

The European Confederation for Human Animal Studies (ECHAS) – project sketch

Human Animal Studies have gained in importance in the European research landscape over the last ten years. Thanks to the involvement of many scientists within and outside the universities, the important questions of human-animal relationships have arisen in various scientific disciplines. They are also increasingly debated throughout society. The institutionalization of this important field of research has developed quite diversely in Europe. While some places have already established their first master's degree courses, there are individual scientists who, with their critical impulses, are bringing forward research on non-human animals.

The project

We, the Chimaira Research Group for Human-Animal Studies, would like to work together with other institutions, establishments and individuals, to establish a European network and coordination office for the research field of Human-Animal Studies. Our goal is to promote research, informed by a critical perspective, through a European network and thus enable mutual support for researchers. Thus, the profile of the Human-Animal Studies can be strengthened and a continuous exchange can be established across national borders.

The European Confederation for Human Animal Studies (ECHAS) will promote, intensify and institutionalize research, teaching and theories, originating from a critical perspective, in the complex field of human-animal relations, for the European region. ECHAS sees itself as an interdisciplinary network of researchers and teachers who are active in Human-Animal Studies, or who are already working on human-animal relationships in other scientific disciplines.

We are aware that such structures already exist within the European framework. Our project does not regard itself in competition to this, but wants to enter an intensive exchange and generate synergies.

ECHAS will have the following objectives:

- The promotion, institutionalization and establishment of critical Human-Animal Studies at teaching and research facilities
- The interdisciplinary and cross-border cooperation in the field, and the exchange of knowledge and best practice
- The setting of teaching and research foci considering an intersectional perspective
- The formation of a theory and method canon
- The development of curricula
- The introduction of a European Master Program for Human-Animal Studies
- The establishment of the "European Center for Human-Animal Studies" as an information and coordination center
- The consideration of the well-being of non-human animals in science and research as a cross-section in the field of higher education
- The promotion of young scientists

To achieve these goals, we strive for regular exchanges at joint congresses and meetings, the publication of joint editions, a scientific database, as well as coordinated press and public relations work.

First steps

In order to realize this project, we are planning to set up a European consortium at the preparatory meeting in June, which provides several funding applications to the European Union for financially securing the network. Among other things, we would like to submit applications for the COST-, the Horizon 2020- and the Erasmus program.

It is planned to create positions (at Universities and other Institutions) for members of the network, located in different European or affiliated countries, in order to build up the structures of the network.

About the Chimaira research group

Chimaira is a research group founded in 2010 in Berlin by students, activists and junior researchers with the goal to bring discussions about human-animal relations into the German speaking academia.

Since then Chimaira has edited three anthologies, including the first scientific book written in 2011 in German that uses the label "Human-Animal Studies". The most recent publication deals with the discussion of animal agency. In addition to this, we organized lectures at universities, colloquia and a research workshop.

Today Chimaira is not only Berlin-based, but a network with members in different German cities. We still are organizationally independent from universities or other affiliations, but in exchange with different academic institutions.

Although Chimaira calls itself "research group for *Human-Animal Studies*" (and not Critical-Animal Studies) we have filled this label from the very beginning with a content coming from a rather critical perspective and refuse the idea that human-animal relations can be analyzed without political implications, like the interdependence and intersection of diverse power-relations.

Correspondingly, our scientific work resorts to theories from other critical scientific fields, such as Gender, Queer and Postcolonial Studies. We are convinced that current human-animal relations can and should be altered, thus we would like to set meaningful incitements through our work.

Our Goals

The Chimaira research group for Human-Animal Studies has devoted itself to the interdisciplinary research of societal human-animal relationships. We are an open network of scientists and pursue the following goals with our work:

- To bring together researchers, students and PhD students who are active in this field of research and to offer them a starting point,
- To enable a scientifically sound discussion on the subject on a broad scale, by bringing together the scientific and societal debate about human-animal relationships,
- To support students with regard to contents, who are writing about human-animal related topics (for example within the framework of research-workshops or colloquia),
- To contribute to the empirical data and the development of theory within the research field,
- To analyze and criticize societal human-animal relations and
- To intervene in this political theory, as well as to give impulses to human-animal studies through scientific research, publications and events.

The three relevant funding programs

COST (European Cooperation in Science And Technology)

COST Actions are bottom-up science and technology networks, open to researchers and stakeholders with a duration of four years. Participation is open to researchers allied to universities, research centers, large and small, public and private organizations from all 36 COST member countries, affiliated countries and their cooperating states.

COST does not fund research itself, but provides support for networking and coordination activities. COST Actions are implemented through a range of networking tools, such as meetings, workshops, conferences, training schools, short-term scientific missions and dissemination activities. For an application, it is compulsory to build up a consortium of institutions from at least seven countries. The deadline for the COST grant application is in September 2017.

For further information please visit: [COST](#).

Erasmus+ Key Action 2

Strategic partnerships are transnational projects designed to develop and share innovative practices and promote cooperation, peer learning, and exchanges of experiences in the field of higher education. With this funding instrument, we will setup a curriculum for a master program in Human-Animal Studies. There is also the opportunity to organize conferences for a best practice exchange and staff mobility actions through a funding by Erasmus+. The deadline for the grant application for Erasmus+ is in February 2018.

For further information please visit: [Erasmus+](#).

Horizon 2020

Horizon 2020 is a EU research and innovation program, through which we are hoping to establish our network goals in the future. For more information please visit: [Horizon 2020](#).