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# Textile crossroads: outcomes of the EuroWeb COST Action 19131 *Europe through Textiles*

## Introduction

The four-year Action CA 19131 *Europe through Textiles: Network for an integrated and interdisciplinary Humanities* (EuroWeb), funded by the European Cooperation Program in Scientific and Technical Research (COST) and the European Commission, successfully concluded on 12 October 2024. Conceived at the Centre for Textile Research in Copenhagen and coordinated by the University of Warsaw, this initiative brought together 256 registered participants from 32 countries, along with over 300 informal followers. Together, they collaboratively established an extensive, textile-focused network, uniting scholars from various disciplines, heritage professionals, craftspeople, designers and artists.

By employing textiles as a prism through which European history is reviewed, EuroWeb offered a new understanding of the past, in which textiles are seen as active components shaping economies, technologies, languages, aesthetics and symbolic values, as well as social and individual identities, including gender, age and status.

The main objectives of EuroWeb included: 1) proper acknowledgment of the formative role of textile production and textiles in narratives about the European past; 2) identification of linguistic and semantic structures in European languages that refer to textiles and textile technologies; 3) development and dissemination of interdisciplinary methods in textile research that bridge different theoretical and

methodological approaches grounded in European scholarship; 4) dissolving the dichotomy between practice and theory through the integration of various disciplines, cultural institutions, traditional crafts and design; 5) forging new notions of inclusive European identity based on a sense of belonging and cohesion resulting from common traditions related to textiles.

These objectives were achieved within the organisational framework established for all COST actions. EuroWeb was led by a core group that included the action chair Agata Ulanowska (PL), the vice-chair, Karina Grömer (AT), and key leaders: Marie-Louise Nosch (DK) – the originator of EuroWeb – Magdalena Woźniak (PL), Louise Quillien (FR), Christina Margariti (EL), Francesco Meo (IT), Francisco B. Gomes (PT) and Riina Rammo (EE). The core group activities were supported by a 60-member management committee representing all participating countries.

Individual tasks were carried out within the working groups (WG), each focused on specific themes: textile technologies (led by Christina Margariti); clothing identities (Magdalena Woźniak); textile terminologies (Louise Quillien); and the fabric of society (Francesco Meo). In addition, two WGs were responsible for dissemination of results (F.B. Gomes), and coordination (Riina Rammo and Cécile Michel, FR), while two other teams were implementing the major deliverables: the *Digital Atlas of European Textile Heritage*, led by Catarina Costeira (PT) and Alina Iancu (RO) and former leader Angela Huang (DE);

and the EuroWeb anthology published as *Textile Crossroads: Exploring European Clothing, Identity, and Culture across Millennia*, led by Kerstin Droß-Krüpe (DE), Louise Quillien and Kalliope Sarri (EL). The extended Core Group also included the WG vice-leaders, the Virtual Networking Manager (Hana Lukesova, NO), the Gender Balance and Inclusiveness Managers (Hana Lukesova and Francisco B. Gomes), and Senior Mentors (Mary Harlow, UK and Susanne Lervad, DK).

Thanks to the exceptional dedication and collaboration of EuroWeb participants, European textile heritage was thoroughly explored and discussed through 24 conferences and workshops organised directly by the COST Action, alongside additional scientific meetings supported by EuroWeb. Early career researchers and colleagues from Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITCs) – countries identified by COST as having fewer EU-funded grants – benefited from 76 individual grants awarded to support their participation and research. Career development was further enhanced through 11 training schools and several dedicated

mentoring programmes. Many of these events remain accessible to the general public via the EuroWeb YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/@euroweb-europethroughtextiles>).

### Scholarly results and online resources

Following the successful achievement of its specific objectives, the EuroWeb Action has significantly enhanced the visibility of European textile heritage through a range of publications, online resources, and dissemination activities across the participating countries. In parallel, new research questions have been identified and addressed for the first time, or explored in greater depth within broader chronological and social contexts.

The EuroWeb publication record comprises a total of 55 articles and chapters, with the majority co-authored by two or more COST Action members. Many of these have been published in the dedicated collections, demonstrating EuroWeb commitment to fostering collaborative and interdisciplinary research. One of the major deliverables is the already mentioned 2024



Fig. 1: Participants of the EuroWeb concluding conference in Warsaw (Image: Katarzyna Żebrowska)



Group led by Louise Quillien. The *Textile and Clothing Terminology Online platform* (<https://textileterm.hypotheses.org/>) is designed for researchers, educators, and the public, offering a searchable collection of textile terms and extensive resources on clothing terminologies from the invention of writing to the pre-industrial era, including terminologies in the languages of the EuroWeb participating countries.

### Europe through Textiles: A personal perspective

In addition to significant scientific and dissemination achievements, numerous EuroWeb members have described their participation in the COST Action as a transformative experience and a unique opportunity for professional and personal growth. As the EuroWeb network spans 32 countries and includes hundreds of participants, it is important to highlight that these shared personal-level experiences represent another key outcome.

For many, EuroWeb has served as a catalyst for expanding individual collaborations, expertise, and research perspectives. Members have frequently reported a sense of belonging to a vibrant, supportive, and inclusive community, which has enhanced their professional satisfaction and overall work experience. Particularly positive feedback has been received regarding the various opportunities facilitated by EuroWeb, such as conference grants, short-term mobility visits to other institutions, and training schools. These initiatives have been praised not only by trainees, who benefited from learning and skill-building, but also by trainers, for whom the schools provided a valuable platform for developing and enhancing their teaching abilities. Another notable resource that many members have highlighted is the COST Action's *Communication Plan* ([https://euroweb.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/EuroWeb-Communication-Plan\\_2023\\_LowRes\\_ForWebsite.pdf](https://euroweb.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/EuroWeb-Communication-Plan_2023_LowRes_ForWebsite.pdf)), developed by Francisco B. Gomes. Widely praised for its clarity, specificity, and rigour, the plan has been described as an exemplary guide to project communication policies.

Finally, the close networking fostered through collaborative projects, conferences, workshops,

and training schools has led to the formation of friendships that go beyond professional collaboration. These personal connections have played a significant role in creating a supportive environment, helping to make the stresses of everyday academic work more manageable.

### EuroWeb legacy

The EuroWeb Action has established a strong and sustainable foundation for ongoing research, education, and public engagement through its extensive network, open-access publications, and digital platforms. Key digital resources, such as the *Digital Atlas of European Textile Heritage* and the *Textile and Clothing Terminology Online* platform, alongside the EuroWeb website and YouTube channel, will continue to be maintained beyond the conclusion of the COST Action, ensuring long-term accessibility and impact.

In addition to preserving the established network, EuroWeb has fostered the development of new ideas and collaborative networks that build upon its achievements. EuroWeb members have already applied for nine new grants inspired by the COST Action's research, six of which have been successfully funded. Notably, the direct continuation of EuroWeb's work is ensured through the COST Innovators Grant starting next year: *Building a Heritage-Based Knowledge Hub to Empower the Green Transition in Textiles and Fashion* (HERITEX-HUB). Led by Francisco B. Gomes, the new action chair, and hosted by the University of Warsaw, HERITEX-HUB will further advance the EuroWeb legacy by addressing contemporary challenges in textiles and fashion through a heritage-based perspective.

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