

VIRTUAL MOBILITY (VM) GRANT REPORT TEMPLATE

This report is submitted by the VM grantee to VNS Manager, who will coordinate the approval on behalf of the Action MC.

Action number: CA18211

VM grant title: Availability of maternity services during COVID-19 waves

VM grant start and end date: 15/09/2021 to 31/10/2021

Grantee name: Daniela Drandic

Description of the outcomes and achieved outputs (including any specific Action objective and deliverables, or publications resulting from the Virtual Mobility).

(max. 500 words)

The main output of this virtual mobility grant was a completed paper outlining changes to the delivery of maternity services of 12 European countries. The paper is completed and is in the process of being submitted to journals for publication. The grant period was quite short and as a result the results of the submission process are still not known, but the submissions and revisions will continue until the paper is accepted for publication, at which point I will inform the COST grant administration team.

Description of the benefits to the COST Action Strategy (what and how).

(max. 500 words)

This VMG contributed to the Excellence and Inclusiveness policy because it included a wide geographical spread of researchers, with the grant lead being from a Central-Eastern Europe, and two of the team members being from Cost inclusiveness target countries (Croatia and Portugal). This grant also contributed to gender balance because the grantee is a woman, and this is an all-woman panel of early career investigators (some of whom, for family reasons, have come to research in maternity care later in their careers), a combination that is unusual in research circles. These researchers have been disproportionately affected by pandemic measures, as women and mothers of young children, and particularly benefited from virtual activities. Given that many countries in Europe are currently in a fourth wave of COVID, this grant was particularly important, both because of the subject matter and possibility of positively influencing epidemiological measures in maternity services in this and upcoming waves, but also in supporting early-career researchers who have young children and have been juggling work, research and childcare responsibilities for the two years of the pandemic.

Description of the virtual collaboration (including constructive reflection on activities undertaken, identified successful practices and lessons learned).

(max.500 words)

The virtual collaboration included three meetings of the project team and twelve meetings of representatives from NGOs that are active in the countries included in the study. The virtual collaboration among the study authors was a cross-professional collaboration (human rights, advocacy, anthropology researchers included), and provided me with experience in managing a research project.

The virtual meetings / interviews with NGOs from across Europe were also an important learning process because this was the first time I was conducting these types of interviews. It was also an excellent networking opportunity, introducing these maternity advocacy NGOs to the work of the COST Action.

All in all, the plan was successfully implemented and met its goals.