



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 649307



Bundesministerium  
für Bildung  
und Forschung



*“Diverse Narrations, Experiences and Contestations  
of Public transport in European Cities”*



**Call for Applications**

**PUTSPACE SYMPOSIUM**

**Location: Görlitz/Zgorzelec, Germany/Poland**

**Dates: 27.10.2021 – 31.10.2021**



The **“Public Transport as Public Space” (PUTSPACE)** project is pleased to announce the project’s Summer Symposium, taking place in Görlitz/Zgorzelec, Germany/Poland, on October 27 - 31.

The symposium is focussing on **“Diverse Narrations, Experiences and Contestations of Public transport in European Cities”**. The five-day event brings together experts, early and mid-career researchers, artists and practitioners engaging with public transport from diverse more-than-engineering perspectives to understand the public space qualities of public transport (PT). We position public transport at the frontline of contesting what is, can be, or should be public in the city. We come together with four objectives in mind: to critically conceptualise and analyse what kind of public space PT is; to understand urban transformations by attending to PT as one of the most intense and contentious public spaces; to offer a localised and historicised perspective on transformations of public space by examining narratives, experiences and contestations over PT in different European cities; and to contribute to PT-related research and practice in civic mobilisation, planning and policy.

Undoubtedly, last year’s everyday experiences of a global pandemic have fundamentally reshaped our perception of PT as public space. Therefore, the symposium invites to revisit thoughts on the fragility of – at times idealised – urban publicness, and how its effects on short- and long-term public transport policies in and beyond European cities. Participants are invited, but certainly not obliged, to relate their contribution to the tremendous changes PT witnessed due to Covid-19 policies.

Besides, we are interested in the role of various heritage, nostalgia, user rights and other groups in raising concerns of PT qualities, but also suggesting alternative narratives and symbolic meanings that PT systems in different cities could draw from. Also, memories of PT systems are crucial for the ways in which they are experienced today. We are interested in artist interventions, social and humanities research perspectives and expert knowledge in highlighting and dealing with the very practical ways social aspects (justice, encounters, affects) of public transport use are being negotiated. Moreover, the symposium critically investigates narratives of Europeanisation and modernisation as they intersect with infrastructures and urban contentions.

**The Putspace Symposium seeks to tackle this ambition in at least two practical ways.**

- *Firstly, we invite interested participants to engage in inter- and trans-disciplinary debates on the more-than-engineering perspectives on PT, reaching beyond a solely academic audience. Hence, the programme envisions a broad range of workshops and public discussions with the aim of improving participants’ research, communication and activist skills.*
- *Second, the symposium engages actively with the local public transport system in the city of Görlitz/ Zgorzelec. Conducting small fieldwork trips and public events, we aim to actively trace the multi-sited assemblage of the local binational transport networks characterised by regulatory challenges, available and anticipated infrastructure, political pitfalls and cooperation practices, citizens dialogues and struggles. By meeting local stakeholders and enthusiasts, we aim to explore the local PT history, its contemporary role in public life, and diverse negotiations of its modernisation and future as a transnationalised service operation within a European framework.*

We invite applications from scholars, artists, and practitioners alike, independently of location, disciplinary affiliation and status. These may include, but are not limited to:

- **PhD researchers and young scholars** whose work deals with PT in relation to the above-mentioned questions and concerns;
- **PT activists** seeking to improve public transport infrastructures, working relations and passenger experiences;
- **PT experts and practitioners**, from public bodies, PT operators, industry or consultancies;
- **Artists, writers, film makers** engaging with PT in the widest sense of the term.

### **How to apply**

In order to apply, please submit an up-to-date curriculum vitae (2 pages max.), and a motivation letter (1 page) which should lay down your interest in the symposium and how you relate to the PUTSPACE project's objectives. For further information, please have a look at the project's website at <https://putspace.eu/> or reach out to the symposium coordinator Tonio Weicker at [t.weicker@leibniz-ifl.de](mailto:t.weicker@leibniz-ifl.de).

Please submit your application package as a single pdf file via e-mail to [l.adolphi@leibniz-ifl.de](mailto:l.adolphi@leibniz-ifl.de) by the **15<sup>th</sup> of August 2021**.

Due to uncertainties connected to the global Covid-19 pandemic, we cannot guarantee that traveling to Görlitz/Zgorzelec will be possible without restrictions. Our Symposium aims at developing new scopes of discussion within an international audience beyond established knowledge regimes and disciplinary borders. This is why, we believe, it would immensely benefit from physical co-presence. Nevertheless, we will make sure, hybrid options are available for all or selected events. Please address this in your application, in case of necessity. However, given the unpredictability of the situation, we will follow Covid-19 updates and if necessary, we will facilitate a fully digital conference format.

### **Travel grants**

The participation at the symposium is free of charge. We offer travel grants to selected applicants. Should you be interested in a travel grant, please indicate this in your application package.

### **Acknowledgment**

The project "Public transport as public space in European cities: Narrating, experiencing, contesting (PUTSPACE)" is financially supported by the HERA Joint Research Programme ([www.heranet.info](http://www.heranet.info)) which is co-funded by AKA, BMBF via DLRPT, ETAg, and the European Commission through Horizon 2020.