

HISTORY OF IDENTITY DOCUMENTATION
HIDDEN
IN EUROPEAN NATIONS

Call for papers – HIDDEN COST Action Conference

‘The Past, Present and Future of Identity Documentation’

15-16 May 2025

Maynooth University, Ireland

The [HIDDEN COST Action \(CA21120\)](#) (2022-26) brings together academics from across the EU and beyond to critically examine the historical development, present-day policy and legal implications of and the future direction of identity documents in their various forms. This is a vibrant network of over c.180 scholars from 37 COST member countries, including 21 ITC countries, working across and between disciplines but primarily situated in history, migration studies, geography, sociology, law, linguistics, postcolonial studies, cultural studies, ethics, human rights and more. In the context of [UN Sustainable Development Goal 16.9](#) that everyone should have a legal identity by 2030, this network exists to critically examine and question how, why and if this might happen.

The rise of new forms of biometric, digital forms of ID in the context of the [EU Pact on Asylum and Migration](#) make this conference a timely discursive forum to critically examine the antecedents of modern systems and contemporary practices, which can increase societal inequalities. HIDDEN analyses how states hinder or help citizens accessing ID, the role technology plays and what ethical implications are involved in accessing past personal data. HIDDEN explores issues of identity, citizenship and migration through connecting historical research on identity documents with modern, digital forms of identity documentation and the laws that create and determine them.



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In Year 3 of our network, we invite proposals for papers or panels addressing any aspect of how identity documentation or identity regimes can be traced. Focal areas include, but are not limited to policy, law, personal reflections and experiences as well as historical examinations of the ways in which paperwork and documentation have helped or hindered access to rights and services.

Papers of **20 minutes in length or panels of three speakers** are welcomed and may consider the following areas:

- Documentation necessary for regular migration.
- Documentation needed for refugee and asylum status.
- Global challenges of war that increase the need for identification of citizens.
- How place of birth, geopolitics, gender, colonial and family legacies all shape access to identity documentation.
- The evolving role of ID in everyday life.
- Historical regimes across Europe and beyond that have used identity documents.
- Archives and archiving of identity documents.
- Public representations of identity documentation and the challenges pertaining to ID systems.
- Debates on national identity cards in national contexts.
- Intersections and divergence between citizenship, nationality and forms of identity documentation.
- Artistic responses to identity regimes including novels, memoirs, poetry, documentaries and more.

Selected proceedings are planned to be published after the conference on the theme of *The Past, Present and Future of Identity Documentation*.

Please upload proposals of abstracts no more than 300 words long in addition to a 150-word biography [at this link](#)

For queries related to the conference please email hiddencostaction@gmail.com

Deadline for proposals is **Friday, 24th January 2025**.



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