

To the presidents of the Research Committees, Working and Thematic Groups of the ISA
To the RC/WG/TG Program Coordinators of the IV ISA Forum of Sociology

VP Research letter #4: Postponement of the IV ISA Forum of Sociology to February 2021

Dear colleagues,

As you know, the ISA Executive Committee decided to postpone the IV World Forum of Sociology to February 23rd to 27th, 2021. The news from all over the world in the last few days have confirmed that it was impossible to organize an international forum in July 2020.

The ISA has adopted a comprehensive approach towards the Forum participants. We will set up an easy way for speakers to confirm their participation and have set a registration deadline much closer to the new dates of the Forum and for which “early registration fees” will apply.

We have also agreed upon a new calendar for the Forum. This calendar answers to the need to combine two different time constraints. On one hand, no one knows how long the high level of uncertainty caused by the CoVid-19 outbreak will last. Our aim was thus to leave as much time as possible for participants to confirm they will attend the Forum. On the other hand, RC/WG/TG need to have an accurate overview of the number of confirmed and cancelled abstracts before accepting new abstracts, re-organizing their sessions and possibly opening panels focused on challenges raised by the CoVid-19 outbreak and the ways it reshapes our world.

Such changes result in a Forum preparation process that allows for more flexibility, but also in a shorter timetable than usual for ISA events. Active involvement of RC Presidents and Program Coordinators will be crucial in this process. We count on you to mobilize both your current members and potential new participants. We count on you to come up with an insightful call for new abstracts and to diffuse it in all the networks of your research field. This call may start circulating in September (i.e. ahead of the opening of the Congrex platform to new submissions). We also count on session organizers that will have a high number of cancellations in their panel to advertise their session and reach out to new participants.

I am very aware that postponing the Forum will require additional work from all of us. I would like to thank the Local Organizing Committee and in particular its president, Professor Hermilio Santos. I also know how much time and energy it takes to set up a coherent and insightful set of panels and to reach out to our members and new participants. Program Coordinators and Sessions Organizers are on the front line of the organization of any ISA Forum or Congress, with countless tasks that remain invisible for those who have never gone through this process. The time and energy we will dedicate to these tasks between September and January will be worthwhile. The 2021 Forum will be a unique opportunity to bringing together sociologists from all continents to share their analyses on the ways the CoVid-19 outbreak is reshaping our world, on the challenges faced by our peoples and our societies, and on how our discipline may contribute to dealing with them.

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I. New calendar for registration and new abstracts

April 2020:

An email will be sent to ISA members with a new calendar of Forum organization.

15 September – 15 October 2020

- On September 15th, a message will be sent to all the authors of selected abstracts inviting them to confirm their participation to the Forum and informing them about the possibility to update their abstract and title in the congress platform, in consultation with their session organizers or RC program coordinators, before October 15th, 2020.
- Session Organizers and Program Coordinators are encouraged to contact the participants and to ask them to confirm their participation before October 15th, 2020.
- Session Organizers and Program Coordinators will be granted access to the online platform (ConFex). Based on information about already cancelled presentations, they may upgrade distributed papers and papers presented at a roundtable to “oral presentation” in a regular panel. SO and PC shall inform the concerned participants about the new status of their paper and ask them to confirm their participation in the Forum.
- New calls for abstracts may start circulating during this period.

15 October 2020: Final day to confirm participation by authors of the already accepted abstracts.

The abstracts that have not been confirmed by this date will be automatically deleted from the program.

16 - 25 October 2020

- Based on the updated program, Session Organizers and Program Coordinators may re-organize panels, move some participants from one session to another and merge two sessions in order to open a new panel.
- Distributed papers or roundtable presentations may be upgrade to oral presentations during this period too.
- The ISA secretariat and the RC/WG/TG publish and circulate the calls for new abstracts.

26 October – 12 November 2020: Submission of new abstracts

The ConFex platform will be open for new abstracts.

- Authors may indicate in which session of the RC/WG/TG their proposal would better fit.
- The new abstracts proposals will be submitted to a single "bucket" session for each RC. (i.e. all the new proposals will be sent to the same session. Program coordinators will then allocate them to specific sessions).
- Organizers of sessions with several withdrawals are encouraged to advertise their session and to invite colleagues who work on the session's topic to submit abstracts.
- Invitations may be issued to speakers for Common Sessions and Semi-plenary Sessions to replace speakers who will not be able to attend the Forum.
- Program Coordinators should encourage presenters to pay registration fees before November 15th, 2020 in order to have more clarity about sessions' programs.

12 November 2020: Deadline for new abstract submissions

13 – 17 November 2020: Selection of the new abstracts by Session Organizers and Program Coordinators

18 – 22 November 2020: Program Coordinators re-arrange sessions based on the selected abstracts.

24 November 2020: Authors and co-authors are notified about the acceptance or rejection of their abstracts

15 December 2020: Presenters final registration deadline

- Early registration fees will apply.

Registrations must be paid by the deadline. Confex sends out the last reminder to register. Presenters who have failed to register will be automatically deleted from the program.

18 December 2020 - 8 January 2021: Final modifications

- Session Organizers modify sessions based on withdrawal of non-registered presenters.
- Chairs and discussants are assigned from among the registered participants.
- Program Coordinators complete sessions' schedule according to the conference timetable.

In case the type of an individual's presentation is changed, or if a presentation is transferred to a different session, Confex will send notifications to authors with final session and presentation details after December 15th, 2020.

27 January 2021: Online program published

8 February 2021: PDF program send to printer

II. *Other ISA commitments*

- Early registration fees will apply until December 15th. It represents a substantial effort by the ISA to reduce the cost of the Forum for the participants.
- Registration grants that were allocated to participants who cancel their participation will be re-allocated following each RC/WG/TG registration grant waiting-list or new proposals sent by the RC Program Coordinators or presidents and that may include newly selected participants.
- The rule of the limited number of appearances as chair or session organizer is maintained. RC/WG/TG may however ask for exceptions to ease the replacement of panel chairs that are not able to attend the Forum. This applies particularly for the Roundtable sessions that require a general coordinator of the session and a chair for each of its five tables.
- Pre-conferences should be organized on Monday the 22nd of February. We are in touch with our local partner universities (UNISINO and the Federal University of Porto Alegre) who offered free rooms for RC/WG/TG.