

The Hugo Conference

Environment, Migration, Politics

Liège (Belgium), 3-4-5 November 2016

Call for panels, papers and posters

First announcement

Rationale

The year 2015 has been a crucial year for the people displaced as a result of environmental changes: in March, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction acknowledged the need to address displacements. In October, 110 States adopted the Protection Agenda of the Nansen Initiative, which seeks to better protect the rights of those displaced across borders by disasters. Two months later at COP21, the Paris Agreement instituted a taskforce to address migration and displacements related to climate change.

Though significant breakthrough was made on the front of climate policy in 2015 with the Paris Agreement, it has not materialized into an actual, meaningful reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and every month that goes by seems to break yet another heat record. Meanwhile, the humanitarian crisis at the borders of Europe seems to deepen every day, with no solution in sight

Thus the year 2016 represents a test of reality. In the last decade, progress has been made with regard to the understanding of the interactions between environmental changes and migration flows and the agenda setting of these issues. But knowledge gaps remain significant, with regard to the quantitative assessments of migration flows, the impacts on communities of origin and of destination, to the theoretical framing of the phenomenon, to name just a few of these gaps.

Despite scientific progress, actual policy results have been slow to deliver. We are now on the verge of the creation of new structures and institutions: a task force within the Loss & Damage Mechanism of UNFCCC, or the new Platform on Disaster Displacement. Held just before the opening of COP22 in Marrakech, the conference will seek to bring together the research and policy communities on both environmental changes and migration flows to assess progress and challenges ahead.

The Hugo Conference

The conference is named after the late Graeme Hugo (1946-2015), formidable scholar in migration studies and a pioneer in the examination of the linkages between environmental changes and migration. The event will also mark the launch of two initiatives to foster research on these subjects:

- The creation of **The Hugo Observatory** at the University of Liège, the first research structure dedicated specifically to the study of environmental changes and migration.
- The constitution of an **international scholarly association for the study of environmental migration**, which will seek to follow up on the COST Action IS1101 on Climate Change and Migration.

The conference is organised within the framework of the EDGE project, funded through the Horizon 2020 programme for Research and Innovation of the European Union. It seeks to bring together scholars and practitioners from social sciences and environmental sciences, as these two scholarly constituencies often remain too clustered from each other on these issues. It will also seek to move

beyond debates on the environmental causality of migration to examine the multiple interactions between the environment, migration and politics. We welcome submissions that cover different aspects of these interactions, from theories and models (of both migration and environmental changes) to policy processes, including empirical and critical studies from both natural and social sciences. Topics include, but are not limited to: social dimensions of vulnerability; Immobility and trapped populations; land issues (land grabs, land holdings, lease, etc.); borders and security; disasters and evacuations; environmental and climate data for the study of migration; climate science, models and tipping points; legal and policy perspectives.

Key highlights of the conference

- Major gathering of scholars, civil society and policy-makers on issues that will be key for COP22, days ahead of the opening of the conference.
- Opportunity to participate in the constitution of the first-ever professional association dedicated to these issues.
- Mentoring session for young and early-career scholars and PhD students.
- Numerous interactions with practitioners, all key organisations active in the field represented.
- Cash prize of EUR 1,250 for the best paper and EUR 250 for the best poster of the conference.
- Opportunity to have your paper published in the Working Papers series of The Hugo Observatory, or in a journal's special issue for the best papers.
- Free copy of *The State of Environmental Migration 2016* for all attendees.

Conference fees

Fees for the conference, including all sessions, lunches, receptions and gala dinner & party are set at **EUR 200**, and **EUR 100 for Master and PhD students**. Conference fees will be waived for participants with limited resources, and scholarships will be available to support their participation – please notify that you will need travel support when submitting your application, and include a note from your supervisor attesting your lack of funding.

How to submit

Please visit <http://events.ulg.ac.be/hugo-conference> to submit your paper, panel or poster. Abstracts should be no more than 300 words, and should be accompanied with a short biographical notice (100 words). Submissions from early-stage scholars are particularly encouraged.

The deadline for submission is August 19th, 2016. Successful submissions will be notified by September 2nd, 2016.

How to register

You will find more information about the conference, including on how to register, at <http://events.ulg.ac.be/hugo-conference>. You can also e-mail hugo.conference@ulg.ac.be for more information.

Organizing committee

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