULTURE AND PUBLIC SPHERES IN CENTRAL EUROPE 1500–1800 (PCPSce)

The COST Members through the present Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) wish to undertake joint activities of mutual interest and declare their common intention to participate in the COST Action, referred to above and described in the Technical Annex of this MoU.

The Action will be carried out in accordance with the set of COST Implementation Rules approved by the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO), or any document amending or replacing them.

The main aim and objective of the Action is to explore the cultural, economic, and social topography of print culture with its impact on the formation and consolidation of various public spheres in Central Europe from 1500 to 1800.. This will be achieved through the specific objectives detailed in the Technical Annex.

The present MoU enters into force on the date of the approval of the COST Action by the CSO.

OVERVIEW

Summary

The past decade's media revolution has profoundly changed the relationship between public speech and political authority: An unlimited virtual audience is gradually being recognised as an heir to the public sphere forming the modern state's basis on its way to democracy during early modernity. If we as a society wish to address its ongoing transformation, this public sphere needs to be understood in its historical dimension.

The COST Action deploys the following working groups to analyse the interactions between print and public spheres in Central Europe from 1500 to 1800: (a) Public and Legal Spheres; (b) Materialities; (c) Texts and Ideas. The focus on Central Europe has three reasons: (1) Central Europe is often presented as a discursive ancillary to Western Europe, simultaneously reinforcing an imbalance of sources, data, and research; (2) Central Europe's nonconformity to standard national paradigms, its interplay of different 'centres' and 'margins' offers valuable insights into the still relevant de-centrality of public discourse; (3) since many Central European countries figure among the ITC, the Action will contribute to asserting a historical consciousness of multiple public spheres.

Besides two long-standing desiderata – an open-access compendium and a database of data and tools – PCPS_{CE} will build a Central European and global network of diverse stakeholders from education, research, and cultural heritage institutions. The Action will work towards a more integrative methodology bringing together experts from different national and disciplinary backgrounds. This initiative will foster a new scholarly and public historical awareness of the diverse, non-national pasts of Central Europe.

Areas of Expertise Relevant for the Action • History and Archeology: Early modern history • History and Archeology: Databases, data mining, data curation, computational modelling • History and Archeology: History of ideas, intellectual history, history of science and technology • Languages and literature: History and philosophy of languages and literature • Other humanities: Cultural heritage, cultural memory	Keywords • Book History and Digital Humanities • Media History and the Emergence of Public Spheres • Circulation of Knowledge and Material Culture • Premodern Civil Society and Cultural Heritage • (Trans)national Consciousness in Central Europe
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Specific Objectives

To achieve the main objective described in this MoU, the following specific objectives shall be accomplished:

Research Coordination

- Strengthen the collaboration of researchers, especially Young Researchers and Innovators (YRI), across multiple disciplines, countries, and sectors by implementing long-term cooperation via international, intersectoral, and interdisciplinary exchange.
- Consolidation of cooperation through intergenerational exchange: PCPS_{CE} promotes inter-generational exchange between YRIs and senior researchers through joint activities, mentoring, or involvement in the management of the Action. It provides opportunities for female YRIs from the ITC to participate in

international competitive research structures through its wide range of individual grants.

- Guaranteed accessibility of the network's output by developing of digital tools as well as the network's data management in close cooperation with institutional partners from digital infrastructure platforms, libraries, and archives.
- Fostering of interdisciplinary research on new methodological concepts and paradigms for the history of Central Europe.
- Participate in public discourse as a way to strengthen the social perception of civil society and the interdisciplinary of the network, and contribute to a common identity of CE that values the regional and national identities of the individual countries.
- Dissemination of the network's results within the scientific community through a wide range of joint activities that will ensure substantial impact, especially in the ITC as the primary host countries.

Capacity Building

- Build Capacities of YRI through network activities and bolster academic mobility and intergenerational exchange, especially for ITC members.
- Increase the opportunities for exchange with institutional partners such as libraries, publishing houses and museums offers the YRI important insights into the application of sciences and international professional contacts beyond the narrower academic infrastructure.
- Increase public outreach of the network's research by installing the PCPSce Portal and its social media channels as the central digital platform for communicating the Action's activities.
- Collecting and developing digital tools and investing in data management as a way to test, gather and make the research workflows of multilingual digital projects publicly available.

TECHNICAL ANNEX

1. S&T EXCELLENCE

1.1. SOUNDNESS OF THE CHALLENGE

1.1.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE OF THE ART

The past decade's media revolution has profoundly changed the relationship between public speech and political authority: **An unlimited virtual audience is only gradually being recognised as an heir to the public sphere forming the modern state's basis on its way to democracy during early modernity.** If we as a society wish to address its ongoing transformation, this public sphere needs to be understood in its historical dimension.

The COST Action *Print Culture and Public Spheres in Central Europe 1500–1800* (PCPS_{CE}) is devoted to studying **print culture and their impact on the formation of public spheres** in early modern Central Europe (CE). The aim of the network is to investigate multilingual and transnational cultural practices of print culture and to analyse how a common Central European sphere of public literary interaction can be defined. The highly ITC-oriented Action fills the research gap to develop **an intersectorally and internationally compatible methodology including digital approaches** to understand this interdependency in detail. It will foster a historical awareness of multiple public spheres across academic generations, and thus a better understanding among future generations of the **cultural heritage and identity of CE beyond the nation-state level.**

1) The Emergence of Public Spheres in Early Modern History

In the early modern period, public spheres were primarily local places and arenas where people met (in marketplaces, bookshops, taverns, confraternities, etc.), exchanged opinions, discussed public affairs, and eventually formed public opinion. News, opinions, and ideas were put into writing and circulated via handwritten (letters, reports) or printed materials (newspapers, pamphlets, books). Public spheres could also have a figurative spatial meaning and exist in non-concrete spaces, as in the exchange of letters within the *respublica literaria*. The early modern '**printing revolution**' had a profound impact on the formation of public spheres. Information became potentially accessible to anybody: **Printing**, which includes **all forms of printed text and printed forms of visual communication**, enabled **communication on a global scale beyond limited groups**; it not only accelerated the **circulation of information** but also provided a durable material form for **transmitting knowledge to future generations.**

The groundbreaking effects of the invention of printing for the emergence of the public sphere (in the singular) were first described in J. Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962, English 1982). In recent decades, studies on media and communication history have questioned Habermas's dichotomous model of the private and public sphere in Europe, dating the emergence of public spheres to earlier periods before the 18th c. Research by B. Dooley (2002) and F. de Vivo (2012) has shown a lively public sphere in 17th-c. Italy. The original notion of the homogeneous, unified, and secular public sphere has been challenged (Geerlings 2014). De Vivo has argued for a differentiated model of communication in early modern cities, where participation in political communication was possible for wide social groups and not limited to the exchange of ideas in coffeehouses. M. McLuhan (1964) developed the theoretical concept of "media ecology" that convincingly visualises the interrelation and interconnectivity of all media types. Following this idea, recent studies on early modern communication have underlined the multimodality of the communicative landscape and the need to analyse the **"interplay, hybridity, and complementarity of acoustic, oral, performative, sensorial, visual, written and printed means of communication"** as a **"media ensemble"** (Bellingradt/Rospocher 2022, 8; Bellingradt 2018).

In the light of cultural studies, research has gained **a more differentiated picture of information culture and communication practices** but has **lost sight of the question of pre-modern public spheres in the age of print.** The Habermasian understanding of the public sphere has been subjected to criticism (Rospocher 2012), but the paradigm has not been replaced. The impact of book printing on the formation of public spheres has been studied from a plurality of individual disciplinary perspectives like book, communication, and media history. However, all these **disciplinary approaches remained**

unconnected. PCPS_{CE} aims at a fruitful combination of these approaches and works towards **a more integrative perspective and methodological approach** reflecting all relevant aspects in the interrelation of print culture and public spheres.

2) Printing Culture and Public Spheres in Early Modern Central Europe

Since E. Eisenstein's study (*The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe*, 1979) on the impact of Gutenberg's printing revolution, many aspects of book history have been re-evaluated in a European and global perspective, not least by emphasising much earlier predecessors of book printing in East Asia. Today, a nuanced picture of the centres and peripheries of book printing and the networks of book circulation and distribution in Europe exists. Nevertheless, **print culture is often analysed from the narrow angle of today's nation states.** Beyond these national paradigms, **the concept of CE often remains vague:** It is used as a loose, fictitious geographical attribution without consideration for the characteristics of the historical regions and territories. By bringing together experts from various disciplines and national backgrounds, **this Action addresses the cultural and economic interdependencies within and between these states and other parts of Europe, as well as their global interactions.** Even if the discussion about early modern public spheres and the impact of printing has moved beyond a Western European perspective, we are far from viewing Europe in its entirety in this debate, with **CE being noticeably underrepresented** (Barbier 2005; Dillenburg/Louthan 2021).

Defining the **borders of CE** precisely was historically controversial and remains so to this day depending on the individual geographic point of view. The network follows **a broad and flexible epoch-specific definition comprising the region between the Baltic Sea, the Adriatic Sea, and the Black Sea.** Most territories of early modern CE lay within four (overlapping) polities – the Holy Roman Empire, the Habsburg Monarchy, Poland-Lithuania, and the Ottoman Empire – but were subject to repeated territorial gains and losses during military confrontations from the 16th to the 18th c. Sweden in the north, Russia and the Ottoman Empire in the east, Venice in the south, and France in the west were perceived as political and military threats to CE. In printed works, states like the Ottoman Empire or France were often portrayed as archenemies of the territories of the Holy Roman Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy. PCPS_{CE} also analyses self-perception and perception of the "other" in early modern texts and images.

PCPS_{CE} chooses **CE as its focus area for three main reasons:** (1) As has been pointed out, CE still often finds itself in **a discursive ancillary position with regard to Western Europe**, which entails an imbalance of available sources, data, and research; (2) **CE's nonconformity to standard national paradigms** and its interplay of different 'centres' and 'margins' offer **valuable insights into the still relevant de-centrality of public discourse;** (3) this region, which includes many **COST Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC)**, will benefit greatly from the network, in particular with regard to the assertion of a historical consciousness of multiple and diverse public spheres. PCPS_{CE} combines expertise within the Central European states with research from other European countries as well as global perspectives on CE by COST participants from International Partner Countries (IPC) (cf. 2.2.1.).

3) Three Wheels of Interaction analysed by an Intersectoral and Multidisciplinary Network

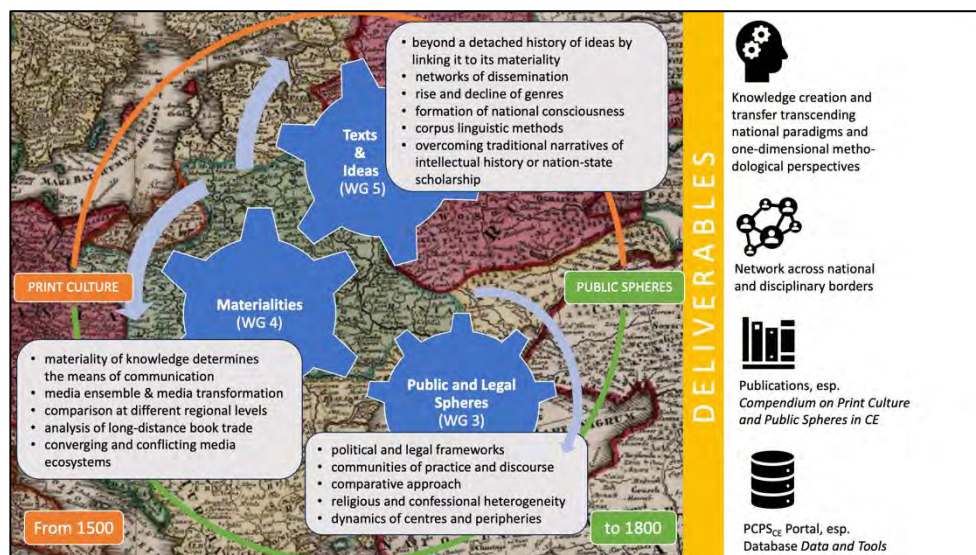


Fig. 1: Overview of the PCPS_{CE} wheels of interaction and output to analyse the interaction between print culture and public spheres

PCPS_{CE} sets out to describe the interactions between print and public spheres along the following three interlocking wheels (cf. Fig. 1) corresponding to the three specialised Working Groups (WG; cf. 4.1.1.). The Action relies on a Central European and global network of different stakeholders from education, research, and cultural heritage institutions, bringing together experts from the fields of Archival and Library Science, Arts, Digital Humanities (DH), History, Literary Studies, Musicology, Philosophy, and Theology (cf. 2.2.1. and 2.2.2.)

Wheel 1: Public and Legal Spheres (WG 3)

Research into historical spaces (Rau 2019) provides helpful concepts for the understanding of the dynamics of public spheres. **Spatial aspects** are **highly relevant** for the territories of CE, which were characterised by **legal heterogeneity and repeated dominion changes**. Research has neglected the deep impact that the legal sphere had on publics. PCPS_{CE} studies the **interdependence between the public and legal spheres and its effect on print culture**. In the early modern period, book markets were regulated to a high degree by the secular and ecclesiastical authorities. **PCPS_{CE} aims to analyse regulations like printing privileges, censorship, and trading concessions in CE using a comparative approach**. **Transregional perspectives are required to understand cross-border connections** in CE that were essential for the book trade and the transfer of technical knowledge. Research on censorship practices is still limited to national perspectives. PCPS_{CE} provides a comparative perspective with case studies on censorship by the state and the ecclesiastical authorities, analysing the effects of censorship on the emergence of public spheres and the circulation of texts and ideas.

A **key aspect of CE was its high degree of confessional heterogeneity**, which had a large impact on the formation of public and legal spheres. Protestant minorities in CE were confronted with the Counter-Reformation efforts of the Roman Catholic Church. They were supported via clandestine networks with book supplies, donations, or correspondence with the Pietists from Halle, for example. In east and south-east CE, Orthodox Christians and Islamic influences had an important impact on print culture. Arabic texts were printed in Bucharest and imported to the Ottoman Empire. In some cities like Prague, Jews were allowed to have printing presses. PCPS_{CE} investigates networks of Jewish book trading and the role of Jewish religious books on the Central European markets.

Recent research has underlined the **multiple spatial levels of early modern markets** (Das Versprechen der Märkte 2023) and **the dynamics of centres and peripheries**. PCPS_{CE} aims to integrate the dynamics of markets into the analysis of legal and public spheres as well as of semi-official trading networks, which often enabled the circulation of knowledge in peripheries. **It examines the transformation of publics** in rural areas or in the new provinces like the Banat after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the first decades of the 18th c. The network intends to **analyse the implementation of policies aimed at fostering literacy, books, and schooling**.

Wheel 2: Materialities (WG 4)

The **materiality of knowledge largely determined the means of communication in early modern Europe**: The printing press accelerated and multiplied the circulation of knowledge to a previously unknown extent. Considering the multiplicity of media that formed the early modern public spheres, book history has questioned the unanimous appraisal of the printed book in the incunabula age (Johns 1998; Pettegree 2010). Handwritten transmission of information or copying of printed material by hand continued to play an important role in the age of the printing press (McKitterick 2003; Brockstieger/Schweitzer-Martin 2023), not least regarding the circulation of news (Barbarics-Hermanik 2010). While research on the interdependency between media types is generally limited to individual genres, PCPS_{CE} **studies the impact of the printed book in its media ensemble and compares its significance at different regional levels** from the 15th to the 18th c., scrutinising the **transformation from one media type into another**, including pictorial materials and later retransformation into the original type. The analysis focuses on (1) the close interrelation between handwritten and printed texts, esp. in regions with limited access to the international book markets and/or a small number of printing presses, (2) the complex relation between manuscripts and print in 'small literatures' (e.g. Slovenian, Czech, Croatian), (3) the circulation of manuscripts as translations or adaptations of prohibited or censored books.

The printed book must be evaluated and analysed as an **economic object**. By examining its role as a commodity, PCPS_{CE} will contribute to a better comprehension of the socio-economic aspects of book trading, and thus of the circulation of ideas. Book history often focuses on production and emphasises local publishing. **PCPS_{CE} analyses the long-distance book trade in a trans-regional framework**, transcending research that follows the borders of today's nation states. Thus, the connections between

economic and cultural spheres as historic entities that scholarship usually divides along spaces and historiographies of later nation states become visible. Investments in long-distance book trading were an influential part of the book business and gained even more importance with the establishment of wholesale publishers. Studying these markets and long-distance trade relations allows us to fully grasp the importance of different centres of the Central European book trade as hubs for the circulation of texts and ideas, along with their contribution to the formation of public spheres in CE. Through similarity analyses of printer types, signets, or the reuse of printing matrices, machine learning can help us trace and document these economic connections between book markets. **Such results are an important complement to existing bibliographic catalogue data.**

Wheel 3: Text and Ideas (WG 5)

Research has underlined the ground-breaking effects of the ‘printing revolution’ for the emergence of transnational public spheres that formed the basis for the Reformation and the Enlightenment. Key processes like these are often used as master narratives to tell the story of the circulation of ideas. But scholarship has developed a more differentiated picture (e.g. for the early Reformation period in Bohemia) to disentangle the complexity of these processes from monocausal narratives. In contrast to previous master narratives, PCPS_{CE} promotes a more nuanced picture by viewing the ‘Reformation’ as a *longue durée* period (Wallace 2020) and book printing as a central element of this ‘process of communication’.

PCPS_{CE} goes beyond a detached history of ideas and deliberately links the foundations of the history of ideas with the materiality of texts to be able to define the emergence of public spheres. Analyses include how ideas of the Enlightenment can be traced in monastery libraries in Lviv and other East-Central European eparchies, **in-depth research on the networks of dissemination** e.g. of Jansenist texts in CE (cf. Tüskés/Schmitt-Maaß 2023), as well as strategies for circumventing censorship and adapting translated texts. The analysis of print culture is also connected to **the rise and decline of genres in CE**: How was the rise of the novel influenced by French or British role models? What specific national developments can be found in ‘small literatures’?

Printing played a crucial role in the process of the **formation of national consciousness in Central European countries**. PCPS_{CE} aims to trace an active process of identity formation through print culture, reflecting that national identity was often constructed in opposition to the “other” (esp. the Ottoman threat). Newspapers were a key medium for creating national identification from a sense of anonymous reading (Anderson 1983). Media historians have argued that such processes of imagined community took place less anonymously at regional levels with newspaper printing (Stenner/Kramer 2023).

PCPS_{CE} uses corpus linguistic methods to detect patterns or distinctive elements of national consciousness in newspapers and other media. By doing so, it (1) invests in the development of new digital approaches (e.g. analysing the representation of CE in French or British newspapers); (2) it works on software to store, analyse, and share the cleaned bibliographic data and texts; (3) it explores **modified co-citation analysis for making comparisons in library catalogues** to trace their ownership back to early modern libraries and determine implicit cultural patterns in catalogues or list-like sources.

By bringing together **experts from different disciplines** – from librarians to historians and DH-scholars – and **from different national backgrounds**, PCPS_{CE} will firstly contribute to **a better understanding of the social, material, and intellectual history of communication through print beyond the traditional narratives of intellectual history or nation-state scholarship**. Secondly, the Action will sustainably promote CE’s historical awareness of its intertwined and interregional publics. Third, the output will integrate traditional approaches in book and media history with tested algorithmic approaches and include two long-standing research desiderata: an open-access compendium and a database of data and tools (cf. 4.1.2.).

1.1.2. DESCRIPTION OF THE CHALLENGE (MAIN AIM)

PCPS_{CE} explores the cultural, economic, and social topography of print culture with its impact on the formation and consolidation of various public spheres in CE. In pursuing the Action’s objectives, the following five major challenges can be identified: — **Challenge 1 (C1): Going beyond the individual disciplinary approaches and achieving a synthesis**. This integrative methodology must be adaptable for interdisciplinary research and cooperation within the humanities, esp. concerning the research on DH tools and methods. DH have not been extensively applied to studying the formation of public spheres in early modern history (Hotson/Wallnig 2019). The network considers the collection, evaluation, and development of data and tools that can be applied to the analysis of the three wheels of interaction as

an integral part of its research, and thus a primary concern of the WGs (cf. 1.2.). — **Challenge 2 (C2): Lack of standardisation.** Analysing print culture and the formation of public spheres in CE can be problematic, as these countries/regions form a large heterogeneous territorial unit. Research standards also vary considerably, esp. regarding the accessibility of bibliographic data (Lahtia/Marjanen 2019). PCPS_{CE} will develop a methodological approach that is equally inclusive to all countries at their historical scale and promotes common standards of comparability. — **Challenge 3 (C3): Multiple dimensions of the making of publics.** The network understands print culture as a process of the production, distribution, and reception of all forms of printed texts and printed forms of visual communication. With this premise, PCPS_{CE} differs from genre-based approaches. The network will determine the extent to which distinct genres contributed to the creation of public spheres in the premodern period. Besides the spatial dimensions, temporal dimensions must also be considered in their complexity: When analysing public spheres, research is often oriented around processes such as the Reformation or the Enlightenment period. Since these were significant processes for the history of CE, they will be key aspects of the network's research – but PCPS_{CE} also seeks to take equally important developments such as legal codification or economic reforms into account. Determining structural criteria for analysing the entire early modern period will be far from trivial given the territorial heterogeneity of CE. — **Challenge 4 (C4): Under-studied perspectives.** The network not only strives for a gender-balanced team but also intends to take sufficient account of gender-historical realities. Recent scholarship has shed light on women in the book industry in CE (Limbach 2022) and underlined how much archival research is still needed here. One objective of the network is to deepen research on women and gender ratios in the history of printing; however, it may be challenging to produce comparable data for different territories and encompass the entire research period. — **Challenge 5 (C5): Setting a starting point for a Compendium on Print Culture and Public Spheres in CE.** The funding period of four years might be considered too short a time frame to realise such a comprehensive project and finalise the manuscript for printing. Section 4 presents a detailed timetable for conceptualisation, collaborative creation, and eventual publication. Work on the publication begins in year 1 (Y1), and agreement on the timetable will be a prerequisite for all Action participants.

1.2. PROGRESS BEYOND THE STATE OF THE ART

1.2.1. APPROACH TO THE CHALLENGE AND PROGRESS BEYOND THE STATE OF THE ART

PCPS_{CE} will leverage the full potential of its integrative methodology to study the interactions between print culture and public spheres and tackle the aforementioned challenges by:

Striving for methodological and conceptual convergence (cf. C1): The COST Action assembles interdisciplinary and international expertise in the fields of Archival and Library Science, Arts, Digital Humanities (DH), History, Literary Studies, Musicology, Philosophy, and Theology from stakeholders working in different sectors. The network brings together existing knowledge from different regional, national, and disciplinary contexts, contributing to the formation of a converging scholarly discourse and the development of new conceptual and theoretical frameworks. With this integrative DH-based methodology, comprehensive analysis of all relevant aspects in the interactions of print culture and public spheres can be achieved, such as the definition of a common literary interaction through analysis of multilingual and transnational cultural practices of Central European print culture. New insights into gender relations can be gained, for example, through the collection of economic data on women in the printing industry in archives and their digital evaluation (from geographical mapping to algorithmic similarity of publisher profiles) or the creation of an index of all relevant printed works through extensive research in library catalogues with name variants of selected printers.

Uniting expertise from ITC and global partners (cf. C2): The network involves stakeholders from all Central European countries and aims to use this expertise in the national historiographies to go beyond individual national approaches and achieve a synthesis on CE. This will make it possible to highlight both differences and commonalities in the making of public spheres through print culture in the heterogeneous territories of CE. The IPC will broaden the view beyond a Eurocentric perspective by analysing the global dimension and interconnections of early modern print culture.

Fostering research on the making of publics (cf. C3): PCPS_{CE} applies a cultural-historical view to the historical developments, allowing us to move away from a descriptive level and analyse practices and processes in the making. The network's view is not detached from the structures of economic history: The limited amount of available primary material permits quantitative conclusions only within a restricted framework but provides the advantage of enhancing the geographical scope of the project, for example by casting a spotlight on long-distance relationships in the official and clandestine book trade

between different commercial centres and distribution channels by means of micro-studies. In this context, approaches to spatial history also offer a rewarding methodological perspective.

Understanding early modern history as a period of decisive change (cf. C3 and C4): Between 1500 and 1800, significant processes profoundly affected all three wheels of interaction in CE: (1) Legal and public spheres: significant changes took place, including codification of laws, administrative reforms, and secularisation processes. (2) Materialities: The use of the printing press from the 15th c. onwards brought about far-reaching technical changes. The 1800s marked the beginning of the era of the replacement of the hand press by industrial printing presses, which mechanised the printing process and enabled larger print quantities. (3) Text and ideas: From the beginning of the Reformation to the Enlightenment and the revolutionary phase, new texts and ideas were inspired by important processes in Europe and the world.

Strengthening Central European expertise and charting new directions for the future of CE (cf. C5): CE is often presented as a discursive supplement to Western Europe, simultaneously reinforcing an imbalance of sources, data, and research. The collection of data and the application of DH tools require cooperation with national libraries and archives. Among the Action participants are experts from the most important institutions, so that their support and cooperation is guaranteed. The Action will train the next generation of researchers in cutting-edge methods. Furthermore, the analysis of the early modern period demonstrates the specificity of CE in comparison to other European regions particularly well. Even if no replicability for the present can be derived from it, PCPS_{CE} shows alternatives to the re-nationalisation of CE in the present by examining this historically pivotal phase. It will prompt future generations to write a different history of CE and of what constitutes and holds it together beyond the nation-state level. The network's media history approach highlights the historically evolved specificity or otherness of CE and enables the present to be adequately understood from the unique constitution of the region. This link is often missing in current research when examining the legacies of the post-socialist societies. A purely political and social science approach cannot help with this historical analysis; CE's particularity must be understood from the conditions of the early modern period and made explicable for the understanding of our contemporary history. The awareness of transregional identity will foster a new civil consciousness of CE and open new avenues of research on the history of this area and its role within the continent.

1.2.2. OBJECTIVES

1.2.2.1. Research Coordination Objectives

The research coordination is organised according to the objectives, all of which are intended to have both a mid-term dimension (to be achieved in distinct steps within the Action) as well as a long-term dimension (extending the scope of the Action). — **Objective 1: Implementation of long-term cooperation via international, intersectoral, and interdisciplinary exchange.** The activities of the Action (cf. 4.1.1.) will strengthen the collaboration of researchers, esp. Young Researchers and Innovators (YRI), across multiple disciplines, countries (with a particular focus on ITCs), and sectors (cf. 2.2.2.). Exchanges within CE as well as in a pan-European and global context will consolidate and secure long-term cooperation beyond the funding phase, including the integration of new participants (aiming at a total network of at least 150 participants by the end of the Action). Particular emphasis will be placed on cooperation with Ukrainian colleagues, implementing structures for long-term institutional exchange and cooperation. — **Objective 2: Consolidation of cooperation through intergenerational exchange.** The Action aims to promote intergenerational exchange between YRIs, esp. from ITCs, and senior researchers through joint activities (cf. 4.1.1.), mentoring, or involvement in the management of the Action (cf. 3.2.1.). The network will provide opportunities for female YRIs from the ITC to participate in international competitive research structures through its wide range of individual grants (cf. for numbers 4.1.1.). These initiatives will ensure knowledge transfer and mutually beneficial exchanges beyond the funding period and foster a new generation of experts to advance the Action's topics in both academic and public discourse. — **Objective 3: Guaranteed accessibility of the network's output.** PCPS_{CE} aims to create and implement a systematic data and tools collection of research (at least 15 datasets). The development of digital tools as well as the network's data management will be carried out in close cooperation with institutional partners from digital infrastructure platforms, libraries, and archives. All output will be presented online on the PCPS_{CE} Portal on a long-term basis, and data and tools will be backed up in repositories hosted via partner institutions. In addition to the print products, permanent open digital access to the network's publications will be guaranteed (realised by WG 1). — **Objective 4: Fostering of interdisciplinary research on new methodological concepts and paradigms for the history of CE.** The intersectoral and financial resources of PCPS_{CE} provide the opportunity to (1) collect data and bring together the network's findings, and (2) implement knowledge

and discuss new approaches at the Action activities (cf. 4.1.2.). The Action's goal is to develop a new integrative conceptual and theoretical framework that can be applied to various fields, research levels, and target groups from secondary school students through university students to future collaborative research projects in Central European history. — **Objective 5: Participation in public discourse and strengthening of the social perception of civil society.** The intersectoral reach – from secondary schools to learned societies to academic institutions – and the interdisciplinary quality of the network will facilitate the organisation of diverse additional activities besides the joint activities of the Action, e.g. public lectures, panel discussions, and small exhibitions at stakeholders' institutions (at least 5 such activities). The PCPS_{CE} Portal will provide the network with a tool to extend its outreach and make its research results known to a wider audience. Through its activities, it intends to contribute to a common identity of CE that values the regional and national identities of the individual countries. PCPS_{CE} aims to raise the awareness of future generations and change social perception of CE to offer a transregional alternative to the progressive re-nationalisation of historical discourses. — **Objective 6: Dissemination of the network's results within the scientific community (cf. 3.2.2.).** The Action's wide range of joint activities (cf. 4.1.1.) will ensure substantial impact, esp. in the ITC as the primary host countries. All activities will contribute to the network's main deliverable, the publication of an open access *Compendium on Print Culture and Public Spheres in CE*. Presentations and book discussions will promote the reception of this publication at the European and global level.

1.2.2.2. Capacity-building Objectives

Support of YRI through network activities: The organisation of Summer Training Schools (SuTS) and an autumn DH-Training School (DH-TS) will implement the wider actions of PCPS_{CE}. The date and topic of each SuTS will be announced on the network's portal and communicated to academic institutions and scholarly societies at the location of the event to attract scholars and an interested public in addition to other YRIs. This will enable intensive intersectoral exchange. Additionally, ITC conferences, Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSM), and Virtual Mobility (VM) will be excellent tools to bolster academic mobility and intergenerational exchange, esp. for ICT members. — **Exchange with institutional partners:** Institutional stakeholders such as libraries, publishing houses, museums etc. (cf. 2.2.2.) will be invited on an ad-hoc basis to participate at the Action WG meetings and conferences. Such cooperation offers YRIs important insights into the application of sciences and international professional contacts beyond the narrower academic infrastructure at universities and research institutes. — **Public outreach** of the network's research: The conferences, workshops, academic presentations, and public discussions during the Action will have a great impact in the member countries and beyond. The aim is to install the PCPS_{CE} Portal and its social media channels as the central digital platform for communicating the activities of the PCPS_{CE} network. — **Collecting and developing digital tools and investing in data management:** The network (esp. WG 1) will (1) test algorithmic approaches, (2) gather them in a database of data and tools developed or enhanced during the Action, and finally (3) make the research workflows of multilingual digital projects publicly available (e.g. the SSH Open Marketplace in its contribution to the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC)). In this way, a larger group can benefit from the best research practices in the network's fields, and the impact on the research community can be maximised. — **Publication of the results of PCPS_{CE}:** Besides individual publications by Action participants, the Action will have three joint publications (cf. 4.1.2.): (1) an open access compendium, (2) a literary review and (3) a YRI-Blog. While the latter two publications are smaller in scope and will be published during the Action, the *Compendium on Print Culture and Public Spheres in CE* requires close conceptual coordination to achieve the goal of a publication-ready manuscript by Y4. This coordination will be performed by an internal board from the beginning of the funding phase, along with the conclusion of contract agreements for the publication, including open access.

2. NETWORKING EXCELLENCE

2.1. ADDED VALUE OF NETWORKING IN S&T EXCELLENCE

2.1.1. ADDED VALUE IN RELATION TO EXISTING EFFORTS AT EUROPEAN AND/OR INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

While PCPS_{CE} will address and complement the following non-exhaustive list of platforms and datasets from ongoing and previous projects and networks by combining and synthesising different knowledge areas, methodologies, and public outputs, the aim of the Action extends even further. (1) There is still a **need to develop international platforms enabling comparability and consolidation of data.** The

prevailing national fragmentation due to funding guidelines contradicts the historical reality of CE. The Action aims to increase the value and sustainability of many funding initiatives already implemented by and within the EU. (2) **CE is generally highly underrepresented in these initiatives; most research on CE is nationally focused due to national funding structures.** PCPS_{CE} will be a much larger and multidisciplinary network. And while a variety of projects deal with the history of print, PCPS_{CE} will be the first network dedicated to Central European print culture with this geographical scope; it will also apply a unique new approach to the formation of publics and the history of media.

1) Digital Resources on data and tools

Name / Acronym / URL	Stakeholder
Digitalna knjižnica Slovenije / dLib.si / https://www.dlib.si/	National Library, Slovenia
Techniques and Reception of Prints in Poland-Lithuania (15th–17th c.) / URUS / https://urus.uw.edu.pl	National Science Centre, Poland
Union Catalogues of Books Printed in German-Speaking Countries in the 16th–18 th c. / www.vd16.de ; www.vd17.de ; www.vd18.de	DFG / Libraries in Germany

In addition to the digital collections of early modern books mentioned here as examples, there are many national library catalogues on the history of printing. Datasets are published in various alternative formats under CC(0) licence by national libraries (e.g. the Austrian, Czech, and German ones). However, queries and reuse of these datasets are not solely representative for a transnational perspective due to the national frame of reference of their collection – they do not adequately represent book circulation during the early modern period.

Exemplary for PCPS_{CE} are the following two platforms with a transnational European scope:

Name / Acronym / URL	Stakeholder
The Heritage of the Printed Book Database (1455–circa 1830) / HPB / https://www.cerl.org/	Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL)
Universal Short Title Catalogue. An open access bibliography of early modern print culture (1450–1700) / USTC / https://www.ustc.ac.uk	University of St Andrews, Scotland

These platforms comprise a growing collection of catalogue records from major European and North American research libraries on European printing in the hand-press period, but document only parts of the book-historical heritage of CE. Both ongoing projects make it clear that data generation can only succeed with long-term funding from the European Union. For a representative media history, it would be important to also include smaller libraries and archival information structures in the future.

2) Research Projects

Project Title	Funding / Project ID
Before Copyright / BE4COPY / 09/2022–08/2027	ERC-2021-STG
Communicating the Law in Europe, 1500–1750 / COMLAWEU / granted in 2023	ERC-2023-STG
Widows in the Growing Print Industry, c. 1550–1700 / WidowsPrint / granted in 2023	ERC-2023-STG
Reassembling the Republic of Letters, 1500–1800. A digital framework for multi-lateral collaboration on Europe's intellectual history / 04/2014–04/2018 / http://www.republicofletters.net	COST Action IS1310
Public REnaissance: Urban Cultures of Public Space between Early Modern Europe and the Present / PURE / 2019–2022	HERA joint programme "Public Spaces: Culture and Integration in Europe"

New perspectives on similar research questions have been and are being offered by the mentioned research projects. But the COST Action extends the periodic framework from 1500 to 1800 and the geographic study area to CE. This would make it **the first project within COST funding to focus on CE as a research area as well as to combine the thematic fields of book and media history.**

2.2. ADDED VALUE OF NETWORKING IN IMPACT

2.2.1. SECURING THE CRITICAL MASS, EXPERTISE AND GEOGRAPHICAL BALANCE WITHIN THE COST MEMBERS AND BEYOND

The Action is distinguished by its **geographic, multidisciplinary and intersectoral reach** enabling it to advance understanding of the theory and practice of print and public spheres in CE. In the initial network, researchers from academic, library, and museum institutions as well as from national and European networks of practice in **18 countries** have committed to the Action, including **16 COST full member countries (10 ITC, 6 non-ITCs) and 2 IPC**.

This range of countries is in line with a broad and flexible epoch-specific understanding of CE (cf. 1.1.1.). In addition, **key partners from geographic regions beyond this core area** will be invited to the network to add **outside perspectives**. This collaboration will help to realise the main goals of the Action, namely to initiate **exchange between different regional traditions in research and practice** with a focus on print culture and public spheres, to create a pan-European knowledge and research base on book and media history, and to develop a future research agenda through collaboration.

The Action includes internationally **renowned experts as well as YRIs** from a wide variety of disciplines (cf. 1.2.1.), thereby bringing experience from qualitative and quantitative research as well as different theoretical approaches to the network. In the initial network, almost **45.5% of the applicants** are classified as YRIs. This proportion will increase over the course of the Action. This is equally true for the gender balance, which deliberately tends towards **a slight majority of women (51.5%)** in recognition of their underrepresentation in this field and in research as a whole. This balance will be maintained in the development of the network while also being reflected in the management structures.

The network of partners represented in PCPS_{CE} provides an opportunity to examine print culture and public spheres from many interdisciplinary angles and backgrounds. The Action will also offer a starting point for **building new alliances for pan-European, practice-oriented research** (to be possibly manifested in follow-up proposals) which offers great potential to **provide new insights into the Central European book trade and circulation of knowledge**.

2.2.2. INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS

PCPS_{CE} consists of a consortium of representatives from **various policy makers and stakeholders in the fields of education, research, and cultural heritage**. The interaction of all COST Participants is managed through regular meetings, both virtual and face-to-face. Each meeting is organised along a predefined process and in accordance with milestones and deliverables.

Nevertheless, to reach the goals of PCPS_{CE}, the **Activities Officer** as part of the Core Group will actively and continuously seek contact with policy makers and stakeholders involved **(1) in the publishing sector; (2) in the secondary education system; (3) in research and cultural institutions** in the fields of book history, DH, and cultural heritage. These cooperations not only promote intergenerational exchange and intersectoral collaboration as well as dialogue with the general public (cf. 3.2.2.), they also ensure access to primary sources on book history and data storage in repositories (cf. 3.1.1.). These efforts are facilitated by **liaising with relevant national societies and networks** to spread the word through their members, such as the transnational network *Connected Central European Worlds, 1500–1700* (UK) or the national and regional societies of the *International Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies* (ISECS), which has a strong presence in the ITC. The latest addition to this large network is the *Ukraine Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies* (founded 2023). Another potential partner is the *Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing* (SHARP). Due to the diverse backgrounds of their members, these societies are important intermediaries between academia and the public.

Further policy makers and stakeholders will be added to cooperate with PCPS_{CE} in the course of the Action. Stakeholder participation will begin in the first year and develop over the four years of the funding period and will be **coordinated by two key positions in the Action's Core Group** (Activities Officer and YRI-Coordinator). All stakeholder, esp. YRIs from ITCs, will be actively encouraged to participate in the activities of the network and invited to contribute to projects and funding proposals as research partners.

3. IMPACT

3.1. IMPACT TO SCIENCE, SOCIETY AND COMPETITIVENESS, AND POTENTIAL FOR INNOVATION/BREAKTHROUGHS

3.1.1. SCIENTIFIC, TECHNOLOGICAL, AND/OR SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS (INCLUDING POTENTIAL INNOVATIONS AND/OR BREAKTHROUGHS)

Already in the initial network, several Action participants have access to institutional repositories of countries within the research area. This guarantees sustainable data storage conforming to FAIR principles. Together with the compendium provided with the data as a “user guide”, the possibility and willingness of scholars to reuse these data will lead to a **new perspective on the pre-modern Central European civil society**. The network’s data management will make these **data available on a permanent basis**, allowing them to be used at the national level for research, teaching, and learning. The Action will help to promote a much-needed academic and public awareness-building that will, in the long term, change the societal perception of CE and offer a viable transregional alternative to the ongoing re-nationalisation of historical discourses. The analysis of premodern public spheres contributes to a different view of the present. Looking at transregional developments also changes the perspective on publics and engenders a new civil consciousness. **With the transfer of academic knowledge, the COST Action will aid in resolving current societal challenges: This provides a basis for future generations’ understanding of what constitutes and holds together this region beyond the nation-state level.** In this sense, PCPS_{CE} contributes to civil society by empowering the young generation to think about CE in a new way. It highlights how CE is embedded in Europe as a whole and what global responsibility it bears out of its historical consciousness.

3.2. MEASURES TO MAXIMISE IMPACT

3.2.1. KNOWLEDGE CREATION, TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The **knowledge creation** of PCPS_{CE} includes four dimensions: (1) The Action will build on existing scholarship and create new knowledge that transcends national paradigms and one-dimensional methodological perspectives in book and media history. (2) This knowledge will be generated through the establishment of pan-European and international cooperation, which can contribute esp. through comparative approaches and the evaluation of best practices. (3) The focus on CE explores a field that has received little attention beyond national paradigms. (4) The close collaboration with institutional stakeholders and information scientists as well as the consistent inclusion of bottom-up research approaches will provide new insights and perspectives for both research and practice. The Action will provide the academic community with an overview of available data and tools for analysis as well as a compendium. **This publication will offer access to the results of research within the Action and provide the first ever comprehensive overview of this field of research in Central European history.**

PCPS_{CE} will establish multiple **knowledge transfer** channels within the Action and towards a wider public. Conferences, TS (both either in a hybrid format or purely virtual for wider outreach), and STSMs will be conducted in participating ITC with a specific focus on the support of YRIs and participants from ITC. Generated knowledge will be published open access (YRI-Blog, peer-reviewed journals) and thus be publicly available through the Action Portal and other public repositories to ensure long-term and low-threshold access. Individual training and knowledge transfer for specific topics will be achieved through direct contacts and STSMs. Participants, particularly from ITCs, will be encouraged to visit partner institutions with the required expertise to support their research and networks. All activities and research outcomes will be advertised through social media. In addition to its publications, the Action aims to present its research outcomes at national and international conferences.

The Action’s focus on participatory methods will ensure that **career development** is open to both participating professionals and esp. YRIs. YRIs will be actively involved in PCPS_{CE}, and through participatory learning will be continuously encouraged to take leadership positions within it. The (academic) management experience, collaborative work, and networks built within an Action such as PCPS_{CE} consolidate the scientific management and networking skills of YRIs, thereby boosting their careers. The focus on data collection, methods, theory, and analysis along with the introduction to new and innovative theoretical concepts and methodological perspectives will provide the tools for success to a new generation of experts. To ensure sustainability, PCPS_{CE} will actively seek future funding for training activities, e.g. through the Erasmus+ or CENTRAL (Central European Network for Teaching and Research in Academic Liaison) programmes and other training networks for YRIs; it will also disseminate job announcements in the field of library science, book history, and DH, thus increasing the pool of international applicants for open positions. In addition, personal contacts will facilitate the candidate selection process, benefiting YRIs as well as Principal Investigators and mentors. In addition to the direct utility for individuals’ career development, the network provides a low interaction threshold for initiating research collaborations and applying for multinational research grants. This in turn benefits all participants and their research and careers.

3.2.2. PLAN FOR DISSEMINATION AND/OR EXPLOITATION AND DIALOGUE WITH THE GENERAL PUBLIC OR POLICY

To ensure effective dissemination and exploitation of results as well as dialogue with the general public, PCPS_{CE} will appoint a scientific communication team (SC-Team) whose members are part of the specialised WG and coordinated by the SC-Coordinator in the Core Group: **Appropriate dissemination of PCPS_{CE}'s results is essential for the effectiveness and sustainability of the network and the continued establishment of research lines and cooperation in CE and beyond.** The SC-Team will lead the promotion of PCPS_{CE} and the dissemination of results to a wider audience including relevant scholarly societies, institutions, and the general public. PCPS_{CE} will maintain an online portal including all information about the network and offer open access to all materials and results acquired within the Action. Furthermore, social media channels such as LinkedIn and X (Twitter) will be used to disseminate news on academic achievements as well as conferences and training schools.

Spring conference and Summer Training School (SuTS): The PCPS_{CE} will organise a spring conference and a SuTS annually on topics defined in the specialised WGs. The conferences and SuTS will take place in ITCs and be organised in cooperation with local hosts as well as international and national scholarly societies. These activities will be announced on the PCPS_{CE} Portal and through all established communication channels. The conferences and SuTS will be open to interested external parties. A call for papers will be disseminated through the abovementioned channels to widen the circle of participants in the Action and promote exchange. National and local societies, esp. from ITCs, will be approached to promote the conferences and SuTS to their members. Special invitations will be sent to experts and YRI (esp. from the host ITC) whose research is particularly relevant to the topic of the respective conference or SuTS.

Management Committee (MC) and WG meetings and conferences: The MC and WG meetings will be held following the annual spring conference to reduce travel costs and encourage participation by Action participants, and thus exchange between WGs. The meetings will include a summary of ongoing activities and reports from the WGs to keep all participants informed and ensure full transparency. A synopsis of these papers will be published on the PCPS_{CE} Portal and disseminated via newsletters as well as the abovementioned social media channels.

Training Schools and Database *Data and Tools*: DH-TS on data and tools curated in the database *Data and Tools* and decided by WG 1 will be held virtually in autumn. They will primarily be open to Action participants, but to maximise visibility and outreach to potential participants, they will also be widely advertised and open to external participants. PCPS_{CE} will establish a low-threshold online system specifically targeting YRIs to apply for TS through its portal. New additions to the database *Data and Tools* will be communicated through the Action Portal and its social media. In addition, there will be state-of-the-art visualisations, for example on the distribution of bestsellers in pre-modern Europe.

Cross-field communication: During the setup of PCPS_{CE}, several of the targeted stakeholders have already been contacted with positive feedback. Continuous involvement will be ensured through proactive communication (e.g. via social media, newsletters, and working papers) and facilitated by the involvement of several participants of PCPS_{CE} in past and current committees and national societies as well as ongoing and past Actions.

Outreach to the general public: Developments and results produced in the WGs will be publicly available through the PCPS_{CE} Portal, which will include applications designed for the general public and the scientific community such as, for example, a map displaying the circulation of bestsellers like French novels in the 18th c., translated into vernacular languages and reprinted and distributed across CE. Research achievements will be made available open access in peer-reviewed journals and in PCPS_{CE} publications. Activities of the COST Action will include public lectures or discussions at public institutions (for example at Goethe Institutes, Academies of Science, or embassies depending on the local conditions at the place of the Action meeting). Small exhibitions at stakeholder institutions can further visualise the results of all networking activities. Finally, the network plans presentations of research results in secondary schools and universities: The premodern circulation of knowledge is an important aspect for understanding the development of media, the creation of public spheres, and the history of Europe in transition to the modern world. The history of the perception of and access to media helps sharpen the understanding of a reasonable consumption of media in our contemporary digital world.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

In accordance with COST guidelines, PCPS_{CE} will be managed by an Action MC that will monitor the progress of the Action and make decisions. The MC will meet regularly every six months, with one meeting per year held in person immediately following the annual conference, and the other as an online

meeting. In establishing the MC, PCPS_{CE} aims to fill 50% of leadership positions with participants from ITCs. In addition, YRIs will hold key positions in the MC and the WGs (e.g. as leaders or co-leaders of the WGs). As a rule, PCPS_{CE} aims for a fair gender balance within the MC.

4.1. COHERENCE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WORK PLAN

4.1.1. DESCRIPTION OF WORKING GROUPS, TASKS AND ACTIVITIES

Besides the Management Committee (MC), the Action will consist of a Core Group and of five WGs (Fig. 2): three specialised WGs that will organise and carry out three different but interconnected areas of activity, two for overseeing the main two deliverables (“Publication” and “Data and Tools”), The latter two will also ensure continuous exchange and collaboration between all WGs, esp. the specialised WGs.

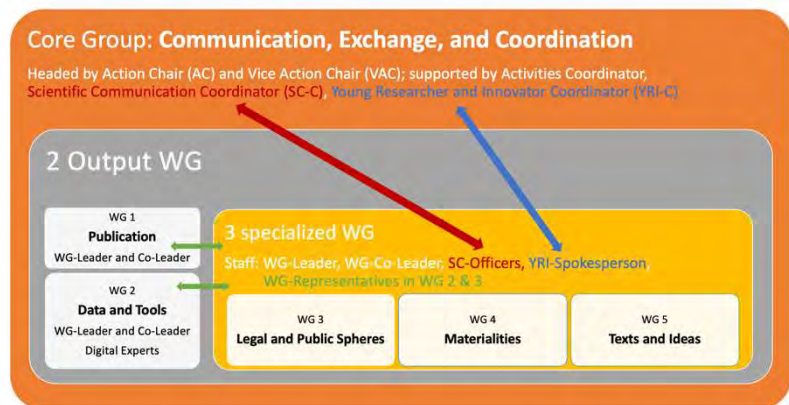


Fig. 2: Overview of PCPS_{CE} organisational structure

All WGs will meet in person once a year following the annual conference and hold at least two more virtual meetings during the year. All meetings will be documented in whitepapers. In addition, a general work and communication plan is formulated by each group at the beginning for Y1 to 4 and in detail for Y1, to be adjusted and updated at the beginning of each Action year. Along with this plan, mid- and end-year reports by each WG are submitted to the MC and circulated summarily among the Action participants, as well as in a shorter newsletter version to the general public.

The Core Group “Action Communication, Exchange, and Coordination”: On behalf of the MC, it prepares the annual budgets, oversees compliance with the Memorandum of Understanding, and communicates with the COST administration. It coordinates activities between the WGs, evaluates the work and communication plans of the WGs, monitors the overall progress of the Action, and performs quality assurance. The Core Group consists of the **Action Chair** and **Vice Chair**. They are supported by a **Scientific Communication Coordinator** (SC-C) to manage all outreach activities, a **Young Researcher and Innovator Coordinator** (YRI-C) to coordinate all early career activities together with the YRI spokespersons in the specialised WGs, and an **Activities Officer** acting as the coordination point for joint activities to build a mutually beneficial network and maximise knowledge dissemination throughout it, working closely with the respective WG leaders.

Output Working Groups:

The two Output WGs, led by WG leaders and co-leaders, will be responsible for organising the publication framework (publishing house, open access, copyrights, authorships, etc.) and the digital environment, as well as for coordinating the contributions of the specialised WGs to the Action deliverables. In doing so, they will be supported by representatives appointed by each specialised WG.

WG 1 “Publication” will coordinate the three main publications of the Action: D1: the long-term project **Compendium on Print Culture and Public Spheres in CE**, D2: the mid-term project **literary review**, and D3: the continuously published **YRI-Blog**. Expert meetings will be organised once a year to discuss the publication process of the compendium. Other relevant publications by Action participants that reflect collaborative settings can also be counted against this point.

WG 2 “Data and Tools” will provide the Action with the **PCPS_{CE} Portal** (D4) through which all Action resources and results will be made accessible. (D5) It will collect various datasets and tools on book history in a **database Data and Tools**, explore minimum requirements for data exchange, and discuss analytical scenarios for the collected data. The overall goal is to compile an annotated catalogue of existing resources (print and digital) with a discussion of the different types of sources/collections (e.g. printers’ records, library catalogues) and how they are modelled. The portal will also serve as a virtual

meeting place for the participants of the Action and the larger community of researchers, and as a secondary publication platform for the YRI-Blog (cf. 4.1.2).

Specialised Working Groups:

Each WG has a leader and a co-leader. Each WG appoints (1) a Scientific Communication Officer (SC-O), and (2) a YRI Spokesperson, both of whom serve as points of contact for their respective colleagues in the Core Group. Also, the WGs appoint (3) representatives to WG 1 and 2 to coordinate their respective contributions to the deliverables of both Output WGs.

WG 3 Public and Legal Spheres (cf. 1.1.1.) will coordinate activities to explore the interdependence of the two spheres and their impact on print culture. The focus is on (1) the entrepreneurial framework of the print market (e.g. technological standards, organisational and economic infrastructure, buyers and sellers), (2) government regulations (e.g. printing privileges, censorship, trade concessions), and (3) the circulation of knowledge using digital tools to display the heterogeneity of legal and public spheres with regard to centres and peripheries in CE.

WG 4 Materialities (cf. 1.1.1.) will organise activities related to research on (1) intermediality between different print genres and (2) socio-economic aspects of the book trade, applying (3) methods of machine learning for similarity analysis to improve the understanding of connected economic spheres in CE.

WG 5 Texts and Ideas (cf. 1.1.1.) will trace besides others (1) the link between content and materiality of texts, (2) the emergence and decline of genres, and (3) the generation of national consciousness using corpus linguistic methods.

JOINT ACTIVITIES include three conferences (2–3 days each), three Summer Training Schools (2–3 days each) followed by expert meetings (1 day), and three DH-Training Schools (1–2 days each). Venues will rotate geographically among Action countries (with preference given to ITC), and all events will be offered in a hybrid format.

From Y2 onwards, every Action year begins with a **Spring Conference** (2–3 days) organised by one of the specialised WGs on a topic related to that WG's general objective, starting with WG 3 and ending with WG 5. A call for papers will be sent out to open the Action network to outside experts and YRI. The WGs not organising will publish a conference report on various scientific online platforms.

The year continues with a **Summer Training School** (SuTS) directed at YRI within as well as outside the Action. Each SuTS is co-organised by two WGs to further exchange between the groups and spread the workload. All three SuTS will focus on data collection, methods, and theory and analysis, introducing participating YRI to new and innovative theoretical concepts and methodological perspectives. Interdisciplinarity will be central to the SuTS. Care will be taken to ensure that in any given year, one WG is responsible for one the annual conference while the other two WGs organise the SuTS. Following each SuTS, the presented papers along with a SuTS report will be published on the YRI-Blog.

To foster cross-generational exchange and reduce travel times in line with the goal of climate-friendly travel, the in-person compendium **expert meeting** (EM) will be held after the SuTS each year. The EMs are aimed at experienced and established researchers and serve to coordinate the work of WG 1, evaluate and adapt methods, and develop theory as well as to prepare Action's publications.

The Action year concludes with an **autumn DH-Training School** (DH-TS) organised by WG 2. The DH-TS will be held either on-site or virtually, addressing PCPS_{CE} members from all participating disciplines. The DH-TS serve to exchange and improve methodological and practical competences for the application of different DH resources. The training materials used will be published on the Action Portal and can be referred to and reused by others. WG 2 can apply for COST financial support in the form of VMs for preparation of the DH-TS and Virtual Networking Support for the event itself, as well as funding for the invitation of external experts.

In addition to these joint activities, there is the possibility to apply for **individual grants (ITC conference, VM, and STSMs)**. The aim is to increase dissemination of the Action results and the mobility (mainly intra-European/ITC) of the Action participants, esp. YRIs from ITC. Depending on the type of grant, the awardees will be supported in (1) presenting their research at an international recognised conference or at smaller virtual workshops organised by third parties, (2) acquiring new research skills in the areas of data curation, method adaptation, and cross-linguistic use, and (3) fostering exchange and collaboration between participating institutions. Grants are expected to lead to visible outputs such as

publications (data, instruments, or journals articles) and, in the case of YRIs, further presentations as part of the joint activities. Budget permitting, the Action is expected to provide approximately 200 STSM days, 50 VM, and 30 ITC conference participations per grant period. The Core Group will allocate the grants flexibly among the WGs based on the submitted work plan of each WG, with preference given to YRIs from ITC. Thematic and research progress, gender balance, and career development aspects will be considered for grant allocation.

4.1.2. DESCRIPTION OF DELIVERABLES AND TIMEFRAME

All activities are expected to produce visible results. Y1 is considered the preparation phase, Y2 and 3 the operational phase, and Y4 the consolidation phase. In addition to the abovementioned work and communication plans, mid/end reports, and conference/SuTS reports to be distributed among the participants of the Action and shared with the general public in adapted form, the main sustainable deliverables of this Action are:

Publications (D1–3)

D1. Open access *Compendium on Print Culture and Public Spheres in CE* (until Y4): The open access compendium will be the main goal of the COST Action. Its theoretical and conceptual framework will be coordinated by an internal board (cf. 1.2.2.2.). The WG meetings and conferences are intended for discussing the structures and the work in progress articles of the publication project. The compendium (500 pages in print with full open access) includes an introduction with the state of the art in the field of research, a methodology part with a focus on digital approaches, and a comprehensive bibliography which also references the data resources used throughout the compendium; each article comprises around 15–20 columns (7–10 pages) including sources and secondary literature. The compendium will be structured into sections on the developments in early modern book history; Central European public spaces and legal spheres; CE's significance within the European print culture; global interconnections; national and regional characteristics of print culture; technical developments from the 15th to the 18th c.; genres and bestsellers. The compendium will include contributions by YRIs in particular: The articles will be co-authored and explicitly follow the model of bringing advanced academics into cooperation with younger researchers.

Milestones for the compendium deliverables are the WG 1 meetings at the annual conferences and the expert meetings held yearly after the SuTS. In Y1, the proposal with table of contents will be written and authors from the WGs assigned; in Y2, first drafts will be circulated, this will continue in Y3 and be finished by year's end. In Y4, an internal peer review of the finalised contributions will take place before submission to the publishing house, which will organise an external peer review.

A competitive analysis on compendia on the academic book market shows that there are several handbooks with national approaches to book history like the *Encyklopedie knihy* on Czech book history (P. Voit 2006, cf. www.encyklopedieknihy.cz) or the recent *Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Book* (ed. by A. Smith, 2023), but digital approaches are hardly reflected in these publications. There is no compendium devoted to CE's overall book and media history so far.

D2. Literary Review on Central European Book History (until the end of Y2): This publication will be co-edited by the network's WG leaders and will comprise 20 articles of ca. 15 pages discussing the state of the art of research into book history. It will include literary reviews by experts on Central European book and media history following national and regional criteria as well as articles on genres like single sheet prints, newspapers, etc.

D3. Young Researcher and Innovators Blog (continuous Y2–4): Research papers by YRIs (via the SuTS or from external parties) will be published on the open access platform Open Research Europe (ORE) and also displayed on the YRI-Blog of the PCPS_{CE} Portal. The blog will be co-edited by the YRI-Officers in the WGs, who ensure that the submitted articles comply with the Open Research Europe policies and ethical guidelines.

Digital assets (D4–5)

D4. PCPS_{CE} Portal (continuous Y1–4): The portal serves as an information platform on the COST Action, addressing the academic community and the interested public. In addition to the YRI-Blog, it offers a platform for publications of the SuTS, DH-TS, and WG meetings. The portal will include online applications, for example on the circulation of bestsellers in CE with a special focus on the translation and circulation of 18th-c. French novels.

D5. Database *Data and Tools* (continuous Y1–4): Created and curated by WG 2, this list will contain short descriptions of relevant datasets and applications used in the field. It will be hosted at a Central European library, linked to the network's portal and searchable under various aspects (from content-

related criteria to format and license). Furthermore, it will be closely cross-referenced with the individual chapters of the compendium; the entries on data and tools will be easily accessible in the digital version of the network's publication. The collection of data and tools will be the focus of Y1. For this purpose, a questionnaire will be developed and distributed to the Action participants and external institutional partners such as libraries. The goal is to have the collection largely completed by Y1 and to use the materials for DH-TS. Since it is a database, the collection can be expanded at any time during the Action and the questionnaire will be sent out once a year until the end of the Action.

4.1.3. RISK ANALYSIS AND CONTINGENCY PLAN

The international and interdisciplinary structure of the network brings not only potential but also risks. The ample experience of many Action participants in international networks, the mandatory interim reports by each working group, and the frequent meetings of the MC and the WGs at least every six months will ensure that the Action can quickly identify and respond to any problems. In particular, the Action faces concrete risks in the following three areas while pursuing the PCPS_{CE} objectives:

Content-related & methodological risks (incl. DH): It may prove difficult: firstly, to achieve balanced gender and geographic coverage of case studies; secondly, to overcome fragmentation of research areas and potential incompatibility of methods and metadata standards; thirdly, to identify textual genres that contribute to the creation of public spheres; and fourthly, to process an appropriately large corpus. The experts in this network have extensive experience in building corpora and identifying common thematic research areas. A key role in mitigating these risks will be played by WG 2 by reflecting on common standards for data exchange and identifying resources for strategic reuse of data, and by the WGs in general by holding scheduled regular meetings, both on-site and virtual, to discuss and decide on solutions to these problems.

Third-party risks: To develop the full potential of the DH data collection, the network will need legal and technological access to the various datasets from different institutions. The biggest risk concerns the status of copyright and local legislation in Europe. Each European country has a different legal system and structure, and the Action must ensure that access to and publication of the data does not violate local legislation or the copyright restrictions of libraries and archives. There are at least three ways to address these legal issues and risks: PCPS_{CE} will obtain permission either by paying fees or by signing collaboration contracts with the necessary GLAM institutions. As many participants work in these institutions, the COST Action will benefit in both ways here. In most cases, the material the network intends to work with is open access and under CC(0) licence, and thus already freely available.

Stakeholder risks: When the COST Action is launched, the greatest risk is that it does not succeed in involving a broad range of relevant stakeholders. The work already done for the Action and the identification of relevant projects and initiatives shows that mobilisation and a balanced approach to stakeholder involvement are possible. During the lifetime of the Action, the main risks are lack of involvement of participants and lack of coordination. The administrative structures put in place warrant that the Action will remain on track and its progress monitored.

4.1.4. GANTT DIAGRAM

		Year 1 (preparation)				Year 2 (operation)				year 3 (operation)				year 4 (consolidation)			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
MC	Meetings (p = in Person / v = virtual)	p		v		p		v		p		v		p		v	p
CG & WG 1-5	Meetings	p	v	v		p	v	v		p	v	v		p	v	v	
Core Group	Activities	Creating and overseeing Annual Budget				Synthesizing / Presenting WG-Plans & Reports at MC				Create / Update Science Communication Plan (responsible SC-C)				Promotion of PCPS _{CE} Portal, incl. Action newsletter (AN) (responsible SC-C)			
		Allocating Grants (responsible YRI-C)				Coordinating Joint Activities (resp. Activities Officer)				Submission of Work and Communication plan (WG-Plan)				Submission of Mid-/End-Year Report			
WG 1	Publications (D1-3)	D1/2: Table of Content - Drafts - Peer Review				D1/2: EM (organizing)				D1/2: Submission to Publishing House				D3: Set up YRI-Blog (part of PCPS _{CE} Portal)			
WG 2	Digital Assets (D4-5)	D4: Set up PCPS _{CE} Portal (M1) incl. Member Registry and YRI-Blog / Update				D5: Set up Database Data and Tools (M2) (part of PCPS _{CE} Portal) / Update				D5: Send out Questionnaire Data and Tools (M3)				DH-TS (virtual)			
WG 3-5	Activities	Annual conferences hybrid (org. by... / Conf. Report publ. by...)				SuTS (org. by... / TS-Report publ. by...)				Grants (ITC Conference, STSM, VM)				Active contribution to WG 2 "Publication" and WG 3 "Data and Tools"			

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