CESSDA ERIC CONFERENCE 2024

10 - 13 June
UNIST Technological Park
Split, Croatia

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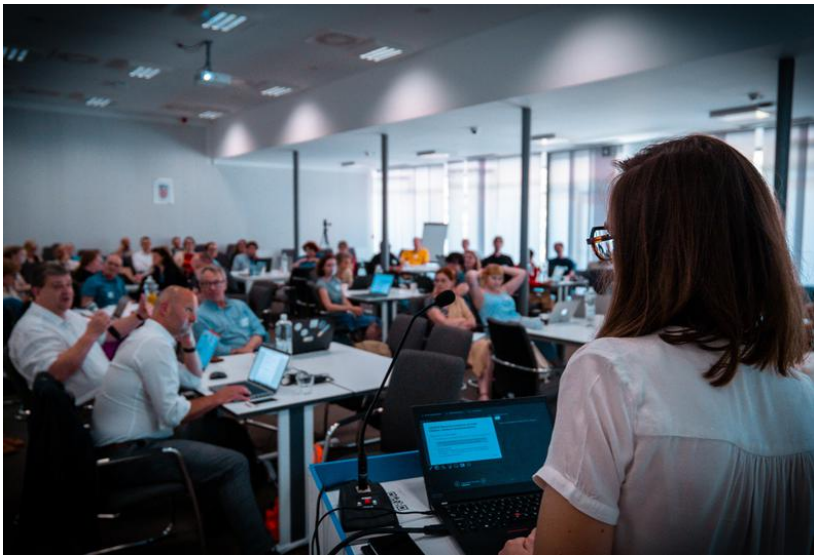
Shaping the Future of Social Science Data

From 11-13 June 2024, the Consortium of European Social Science Data Archives (CESSDA) held its landmark conference in Split, Croatia, celebrating a decade of innovation in social science data management. The event brought together over 90 participants from across Europe and beyond, including service providers, researchers, policymakers, and data experts. This report summarises the key themes, discussions, and outcomes of this pivotal gathering. The conference served as a platform for discussing cutting-edge developments in data archiving, sharing, and analysis.

It focused on addressing current challenges in the field and exploring innovative approaches to enhance the accessibility and impact of social science data. Through a series of workshops, presentations, and collaborative sessions, attendees engaged in critical dialogues about the evolving landscape of social science research infrastructure.



What is CESSDA?

The Consortium of European Social Science Data Archives

Before delving into the conference highlights, it's crucial to understand the pivotal role CESSDA plays in the European research landscape. Established in 2014, CESSDA is a European Research Infrastructure Consortium that has revolutionised how social science data is managed, preserved, and utilised across the continent.

"CESSDA is not just an organisation; it's a movement towards more open, accessible, and impactful social science research," explained Bonnie Wolff-Boenisch, Director of CESSDA. "We provide large-scale, integrated, and sustainable data services to the social sciences, bringing together data archives from across Europe to promote wider and more effective use of high-quality data in research, teaching, and learning."

Over the past decade, CESSDA has been instrumental in standardising data management practices, fostering cross-border collaboration, and ensuring that valuable social science data is not just preserved but actively used to drive insights and inform policy.

DAY 1: REVOLUTIONISING DATA CITATION AND SERVICE PROVIDER COLLABORATION

The conference opened with a focus on CESSDA's service providers and the critical issue of data citation.

Key highlights included:

Service Provider Forum:
CESSDA service providers discussed operational challenges and aligned strategies for the coming year, emphasising the need for enhanced cross-border data sharing capabilities.

Data Citation Seminar:
Led by Christina Bornatici from FORS, Switzerland, this session explored the intricacies of properly crediting data sources in scientific research. The seminar outlined comprehensive recommendations for six key stakeholder groups, aiming to standardise data citation practices across the social sciences.

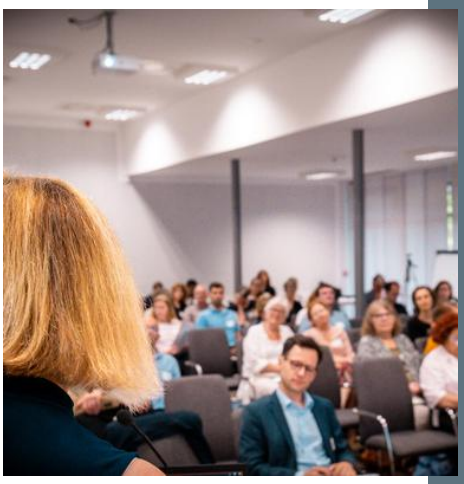
Matthias Reiter-Pázmándy, Vice-Chair of CESSDA General Assembly, set the tone for the conference, stating: "Sharing research data is not just an investment in our country and in Europe, it's an investment in the future of research itself."

The six key stakeholder groups:

- Data repositories
- Authors
- Journals and publishers
- Research performing organisations (RPOs)
- High-level research policy and strategy development entities
- Ethics committees

DAY 2: CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES AND INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

The second day delved into current challenges facing social science research and data management, with a focus on crisis response, data collection challenges, sensitive data handling, and metadata interoperability.



Contemporary Challenges in Data Collection in the Social Sciences

This introductory session set the stage for the day by exploring the current landscape of data collection challenges:

- Olga Zhmurko (Kyiv Data Archive) shared experiences of preserving data amidst conflict in Ukraine.

- Tuba Bircan (VUB, Belgium) discussed the complexities of using immigration data for policymaking.

- Frederic Sgard (OECD Global Science Forum) addressed research ecosystem preparedness for crises.

Helena Laaksonen, CESSDA ambassador for COVID-19 research, emphasised: "The pandemic showed us the power of open data and collaborative research. It also exposed gaps in our systems that we must address to be better prepared for future crises."

Navigating Sensitive Data

This session, chaired by Ricarda Braukmann (DANS), focused on the challenges of managing sensitive data:

- Frederic Sgard (OECD Global Science Forum) addressed research ecosystem preparedness for crises.

- Jiří Kocian (Malach Centre for Visual History) discussed challenges of working with Holocaust survivor testimonies.

- Libby Bishop (GESIS) and Brian Kleiner (FORS) presented findings from a CESSDA survey on sensitive data handling practices.

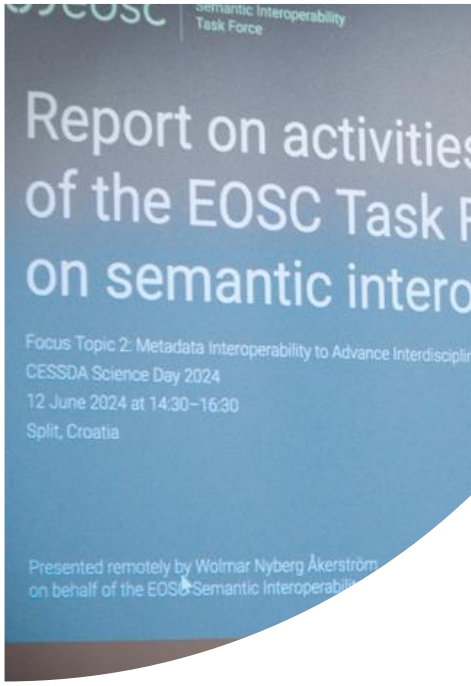
Metadata Interoperability for Interdisciplinary Research

The final session of Day 2 explored the importance of metadata interoperability in facilitating cross-disciplinary research:

- Simon Hodson (CODATA) introduced the Cross-Domain Interoperability Framework.

- Hilde Orten (Sikt) presented a case study on SSHOC-ENVRI collaboration for smart cities.

- Wolmar Nyberg Åkerström discussed activities of the EOSC Task Force on semantic interoperability.



CLOSING REMARKS

The day concluded with heartfelt farewell speeches from Marijana Glavica, the local host from CROSSDA, Croatia, and Bonnie Wolff-Boenisch, CESSDA Director. They expressed gratitude to all participants and reflected on the day's rich discussions, emphasising the importance of collaboration in advancing social science research infrastructure. Their remarks synthesised the key themes of the day and reinforced the collective commitment to CESSDA's mission.

These closing speeches not only underscored the significance of the conversations held throughout the day but also set an inspiring tone for the workshops planned for Day 3, leaving participants energised and looking forward to the final day of the conference.

DAY 3: WORKSHOPS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The final day featured four workshops focusing on emerging technologies and methodologies in social science research:

WS1: The Role of AI in CESSDA Service Providers: Chaired by Bojana Tasić (FORS), this workshop explored the potential of AI in data archives and research infrastructures. Presentations covered machine learning for metadata enrichment, AI in keywording, and applications in computational social science.

WS2: The CESSDA Question Bank Commons: Led by John Shepherdson (CESSDA Main Office), this session discussed the potential benefits of a centralised question bank for European researchers and service providers.

WS3: Introduction to the SSHOC Marketplace: Irena Vipavc Brvar (ADP) introduced the Social Sciences and Humanities Open Marketplace, a discovery portal for research resources

WS4: From MyBinder to JupyterHub: Enhancing Reproducibility in Computational Social Science: Arnim Bleier and Raniere Silva (GESIS) provided hands-on experience with tools for enhancing research reproducibility.

GESIS Library, Cologne
Split

Which organisation do you work for?
Split

The 4 industrial revolutions
Split

Encoding
also an
operate in order to
Split

This scenario sets out the best practices for
Initiative). However, buiding a standardized
intellectual and technical process where one
create an easy-to-use and sustainable resourc

KEY THEMES A

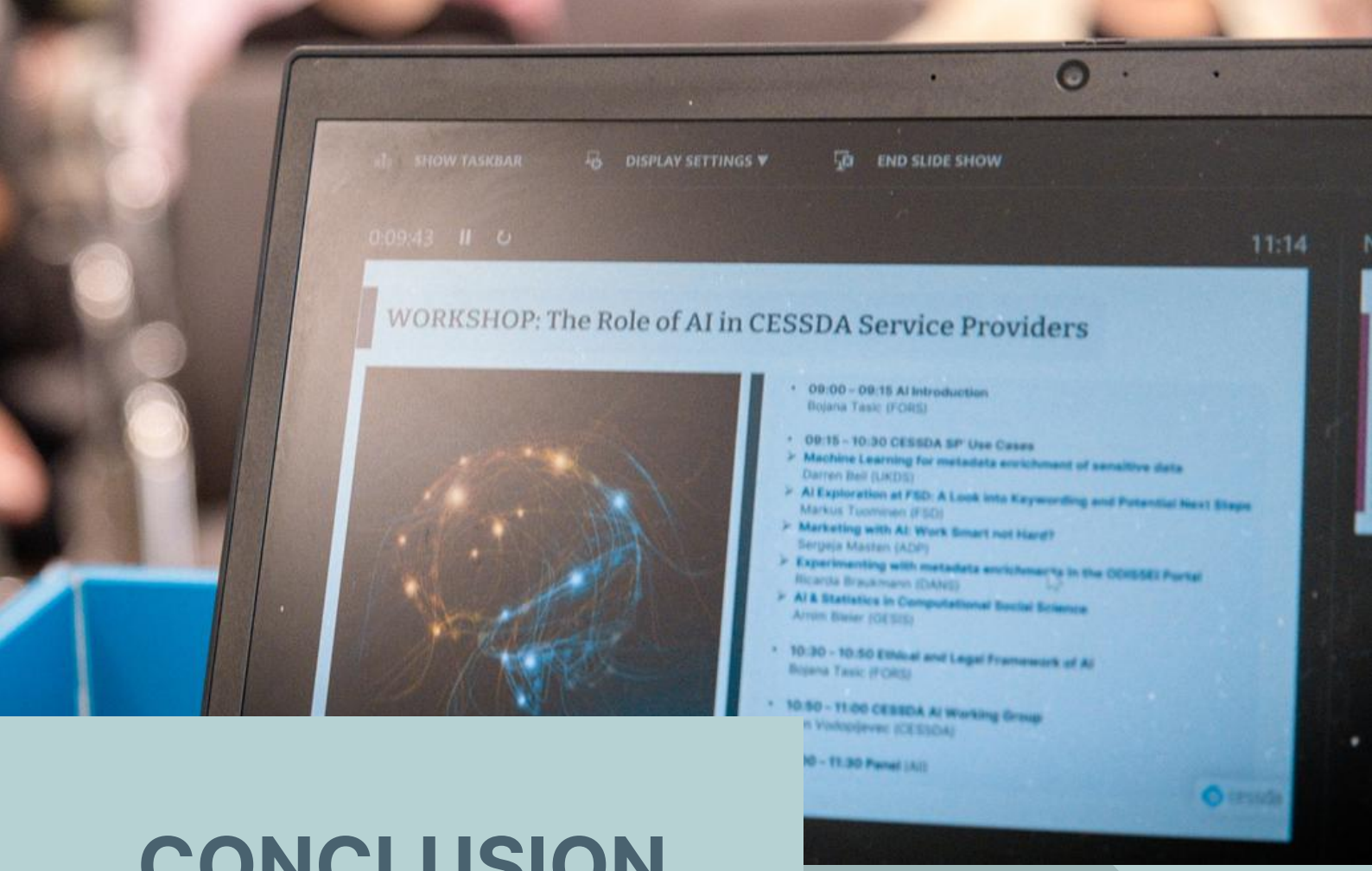
Throughout the conference, seve

- **Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** The need for greater collaboration across disciplines to address complex societal challenges was repeatedly emphasised.
- **Data Accessibility and Sensitivit:** Balancing open science principles with the need to protect sensitive data emerged as a critical challenge for the social science community.
- **Technological Innovation:** The potential of AI, machine learning, and new computational tools to transform social science research was a recurring topic.

ND OUTCOMES

ral overarching themes emerged

- **Research Reproducibility:** The importance of ensuring computational reproducibility in social science research was highlighted, with practical tools and methodologies discussed.
- **Crisis Preparedness:** The need for resilient research infrastructures capable of adapting to and studying societal crises was underscored.
- **Metadata Standardisation:** The critical role of standardised, interoperable metadata in facilitating cross-disciplinary research was emphasised.



CONCLUSION

The CESSDA Conference 2024 not only celebrated a decade of achievements but also charted the course for the future of social science data management in Europe. This milestone event brought together experts, policymakers, and researchers from across the continent, showcasing the breadth and depth of CESSDA's influence in the field of social science research.

The discussions and workshops held during the conference have laid a solid foundation for future initiatives. By addressing key areas such as AI integration, enhanced data sharing, and metadata standardization, CESSDA is well-positioned to lead the evolution of social science research infrastructure in Europe.

As CESSDA moves forward, its journey continues, driven by a collective vision to revolutionise social science data. This shared commitment promises to make research more accessible, reliable, and impactful than ever before, paving the way for innovative solutions to complex societal issues in the years to come. The conference has reinforced the importance of cross-border collaboration, interdisciplinary approaches, and technological innovation in achieving these goals.

Reflecting on the outcomes of this conference, it's clear that CESSDA's role in shaping the landscape of social science research is more critical than ever. The organisation's commitment to fostering collaboration, embracing new technologies, and maintaining the highest standards of data management will continue to drive progress in the field, ensuring that social science research remains at the forefront of addressing the most pressing challenges of our time.

This forward-thinking approach will not only benefit researchers but also contribute to more informed policymaking and a deeper understanding of our rapidly changing society.

LEARN MORE ABOUT cessda

CESSDA Data Catalogue

CESSDA ELSST Thesaurus

CESSDA Vocabulary Service

CESSDA Metadata Validator

CESSDA Resource Directory

CESSDA EQB - European Question Bank

CESSDA DMEG - Data Management Expert Guide

Watch the videos now on our YouTube Channel

www.cessda.eu

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