Brussels, 12 May 2023

COST 025/23

**DECISION**

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Subject: Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of the COST Action "A Multilingual Repository of Phraseme Constructions in Central and Eastern European Languages" (PhraConRep) CA22115

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The COST Member Countries will find attached the Memorandum of Understanding for the COST Action A Multilingual Repository of Phraseme Constructions in Central and Eastern European Languages approved by the Committee of Senior Officials through written procedure on 12 May 2023.

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

For the implementation of a COST Action designated as

**COST Action CA22115**
**A MULTILINGUAL REPOSITORY OF PHRASEME CONSTRUCTIONS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN LANGUAGES (PhraConRep)**

The COST Members through the present Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) wish to undertake joint activities of mutual interest and declare their common intention to participate in the COST Action, referred to above and described in the Technical Annex of this MoU.

The Action will be carried out in accordance with the set of COST Implementation Rules approved by the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO), or any document amending or replacing them.

The main aim and objective of the Action is to create an infrastructure for comparative research on PhraCons in the Action languages. The Action develops a multilingual repository of PhraCons for researchers, language learners, teachers, and professional translators. The repository also serves as a resource to conduct further research and develop practical applications. This will be achieved through the specific objectives detailed in the Technical Annex.

The present MoU enters into force on the date of the approval of the COST Action by the CSO.

## OVERVIEW

**Summary**
To communicate, language users must not only respect the grammatical rules of a given language; they must also have knowledge about which words typically belong together. This means that they must know how to combine words and grammatical forms to create specific meanings in specific contexts. When learning a new language, the focus is usually on the teaching of grammatical rules and vocabulary. Verbal routines and other kinds of patterned speech, such as idioms or proverbs, have also become a natural part of modern foreign language teaching. The PhraConRep Action targets a class of idiomatic word combinations that have been much less of a focus not only in teaching, but also in research. The patterns in question will be referred to as Phraseme Constructions (PhraCons) and are defined as patterns of idiomatic word combinations consisting of fixed lexical elements ("anchors") and empty slots for fillers. Both lexical anchors and lexical fillers must meet certain criteria specific to the given PhraCon.

PhraConRep coordinates contrastive empirical research on PhraCons and establishes a platform for conducting joint research on the classification, description, storage, translation and teaching of PhraCons of Middle and Eastern European languages. Its main objective is to provide a multilingual repository of PhraCons. On the basis of two pivot languages, German and Russian, equivalents of PhraCons are established in at least nine Slavic languages and Hungarian. The repository will be a unique tool for language learners, teachers, and other stakeholders, such as professional translators, involved in the study of these languages.

| **Areas of Expertise Relevant for the Action** | **Keywords** |
|---|---|
| ● Languages and literature: Use of language: form, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, lexicography, terminology<br>● Languages and literature: Second language teaching and learning<br>● Languages and literature: Linguistics: typological, historical and comparative linguistics<br>● Languages and literature: Translation and interpretation<br>● Languages and literature: Databases, data mining, data curation, computational modelling | ● phraseme constructions<br>● syntactic idioms<br>● translation<br>● foreign language teaching and learning<br>● intercomprehension |

**Specific Objectives**
To achieve the main objective described in this MoU, the following specific objectives shall be accomplished:

Research Coordination
● create an application-based theory and joint terminology for the collection, description, comparison and interrelation of PhraCons in the Action Languages which will apply to other languages as well
● develop a standardised procedure for the detection, analysis and translation of PhraCons in various languages based on said theory and terminology
● bring together theoretical and practical knowledge about PhraCons from different research cultures and traditions
● coordinate empirical research into families of PhraCons and their equivalents in the Target Languages
● disseminate information about the output generated by the COST Action by raising awareness of the importance of (semi-)prefabricated language in language learning and translation among different groups of stakeholders
● assist language teachers in schools, universities and other relevant institutions in testing and developing teaching materials aimed at the acquisition of PhraCons and related phenomena of (semi-)prefabricated

speech; identify examples of best practice which might be readily available

Capacity Building

● build a platform to coordinate the development of a repository of PhraCons that will be easily accessible by linguists and other communication researchers across frameworks, as well as by professional translators, language teachers and learners at universities, schools and other relevant institutions

● overcome the fragmentation of language sciences into individual language disciplines by identifying and bringing together experts researching the PhraCons of different languages

● offer team and networking opportunities for Early Career Researchers (ECRs) by allowing participation in all COST Action-related activities and by providing the opportunity to conduct tandem research with experienced researchers

● extend beyond the lifespan of the COST Action by building partnerships and providing a networking and working infrastructure which includes the multilingual repository that will be open and flexible to integrate an ever-increasing number of PhraCon entries, related Construction types, as well as additional languages

# TECHNICAL ANNEX

## 1. S&T EXCELLENCE

### 1.1. SOUNDNESS OF THE CHALLENGE

#### 1.1.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE OF THE ART

The past few decades of research has shown that the proportion of prefabricated or partially prefabricated expressions in language is significantly higher than was assumed in the early days of modern grammar research. This insight has resulted in a growing interest in frequently occurring combinations of words of various degrees of flexibility in linguistics, translation studies, digital text processing, and other communication sciences. This research has also challenged the assumption that the system of a language consists of two separate modules, namely the vocabulary or lexicon, and a grammatical structure stipulating the rules of how to combine elements of the lexicon in order to form cohesive sentences. Instead, researchers engaging in the analysis of actual language use have increasingly adopted the idea that language is built on conventionalized pairings of form and meaning of different levels of abstractions, called Constructions. Since the 1980s, this constructionist paradigm has evolved to become a multifaceted approach united by the overall postulate that any meaningful linguistic unit, be it a single word or a multi-word expression, can be conceived of as a Construction, provided it is characterized by an idiosyncratic form-function-relationship.

The COST Action "A Multilingual Repository of Phraseme Constructions in Central and Eastern European Languages" (PhraConRep) is dedicated to a specific type of multi-word Constructions, referred to herein as "Phraseme Constructions" (PhraCons). PhraCons consist of one or more lexically fixed element/s (=anchor/s) and one or more open slot/s (Dobrovol'skij 2011: 114). The slots must be filled by lexical elements (=fillers) according to lexical, grammatical, communicative, stylistic and intonational rules. Although PhraCons are partially schematic, they have an abstract overall meaning that is usually idiomatic, which means it cannot be attained simply by adding up the meanings of its constituents. Instead, PhraCons must be learned and memorized as a whole. Examples of English PhraCons are: *Don't you (even)* + verb phrase (e.g. *Don't you (even) dare think about it*) or *Some X* + subject + copula (e.g., *some friend you are; some help she was*).

PhraCons pose a challenge for learners and language professionals such as teachers, translators, or programmers of automatic translation software. Despite their high frequency in language use, PhraCons often pass by unnoticed, which makes them a potential point of misunderstanding for non-native speakers. The semi-formulaic nature of PhraCons makes it difficult to extract PhraCons from language corpora in order to determine their structure or to record them in conventional dictionaries. Although focus is currently shifting towards semi-formulaic Constructions in empirical linguistic disciplines, PhraCons are still poorly recorded and understood, particularly in the less intensely researched languages of Europe. **This COST Action network includes ten languages of Central and Eastern Europe, whose inventories of PhraCons have not yet been explored on a broader scale: Bosnian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Hungarian, Polish, Serbian, Slovakian, Slovene, and Ukrainian (= Target Languages).** By investigating the translation, learning and teaching of PhraCons as a relevant aspect of living language use in these languages, **this COST Action contributes to the preservation of Europe's multilingual cultural heritage and to the European Language Policy** (Factsheet of the European Parliament "Language Policy" 2022).

The development of increasingly powerful tools to store and process digital language corpora has opened up new possibilities of how linguistic patterns can be studied. This is also particularly true of PhraCons, whose semi-formulaic nature makes it necessary to develop specific procedures of corpus research which combine lexical and morpho-syntactic query techniques. These new technologies have also fuelled the endeavour of establishing **the inventory of Constructions of a given language, the so-called "Constructicon"**. As a result, "Constructicography", a new linguistic discipline dedicated to

the recording and description of the Constructions of a language emerged as an amalgam of constructionist theory and lexicographic methods (e.g., Ziem 2014; Lyngfelt 2018).

There is a rich research tradition of types of prefabricated speech established in Russian phraseology since the middle of the 20th century which had a particularly strong impact on (Eastern) German theory building. In German-speaking literature, PhraCons were associated with umbrella terms like "Phraseoschablonen" (Fleischer 1982: 135-139) or "modellierte Bildungen" (Černyševa 1986: 213-217) and typically considered fringe phenomena of phraseology. In the Russian-speaking tradition, PhraCons and related phenomena came to be known as "phraseoschemes" (Ru: *frazeosxemy*, Šmelëv 1976) or "syntactic phrasemes" (Ru: *sintaksičeskie frazemy*, Iordanskaja & Mel'čuk 2007: 298f.) and, more recently, as belonging to the domain of "microsyntax" or "small syntax" (e.g. Iomdin 2016). There is also a well-established lexicographic tradition of indexing language units beyond the single word in Russian language studies (e.g., the syntactic dictionary by Zolotova 1988), and the importance of intonational properties of PhraCons has also been acknowledged (Pavlova & Svetozarova 2017: 462-476). The COST Action profits from these traditions by applying theory and methodology developed for **two Pivot Languages, German and Russian**, to the **ten Target Languages** named above. **All twelve languages will be referred to in this document as Action Languages.** In a mutually supportive way, the COST Action also brings together lesser-known research approaches from the Target Languages and joins them with established approaches.

PhraCons are very frequent and particularly widespread in informal registers of speech, which makes them **important for the mastery of colloquial language**. As semi-formulaic patterns, PhraCons are shaped by conventionality on the one hand, and creativity and expressivity on the other. Crucially, native speakers use much more prefabricated language than learners of foreign languages do. While the consideration of lexically and structurally completely fixed idioms (e.g., *you're welcome*, *no problem,* or *be that as it may*) has become common practice in foreign language instruction for some time, teachers' and learners' **knowledge of how to teach and learn partially prefabricated patterns is still quite limited.** This is not only because there is little awareness among language teachers and learners of the ubiquity of partially schematic Constructions like PhraCons in everyday language use, but also because mechanisms which serve as the foundation of the proficiency displayed by native speakers in this domain are still poorly understood. Consequently, reference books and teaching materials addressing PhraCons are scarce even in major languages such as English or Russian. If there are textbooks available, they are typically designed for highly advanced levels, usually B2 of the European Reference Framework or even higher. The Russian Constructicon (e.g., Èndresen et al. 2020) is an exception to this rule, as it includes a section with exercises containing PhraCons and other types of prefabricated speech beginning at level A1 of the European Reference Framework. The absence of reference books including PhraCons and related phenomena also creates consequences for the work of professionals who translate into the Target Languages, whenever they are limited to information that may or may not occur in regular lexicographic reference books, or when they rely on their own knowledge and ad-hoc examples.

Although research suggests that between one third to one half of linguistic outputs contain prefabricated structures (cf. the overview given by Rafieyan 2018), the **acquisition and teaching of PhraCons has only recently been taken up in scientific study**, and usually not within the context of the Action's Target Languages (e.g., de Knop & Gilquin eds. 2016). Research on how foreign language acquisition of PhraCons can be supported and fostered in general, and especially on lower levels of proficiency, is scarce, although there is currently a shift taking place from monolingual to bi- or multilingual studies (e.g., Mellado Blanco & Mollica & Schafroth eds. 2022). The two main approaches to teaching prefabricated linguistic structures in the language classroom can be distinguished along the lines of the well-known distinction between *focus on form* and *focus on forms* approaches to language teaching. The *focus on form* approach' seeks to integrate prefabricated patterns as they occur in communicative situations, whereas the *focus on forms* approach relies on the explicit instruction of such patterns. So far, it is debatable which approach creates the better learning results (e.g., Rafieyan 2018).

### 1.1.2. DESCRIPTION OF THE CHALLENGE (MAIN AIM)

The **main goal of the PhraConRep COST Action is to develop a systematic approach of recording, analysis, translation and comparison of PhraCons in the Action Languages**. It will establish the infrastructural and networking conditions that will enable the COST Action Participants to develop such an approach, with a main goal being the creation of a multilingual repository of PhraCons in the Action Languages which will serve academic and non-academic stakeholders on an ongoing basis.

To this end, the Action Participants must **jointly develop a theoretical basis, a methodological procedure and the technical prerequisites to retrieve, store, classify and translate PhraCons** in different languages. The macrostructure of the digital repository and the linguistic microstructure of the multilingual entries must be formalised adequately and concisely. There are two specific challenges regarding the structure of the repository: The structure must make it possible to represent hierarchical nest structures among related PhraCons, and the structure must enable users to conduct targeted searches for PhraCons in the languages represented in the repository.

The lexicographic recording of PhraCons is complicated by the fact that the lexically specified elements (anchors) of PhraCons are often highly frequent and polysemous function words (e.g., particles, conjunctions, prepositions), which is why including the description of a PhraCon into the standard lexicon entry of the respective words will not help users find it: They simply won't know where to look for a given PhraCon in a dictionary. PhraCons are also hard to find by means of canonical corpus research tools. The semi-formulaic nature of PhraCons makes it necessary to develop specific procedures of corpus research that combine lexical and morpho-syntactic information. These procedures will need to vary depending on the architecture of the underlying language corpora. Most of the Action's Target Languages are less well-equipped with digital language corpora and research tools than what is available for the major languages. Of the corpora available, the language data included are typically fiction and newspaper texts, two types of text which may well contain colloquial speech but do not necessarily adhere to it. As PhraCons are particularly frequent in colloquial registers, and some PhraCons may be too rare to be found in language corpora of limited size, alternative ways of finding equivalents to PhraCons across the Action languages must be developed. What is more, the rules licensing the fillers for a given PhraCon are Construction specific and must therefore be determined individually for any given PhraCons within a language. This requires the careful, bottom-up study of individual PhraCons and their possible equivalents across the Action languages.

PhraConRep addresses the following **core objectives** of research on multi-word patterns in general, and PhraCons in the Action Languages in particular:

1. Development of a **theoretically sound system** to describe, classify and analyse PhraCons cross-linguistically and in an empirically adequate way.

2. **Recording, description** and **multidirectional translation** of PhraCons into the Action Languages. As of now, these languages are:

    a. **Two Pivot Languages:** German and Russian serve as Pivot Languages because research into PhraCons in these languages is advanced both theoretically and empirically.
    b. **Ten Target Languages:** Nine Slavic languages (Bosnian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Polish, Serbian, Slovak, Slovene, Ukrainian), and Hungarian. The number of Target Languages included in the Action can grow in the course of the Action, provided that enough experts for the respective languages are made available. Russian is a particularly important Pivot Language for the Slavic Target Languages because of its typological and genetical closeness.

3. Better understanding of the **intercomprehension of PhraCons**. Intercomprehension captures interlanguage transparency and people's strategies to exploit familiar languages to understand less familiar ones.

4. Better understanding of the **acquisition of PhraCons**, particularly among adult language learners.

5. **Testing of teaching methods** and (assistance in the) **development of teaching materials** for L2-learners of German, Russian, and of the Target Languages to acquire PhraCons.

## 1.2. PROGRESS BEYOND THE STATE-OF-THE-ART

### 1.2.1. APPROACH TO THE CHALLENGE AND PROGRESS BEYOND THE STATE OF THE ART

PhraConRep draws on existing projects dedicated to the constructionist description of PhraCons and related phenomena (cf. the overview of relevant projects in Section 2.1.1). The stocks of German and Russian PhraCons are, although far from complete, better recorded and analysed than the PhraCons of the Target Languages. As the Action proceeds, the stock of PhraCons will constantly grow. At the same time, PhraCons detected in one Target Language will be translated and ported over to the repositories of the other languages.

The repository is being built using the internet hosting service GitHub. Previous working experience has shown that the Git software is suitable for this goal. The Russian Constructicon (Èndresen et al. 2020) also uses a GitHub repository. Currently, an advanced working edition of the repository exists which includes about 260 Russian and 150 German PhraCons, with the first equivalents in the Target Languages having already been established. The compilation of the repository makes it necessary to **conduct empirical studies on the distribution and frequency of individual PhraCons** in authentic language corpora of Pivot and Target Languages.

The PhraConRep COST Action takes a **user-friendly approach** by preferring traditional grammatical terminology over framework-specific terminological and notational conventions. Necessary additions to traditional terminology are kept to a minimum and formulated in such a way that they can be understood by non-scientific stakeholders. The approach is dedicatedly usage-based, which means that **PhraCons are retrieved from authentic language material** used in real-world contexts. When available (as it is often the case for examples from fiction), translations are likewise identified by means of research parallel language corpora. More often, however, examples of PhraCons will have to be translated by the Action Participants themselves and evaluated by their peers. The focus on translation is not only motivated practically, but also inspired by the idea that translations into other languages improve our understanding of the source language (e.g., Zaliznjak 2015).

PhraCons and other types of schematic multi-word patterns typically form Construction families related through hierarchical inheritance relationships. To capture such “fuzzy” relationships, the Action adopts a radial or prototype model of categories which locates typical representatives of a category at its core, and less typical representatives of a category along its periphery. Of course, the concept of radial structures also allows for overlapping category boundaries. The challenge of developing a technical structure that is able to represent these relations in an adequate and understandable way will be met by the close **cooperation of experts across disciplines**, including core linguistic fields like phraseology, lexicography and grammar, and also translation studies, speech studies, and digital humanities (corpus linguistics, digital language processing, experimental designs).

The PhraConRep COST Action provides **the first repository of PhraCons in the Action Languages** to linguists, professional translators, and language teachers, as well as language learners at universities, schools and other educational institutions. The repository will be an open-access and free of charge resource**. It is unique not only in terms of the scope of languages, but also in terms of content and structure** as it provides easily accessible information about meaning, style, and possible usage of PhraCons based on the careful in-depth analysis of individual PhraCons, families of PhraCons and their equivalents in other Action languages. The description of PhraCons in the repository is particularly **innovative as it includes phonetic and suprasegmental characteristics** of PhraCons, which are often different from the phonetic realization of free word combinations. **The comparative study of PhraCons also helps to determine the typological profile of the Action languages** with respect to prefabricated patterns, an area largely neglected in language typology.

By creating knowledge in the domains of comparative, typological and single-language studies of PhraCons, the COST Action **opens up new approaches to their teaching and learning**. In comparing closely related and less closely related languages, the COST Action also creates insights into the range and limits of cross-lingual intelligibility and interlanguage transparency of PhraCons. In this way, the COST Action **can contribute to a revitalization of EuroComSlav**, the Slavic subsection of the

European intercomprehension project EuroComprehension (http://www.eurocomprehension.eu; Zybatow 2003).

Further potential applications of the multilingual repository and other outputs created by this COST Action include the development of computer-assisted learning software for the respective languages, as well as intercultural studies relating to the inventory and nature of the idiomatic vocabulary of a given language.

### 1.2.2. OBJECTIVES

#### *1.2.2.1. Research Coordination Objectives*

To achieve the research goals as outlined in Section 1.1.2., the Action aims to accomplish the following specific objectives regarding the coordination of research activities (cf. Section 4.1.2 for the specification of measurable output):

- O1: **create an application-based theory and joint terminology** for the collection, description, comparison and interrelation of PhraCons in the Action Languages which will apply to other languages as well
- O2: **develop a standardised procedure** for the detection, analysis and translation of PhraCons in various languages based on said theory and terminology
- O3: **ring together theoretical and practical knowledge** about PhraCons from different research cultures and traditions
- O4: **coordinate empirical research** into families of PhraCons and their equivalents in the Target Languages.
- O5: **disseminate information** about the output generated by the COST Action by raising awareness of the importance of (semi-)prefabricated language in language learning and translation among different groups of stakeholders (cf. Section 2.2.2.)
- O6: **assist language teachers** in schools, universities and other relevant institutions in testing and developing teaching materials aimed at the acquisition of PhraCons and related phenomena of (semi-)prefabricated speech; identify examples of best practice which might be readily available

The Objectives are listed in chronological order. O1 and O2 will have to be accomplished by the end of the second year of the COST Action. O3 through O5 will be pursued throughout the COST Action. The realisation of O6 will come to the fore in the second half of the COST Action.

#### *1.2.2.2. Capacity-building Objectives*

In terms of capacity-building, the PhraConRep seeks to:

- O7: **Build a platform** to coordinate the development of a repository of PhraCons that will be easily accessible by linguists and other communication researchers across frameworks, as well as by professional translators, language teachers and learners at universities, schools and other relevant institutions.
- O8: **Overcome the fragmentation** of language sciences into individual language disciplines by identifying and bringing together experts researching the PhraCons of different languages, with the intent of broadening the focus to include Construction types that are more and less lexically specified than PhraCons, and to add even more languages to the repository.
- O9: **offer team and networking opportunities** for Young Researchers and Innovators (YRIs) by allowing participation in all COST Action-related activities and by providing the opportunity to conduct tandem research with experienced researchers. YRIs will be prioritized in Short-Term- Scientific Missions (STSMs).

- O10: **extend beyond the lifespan** of the COST Action by building partnerships and providing a networking and working infrastructure which includes the multilingual repository that will be open and flexible to integrate an ever-increasing number of PhraCon entries, related Construction types, as well as additional languages.

# 2. NETWORKING EXCELLENCE

## 2.1. ADDED VALUE OF NETWORKING IN S&T EXCELLENCE

### 2.1.1. ADDED VALUE IN RELATION TO EXISTING EFFORTS AT EUROPEAN AND/OR INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

There is a number of research projects already in existence which seek to establish and catalogue the Constructions of individual languages in totality, or of a subset of Constructions, which are typically semi-formulaic in nature. The following is a list of the projects most relevant to this COST Action. These projects are in various stages of realisation and can serve as models for PhraConRep:

- Russian: Russian Constructicon, including explanations and examples of Russian constructions in English and Norwegian (https://constructicon.github.io/russian/; e.g., Janda et al. 2018; Èndresen et al. 2020).

- German: FrameNet & Konstruktikon des Deutschen (https://gsw.phil.hhu.de; e.g., Boas & Ziem 2018); German Frame-based Online Lexicon (G-FOL), designed for English speaking learners of German (Boas & Dux 2013)

- English: The FrameNet Constructicon (https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/fndrupal/; e.g., Fillmore & Lee-Goldman & Rhomieux 2012)

- Romance languages: ConstructiCon – The Construction Lexicon of Romance Languages (https://kw.uni-paderborn.de/institut-fuer-romanistik/7)

- Computer-aided learning of lexical functions (CALLex): learning tool of Russian and German vocabulary and multi-word expressions, funded by the European Union in the 1990s (https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/INTAS-94-0843/results/fr) and later adapted to French and Spanish (e.g., Boguslavsky et al. 2006).

- Swedish: SweCcn – a Swedish constructicon (https://spraakbanken.gu.se/en/projects/sweccn; Lyngfeldt et al. 2018). SweCcn focuses on partly idiomatic constructions and is mainly based on the English Constructicon, which is why major impetus is not expected from this project.

PhraConRep will profit from expertise provided by the COST Action “European network for Web-centred linguistic data science” (NexusLinguarum) CA18209, mostly in terms of multilingual data curation and with respect to some of the minor languages addressed by NexusLinguarum. The COST Action “CLIL Network for Languages in Education: Towards bi- and multilingual disciplinary literacies” (CLILNetLE) CA21114 and this COST Action can benefit from each other: PhraCons represent a specific and understudied domain of language use and knowledge, and CLILNetLE can provide this COST Action with insights on best practices of implementation in the (bilingual) classroom.

The recent emergence of phraseological reference works including at least some PhraCons (e.g., Dziamska-Lenart et al. 2021; Petronijević & Vujčić 2021) reflects the growing awareness of the high number and wide array of prefabricated language patterns and helps to compile PhraCons in the respective language(s). However, **the PhraConRep COST Action is unique in its empirical, comparative and typological perspective on PhraCons and in the scope of languages**: The COST Action applies theory and methodology developed for Russian and German to less well-studied Slavic languages on the one hand, and to Hungarian, a model case of a genetically unrelated language, on the other. PhraConRep thereby contributes to the very foundation of comparative and typological studies on partially prefabricated language. It supports the European policy of language diversity and contributes to initiatives of the European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe (ECML), for instance, by providing new teaching and learning materials (CARAP > Database (ecml.at) in the less widely spoken languages of Europe.

## 2.2. ADDED VALUE OF NETWORKING IN IMPACT

### 2.2.1. SECURING THE CRITICAL MASS, EXPERTISE AND GEOGRAPHICAL BALANCE WITHIN THE COST MEMBERS AND BEYOND

Th Action benefits from the knowledge, creativity and experience of experts working at various stages of their academic career and within different disciplines of language and communicative sciences. Some of The Action Participants will be composed of Young Researchers and Innovators (YRIs). While many Action Participants come from research institutions located in
COST Member Countries, some of which are Inclusiveness Target Countries. This Action will include experts for the Pivot Languages German and Russian, and for all Target languages, and therefore will create relevant output. The network is also combined in such a way that the different standard varieties of German (German, Austrian, and Swiss standard) are taken into account.

It became clear during the first round of invitation to join the COST Action that there is not only sufficient expertise but also enormous interest among experts. The eagerness of many researchers to engage in this COST Action reflects the **timeliness of research endeavors focusing on the regularities and peculiarities of prefabricated speech, and on questions of the mutual comprehensibility, translatability and typology of multi-word units across languages**. The current number of COST Action Participants enables the team to successfully launch the initial phase of the COST Action and to establish suitable working routines. At the same time, the current number of members means that the COST Action remains open to growth as it moves forward.

It was important to make sure that experts of the Pivot Languages, all Target Languages and those with various research foci join the COST Action. **The interdisciplinary network of the Action represents the various disciplines necessary for success, including such diverse fields as lexicography, phraseology, grammar, digital language data analysis, applied linguistics, language didactics, speech studies, phonetics, and translation studies.** The Action is slightly biased in favor of the core competencies of lexicography, phraseology, morpho-syntax, phonetics, and corpus linguistics in the relevant languages. As the emphasis will shift from descriptive theory to practices of translation, learning and didactics over the course of the COST Action, more experts in these fields will join, particularly those who have well-established contacts with non-academic stakeholders (e.g. teachers' associations, education authorities). The Action includes participants who have many years of experience in project management. The team is assembled in such a way that a wealth of technical expertise and project management experience is assured at all times (cf. also Section 4.1.3).

The twelve initial Action Languages differ greatly with respect to numbers of speakers, the language corpora available, and the state of research with respect to PhraCons. The ratio of Participants of the different countries joining PhraConRep is of course influenced by the number of experts required and available for the respective languages, which is naturally lower in small speech communities than in large ones. However, experts for a Target Language may be available outside the respective nation state, which is why the number of Participants per country does not reflect the number of experts per language one-to-one. Rather, the initial network is put together in such a way that it can start working on all twelve Action Language right away.

The Pivot Language German will be the main reference point for comparison and translation, which is why the expertise for this language maintains the highest level of representation in the team and why it is so often combined with expertise in at least one of the Target Languages and/or Russian. As the project progresses, the share of partners from ITCs will be further increased. Due to the ongoing war against Ukraine, expertise in the Russian language is assured by including experts of Russian affiliated in COST member countries, many of whom are native speakers. All experts of Ukrainian included in the network are also experts of Russian.

### 2.2.2. INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS

PhraConRep relates to four Core Groups of stakeholders 1. the research community, 2. the education community (secondary and primary education; namely university and school teachers), 3. practitioners (adult language learners, professional translators), 4. providers of digital language services.

Measures to reach out to the general public will be discussed in Section 3.2.2.

| Stakeholders | Measures of involvement |
|---|---|
| 1.Research community/ academia | The academic stakeholders are represented by the PhraConRep network, and broadening the network to involve more academic stakeholders will be crucial particularly in the first half of the COST Action. Inclusion and information of the broader research community will be accomplished through presentation of the Action's activities at internationally renowned conferences (e.g. the annual conference of the European Society of Phraseology EUROPHRAS (http://www.europhras.org/en/) and by means of high-impact journal publications. The student group of academic stakeholders will be introduced to the Action activities through dedicated teaching opportunities on contrastive research of PhraCons offered by the Action Participants. |
| 2. Educational | The education community at universities will be involved in the COST Action early on, specifically through the recruitment of more experts of language didactics and teacher education into the Action team. The team will inform academic language lecturers of the Action Languages by inviting them to workshops and training schools, and by disseminating printed and online information material to academic stakeholders involved in the teaching of an Action Language at the national level of their respective country. In the second phase of the COST Action, these measures will be extended to stakeholders in primary education, taking into account feedback and advice gathered from academic stakeholders. |
| 3. Practitioners | PhraConRep will establish contact with the education community outside of schools and universities. It specifically addresses professional translators and teachers in adult education. Contacts will be established through national and international professional associations and initiatives (e.g., the "Netzwerk digitale Bildung" in Germany), and personal contacts of Action Participants, as well as through conference contributions at conferences and publications in journals relevant to these professional groups. |
| 4. Industry | PhraConRep will reach out to publishers of teaching materials and providers of digital language services and language corpora (e.g., learning software such as Duolingo and Babbel; automatic translation services such as DeepL, Google Translate, ChatGPT; digital language corpora such as Sketch Engine and many others) by inviting representatives to project presentations and training schools. Contacts can also be established during conferences, book fairs, and similar events. |

# 3. IMPACT

## 3.1. IMPACT TO SCIENCE, SOCIETY AND COMPETITIVENESS, AND POTENTIAL FOR INNOVATION/BREAK-THROUGHS

### 3.1.1. SCIENTIFIC, TECHNOLOGICAL, AND/OR SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS (INCLUDING POTENTIAL INNOVATIONS AND/OR BREAKTHROUGHS)

Scientifically, PhraConRep not only **promotes the empirical study of PhraCons** in the Pivot and Target Languages, but also **contributes to the theory and methodology of studying PhraCons cross-linguistically and across the numerous disciplines engaged in the study of language**. It encourages quality research on PhraCons and related phenomena, and fosters joint research across disciplines and countries. The material gathered in the repository, the individual case studies, and the

procedures of data retrieval from language corpora developed during the course of the COST Action **can in turn be leveraged for many other uses in the communication sciences.** More specifically, the outputs created by PhraConRep help to further develop single-language and parallel corpora, such as the German Reference Corpus (DeReKo), the National Corpus of the Polish Language (NKJP), the Czech National Corpus (CNC), the Croatian National Corpus (HNK), and others.

In terms of network building, PhraConRep **fosters the emergence of new research collaboration** and increases the chances of consecutive funding on the national and international levels, which is particularly important for ECRs and researchers in Inclusiveness Target Countries.

On a broader scientific and social scale, this **COST Action promotes the empirical study of languages which tend to be understudied.** This includes not only minor like Slovene or Slovakian, but also Ukrainian, with approx. 35 million native speakers (numbers vary between 32 and more than 40 million native speakers). The COST Action raises the awareness of the existence and ubiquity of PhraCons in the Action Languages among university and school teachers. The scope of languages and the multilingual perspective of the PhraConRep **help implement the European language policy of promoting multilingualism** among its citizens.

The COST framework is ideal for the purpose of helping **identify relevant preliminary work** from the different single language studies involved in the COST Action. Some of these works are deprived of the attention they deserve and circulate only within their respective single language philology, often because they are not written in English. PhraConRep benefits from the instruments provided by the COST framework to foster networking structures across individual language sciences. By disseminating its outputs in English and in the Action Languages, this COST Action contributes not only to the exchange of knowledge but also to the **cultivation of European multilingualism** in an immediately impactful way.

Socio-economically, the repository can help enrich single language and multilingual corpora, automatic translation software and learning software, by helping to include PhraCons in these various services. By cooperating with academic and educational stakeholders, the COST Action outputs can also assist teachers and producers of teaching materials in developing methods and materials to teach PhraCons.

## 3.2. MEASURES TO MAXIMISE IMPACT

### 3.2.1. KNOWLEDGE CREATION, TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

PhraConRep **creates knowledge** by developing an agenda for the comparative and typological research on PhraCons in genetically closely related (Slavic), less closely (German), and unrelated languages (Hungarian), which participate in the shared cultural history of Central, Eastern, and South-Eastern Europe. PhraConRep helps to discover more about differences in the inventory of PhraCons across languages, both in terms of the number, types and actual occurrences (tokens) of PhraCons in a given language as compared to others. Such knowledge, which contributes to the foundation of typological research in phenomena situated at the intersection of grammar and lexicon, is only scarcely available thus far. The repository is **the first multilingual reference work** to store, describe and translate PhraCons in the Action languages. Open access to the repository and its simple metalanguage make it possible to transfer knowledge to practitioners. The multiple empirical case studies conducted within the COST framework create in depth knowledge about individual PhraCons and their possible translations into other languages. It will therefore shed light on the frequency of equivalence, from full equivalence (which is rarely observed with PhraCons) to free translations. Experimental work with adult learners and native speakers of the different languages promises insight into the mechanisms involved in the acquisition of PhraCons. This may include frequency properties as well as phonetic-prosodic, pragmatic-discursive, and content parameters.

**The transfer of knowledge** to academic colleagues outside the COST Action network is achieved through publications in high impact journals across various subfields of communicative sciences, ranging from core linguistic disciplines like phraseology, grammar studies and lexicography through to translation studies, speech studies, and language learning. The Action envisions a balanced ratio of publications in English and the Action languages. Within the Action network, the transfer of knowledge is enabled by annual plenary meetings of the Action Members, and by intensive peer group work, particularly in the form of Working Groups (WGs) and STSMs, both within and across WGs as

outlined in Section 4.1.1. Importantly, a **transfer of knowledge** is expected not only unidirectionally from studies about the Pivot Languages into the study of the Target Languages, but **in multiple directions**. Research into prefabricated speech also has a considerable tradition in many of the Target Languages, whose achievements are seldom recognized beyond the respective research communities.

PhraConRep fosters the **career development** of ECRs by involving them in all Action-related events and activities and by giving them the opportunity to work both independently and with peers within a strong and growing network. ECRs will be particularly considered in STSMs and their interests and needs will be prioritised in the thematic specification of training schools, conference panels, and other activities. ECRs will also be given the opportunity to take on management functions, both within the MC and in individual activities of the COST Action.

#### 3.2.2. PLAN FOR DISSEMINATION AND/OR EXPLOITATION AND DIALOGUE WITH THE GENERAL PUBLIC OR POLICY

In the kick-off plenary meeting, a Working Group is composed that will be responsible for the dissemination into and contact with secondary stakeholders as well as the general public (WG6, see Section 4.1.1.). This WG will lead in the development of the COST Action's website, initiate communication with the PR departments of the participating universities, and identify and reach out to non-academic stakeholders. The goal of these measures is to **raise awareness of the ubiquity of prefabricated patterns in language** and of the COST Action activities, both among the research community and among educational and professional stakeholders. The repository, as well as the findings achieved during the course of the COST Action, are made available openly to assure low-threshold access. For the same purpose, the COST Action seeks to communicate key findings also in regional and popular science press and exploits social media channels (e.g., ResearchGate, LinkedIn, but also more inclusive platforms like Twitter).

The work of PhraConRep is also promoted at scientific conferences of varying levels of focus. The COST Action's insights will be distributed among the Participants' affiliations to promote their integration into language learning courses. National and supra-national professional associations of language teachers at schools and universities, professional translators and other **stakeholders will be invited to join COST Action activities tailored to their need**s (e.g., training schools and project presentations). Intensive dialogue with these groups of practitioners is also important to identify best-practice examples that may already be in use. Towards the end of the COST Action, decision-makers in education policy at different levels of representation may be addressed with proposals for action to improve language teacher education, if education policy of the respective COST Action Member Country allows.

When communicating the COST Action's research results, it will be imperative to **maintain a balance between English-language publications** for the wider professional audience **and publications in the various individual languages**, for the purpose of dissemination to the respective academic and non-academic stakeholder communities. In this way, the COST Action will also foster European linguistic diversity and strengthen the functional polyvalence of the respective standard languages.

# 4. IMPLEMENTATION

## 4.1. COHERENCE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WORK PLAN

### 4.1.1. DESCRIPTION OF WORKING GROUPS, TASKS AND ACTIVITIES

WG1: Theory and typology

This WG develops the theoretical apparatus of the PhraConRep COST Action. The apparatus must allow for a comparative analysis, which means that it cannot, at least not primarily and exclusively, operate on the level of language forms (as these naturally differ between languages). Instead, it must apply an onomasiological approach that seeks to classify PhraCons in terms of their meaning. Given that PhraCons typically fulfil discursive functions, a pragmatic classification seems most feasible at this stage. WG1 also focuses on typological insights arising from the comparative perspective adopted by the Action. The WG coordinates and combines findings about (areal-)typological properties, similarities and differences between PhraCons in the Action Languages in terms of number, frequency, formal and functional (communicative) properties.

WG2: Repository development

WG2 implements the proposals of WG1 by incorporating them into the repository. The WG is also responsible for making changes in the microstructure of the already existing PhraCon entries in the repository as appropriate, based on the findings of WG1. WG2 is also the technical support for the COST Action Participants. Its members are experts of language databases, lexicography and phraseology. At the moment, an advanced working version repository already exists that needs to be further adapted to the specific needs of the project. Above all, the conceptual tools to be developed by WG1 must be integrated into the repository in such a way that WG3 will be able to work consistently. Lastly, WG2 assists WG3 in the formulation of sophisticated corpus queries when the need arises.

WG3: Entry processing and translation

This WG does the actual data entry by feeding the database with new PhraCons and translating them into the other Action Languages. WG3 conducts extensive searches for PhraCons in existing monolingual and bilingual phraseological dictionaries in the Action Languages and merges them into the repository. A great deal of this work is also concerned with the retrieval of authentic evidence of the use of PhraCons and of translations into the Target Languages. To that aim, WG3 conducts searches in digital language corpora on a large scale. Given that a considerable number of PhraCons in the Pivot Languages and, to a lesser extent in the Target Languages, is already included in this Action, it will be possible to begin the translation of entries early on. Furthermore, PhraCons are not always so complex that the results of individual case studies must be completely considered, which means that entries can be updated even before case studies are fully concluded. The main responsibilities of WG3 include the formal, semantic, pragmatic and phonetic description of PhraCons in the repository and their translation. WG3 works in subgroups representing the different Target Languages of the Action.

WG4: Intercomprehension and learning

Intercomprehension refers to situations where people take advantage of similarities between their native language (L1) and a closely related foreign language (L2) to comprehend speech or text in L2. In recent years, intercomprehension has been interpreted more broadly as involving both inherent and acquired intelligibility, so that it can apply to less related or unrelated languages, as well as include the use of a bridge language (known as mediated receptive multilingualism). This WG designs and conducts experimental studies to test hypotheses about the intercomprehension of PhraCons and learning strategies of adult/adolescent languages learners to process PhraCons (i) in a foreign language that is closely related to the native language (as is the case among Slavic languages), and (ii) in a foreign language that is not closely related to the native language (Slavic languages with respect to German and Hungarian).

WG4 approaches properties of PhraCons by considering specific research questions: RQ1: How are PhraCons encoded in different but (closely) related languages? RQ2: To what extent can learners detect correspondences in the unfamiliar language? RQ3: How can constructional equivalents be activated and interpreted for successful learning? Methodologically, this WG relies on the established INCOMSLAV infrastructure of integrated corpus analyses and web-based experiments at the level of phrases, sentences and texts, using both written and oral modality. The chance of participants' good performance in (closely) related languages can be examined as implicit multilingual learnability. The scalability of these findings and models depends on linguistic and extra-linguistic factors that may impact cross-lingual intelligibility and thus productive multilingualism as well as efficient learning.

WG5: Didactic methodology

The mission of this WG is two-fold: First, the group develops and tests methods of learning PhraCons efficiently at different levels, in turn using the findings provided by WG4. WG5 will draw specifically on brain-friendly, multimodal learning techniques and test different kinds of *focus on form* vs. *focus on forms* oriented methods (cf. final paragraph of Section 1.1.1). Second, the WG exploits this knowledge to support language teachers and lecturers at universities, schools and adult education institutes through helping develop teaching materials. This goal will be realised in the form of a training school for teachers in the fourth year and by producing at least one multilingual textbook or learning tool to impart the understanding and active use of PhraCons. WG5 also works in subgroups fdor the different languages. Each subgroup is dedicated to the transfer the knowledge created by the COST Action’s research activities to language classes of the respective Action Languages.

WG6: Dissemination and communication

This WG is concerned with the representation and communication of the COST Action activities and the establishing of contact with stakeholders. This includes website design, conference and meeting organisation, public relations work, textual content creation and publishing, a social media presence, and report writing. Since the work in this group has less to do with generating scientific output, it is expected that this group will be staffed on a rotating basis so that all team members have the same opportunity to participate in the process of generating scientific knowledge and of maintaining the public presence of the COST Action.

### 4.1.2. DESCRIPTION OF DELIVERABLES AND TIMEFRAME

All thematic subfields are being worked upon throughout the entire lifespan of PhraConRep. In addition, each year of the COST Action is dedicated to a thematic focus corresponding to the timeline of output creation in the respective fields. The thematic foci are as follows: Year 1: Theory; Year 2: Translation; Year 3: Learning; Year 4: Teaching.

The planned timeline is ambitious yet realistic enough to be adjusted accordingly as the COST Action evolves. Moreover, the individual WGs will have the opportunity to develop their own, more individualized timeframes. Yearly plenary meetings represent **four milestones** to monitor the progress of the COST Action and to initiate corrective action if needed.

| Lead/responsible | Deliverables | Month |
|---|---|---|
| **Year 1: THEORY** | | |
| MC, WG6 | Science Communication Plan specifying the communication, dissemination, valorisation and implementation of Action activities and results | 6 |
| WG1-WG5 | Case studies I: average output of two case studies about individual PhraCons or families of PhraCons per Action Language, dealing in particular **with the theory and methodology of analyzing PhraCons** | 12 |
| WG3 | Entry processing and translations I:average output of 50 entries per Action Language | 12 |
| WG1 & WG 2 | Issue of theoretical and methodological guidelines for comparative research on PhraCons, including a handout for editing entries in the repository | 12 |
| **Year 2: TRANSLATION** | | |
| WG1-WG5 | Case Studies II: average output of two case studies about individual PhraCons or families of PhraCons per Action Language, dealing in particular **with the translation of PhraCons** | 24 |
| WG3 | Entry processing and translations II: average output of 50 entries per Action Language | 24 |
| **Year 3: LEARNING** | | |
| WG1-WG5 | Case Studies III: Average output of two case studies about individual PhraCons or families of PhraCons per Action Language, dealing in particular **with the learnability of PhraCons** | 36 |
| WG3 | Entry processing and translations III: average output of 50 entries per Action Language | 36 |

| YEAR 4: TEACHING | | |
|---|---|---|
| WG1-WG5 | Case Studies IV: average output of two case studies about individual PhraCons or families of PhraCons per Action Language, dealing in particular **with the teaching of PhraCons** | 48 |
| WG3 | Entry processing and translations IV: average output of 50 entries per Action Language | 48 |
| WG4 & WG5 | Release of a multilingual textbook or learning tool of PhraCons including all Action Languages | 48 |

### 4.1.3. RISK ANALYSIS AND CONTINGENCY PLANS

Risks for which the Action Participants are responsible (internal risks):

1. Failure to develop a coherent classification. Risk: **medium**.
   Contingency plan: The prototype approach to categories adopted here allows for a typology of PhraCons in terms of centre and periphery, which makes a strict categorisation dispensable. At present, a communicative perspective on PhraCons seems most promising. Importantly, the development of an accomplished typology is not a prerequisite for the compilation of the repository. Instead, the compilation and translation of PhrasCons can also be kept on a micro-level of description by supplying as many different PhrasCons and as good translations as possible without including them into an all-encompassing typology. Alternatively, the typology will be developed bottom-up from the comparative analysis of PhraCons.

2. Insufficient coordination among Members of WGs or across WGs and, as a result, lack of uniformity in the processing of entries. Risk: **low**.
   Contingency plan: Reliable and clear communication of possible updates by WGs 1 and 2. Regular meetings of WGs and across WGs as outlined in Section 4.1.4 to align best practices, share details about innovations and discuss problems.

3. Lack of adequate text corpora to retrieve equivalents of PhrasCons in one of the less-studied languages. Risk: **high**.
   Contingency plan: The high level of competence in the Target languages represented by the experts in the different languages and the networking structure makes it possible for the COST Action to make its own translations even without relying on translation examples provided in multilingual language corpora.

4. Loss of working hours dedicated to the COST Action. Risk: **medium**.
   Contingency plan: The enlistment of a combination of early career, experienced, and retired Action Participants and a doubling up on competencies to reduce losses. Some of the Participants will be able to take research leaves during the Action. The established researchers also commit to enabling the ECRs to maximise their working time dedicated to the COST Action.

5. Failure to reach a minimum of 200 PhrasCons for each language within the COST Action period. Risk: **medium**.
   Contingency plan: The workload varies depending on the Target Language. If the quota of 200 constructions is per language is not met for every language, the overall project will still remain coherent and work on the repository can continue well beyond the duration of the Action.

Risks for which the Action Participants are not responsible (external risks):

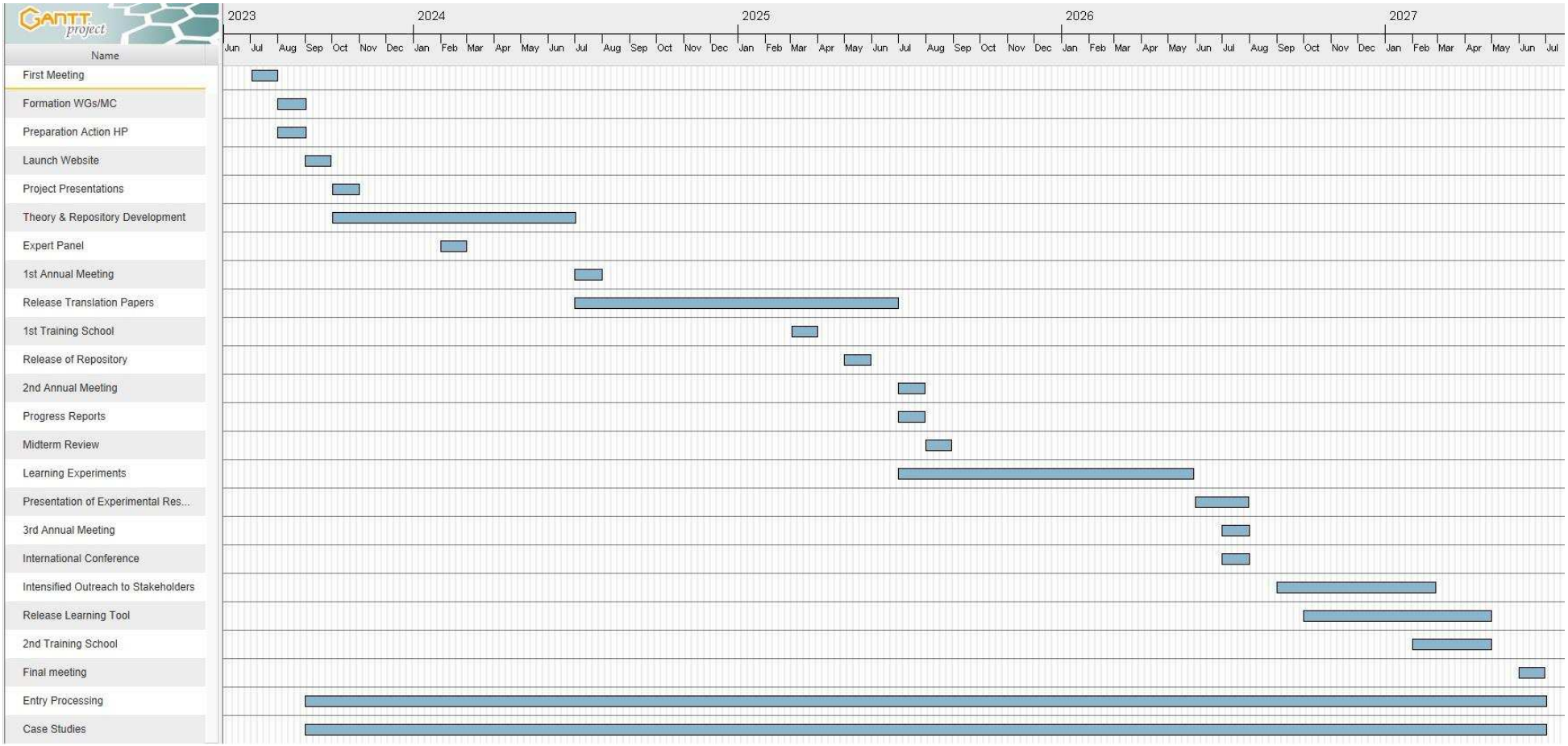
1. Impossibility of personal meetings due to force majeure. Risk: **high**.
   Contingency measures: flexible booking of travel tickets and accommodation with the possibility of cancellation at short notice, transition to digital and semi-digital (hybrid) formats.

2. Loss of COST Action Participants during Action duration, (i) due to end of employment contract during COST Action duration. Risk: **low**.
   Contingency measures: sufficiently large stock of Action Participants with sufficient contract

duration; doctoral positions are granted for the duration of the action; (ii) For other reasons (e.g., health, other personal reasons, change in professional position). Risk: medium. During the compilation of the application team it became apparent that there is enormous interest among suitable experts to join the Action. The loss of participating experts can be mitigated through replacement. Thus, the success of the Action does not depend on the participation of any single Action Participant.

3. Failure to establish contact with stakeholders due to lack of interest or time. Risk: **high.** Contingency measure: Establishment of a separate WG (WG6) dedicated to the dissemination of Action outputs and Public Relations. Early outreach to gatekeepers, including university language teachers cooperating with schools, heads of professional associations, and others. Ensuring high quality output that will attract stakeholders' attention.

## 4.1.4. GANTT DIAGRAM



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