

Third edition of

LEADERSHIP, CONTACT & CONFLICT

working beneath the surface

An experiential working and learning conference

jointly organized by

Utrecht University School of Governance

p.r.o. academie

MaTRIS

Erasmus Academie



Week 41, October 2021 in Vlodrop (NL)

LEADERSHIP, CONTACT & CONFLICT

working beneath the surface

Dear reader of this conference brochure,

How could we have imagined that the title of this conference – Leadership, Contact and Conflict – suddenly would become so present worldwide?

The essence of leadership was no longer about being great or compelling, but about everyone being at work, from his or her role, on the common primary tasks ⁽¹⁾.

Suddenly we discovered that leadership is not only about vision, but about holding – in the psychological sense: providing containment and interpreting what is happening in times of uncertainty.

We were deprived of many contacts that used to be so normal and important to us.

For those of us who were able to keep working, traditional boundaries between private and work life have been overthrown. The word contact has received a new meaning and changed emotionally, with a major impact on the functioning of both family systems and organisations.

A new expression has invaded our daily lives: "social distancing". We should rather say "physical distancing" because in a context of confinement we need even more social closeness ⁽²⁾.

Meanwhile, conflicts in the workspace seemed to have by and large vanished, as we were all facing a new common enemy. When and how will they emerge again there? The disappearance of conflicts is a natural and pleasant illusion that can backfire.

In this turmoil many organisations had to shift the focus of their primary task towards crisis management. Organisations, as much as persons, need post-pandemic reflections about task and role in order to avoid the risk of losing parts of their identity.

Besides good health and safety, we are looking forward to meeting you in this conference, which is a place where we can collectively explore and work on leadership, contact and conflict in the new context,



Martha Mens
Conference Director



Bruno CHEVOLET
Conference Associate Director

(1) Martijn VAN DER SPEK in <https://www.uu.nl/nieuws/leiderschap-in-volgerschap-in-besmettelijke-tijden>

(2) Zachary Gabriel GREEN and Bruno CHEVOLET in https://www.linkedin.com/posts/bruno-chevolet-4740901_safe-space-and-safe-place-self-care-and-activity-6649055977213620224-VS-g

LEADERSHIP, CONTACT & CONFLICT working beneath the surface

LEADERSHIP, CONTACT & CONFLICT: what do these three words mean to you?

LEADERSHIP: Is it for you a job title or a status, a role that you take in a group, or a type of behaviour...?

How do you perceive that people take you or have leadership roles in groups and in organisations, and how does that affect you?

How do you tend to take up and shape leadership?

The key question might be here: how do we manage and contain contacts and conflicts when we are leading?

CONTACT: What are the dynamics of contacts?

What is played out in contacts between persons, groups and organisations?

The word contact refers to touching: in that way?

While having contacts, how do you work with the distinction between the person and his/her roles?

Consider that the etymology of the word contact refers to the fact of being touched. What does it imply?

CONFLICT: How do you experience their impact on you?

As something annoying or as some symptom hiding something else?

What do you experience when you are personally involved in conflicts? How do conflicts in groups affect you?

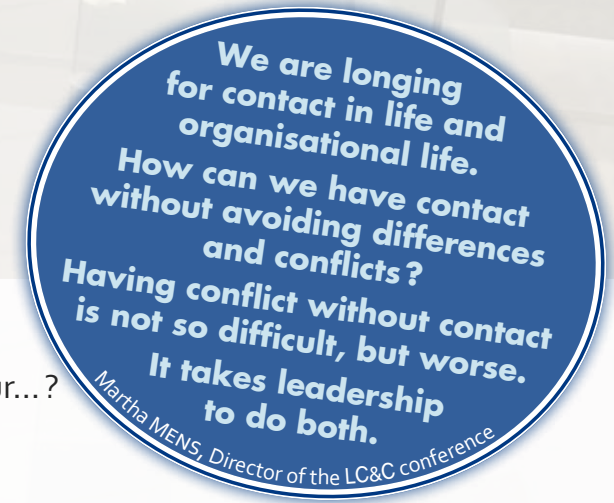
Why and how can conflicts be generative and therefore worthwhile?

Working beneath the surface: What is not directly visible in your interactions with others or in groups and nevertheless contributes to how leadership, contacts and conflicts develop?

How much is going on beneath the surface?

What is in facts at stake and playing, how and why?

Which roles do you (un)consciously get and how do you take them up?





Testimonials from the previous editions

Since LC&C I am more aware of what's happening 'beneath the surface' and able to ask people to come up with their thoughts.

Manager Shared Service Center – LC&C 2018

It has made entering conflict easier.

Managing Director – LC&C 2015

Amazement, awareness, reflection, unconventional experiences, opening up to the unknown, allow the process to do its work, recognise patterns...

Advisor training programs – LC&C 2015

What will you get out of this LC&C conference ?

During this conference, you will explore your different roles, experience the dynamics, and find and take your authority within the context of personal leadership, contact and conflict within the temporary institution of this conference.

As member you will have the opportunity to :

- Explore, through issues related to leadership, contacts and conflicts, the conscious and unconscious dynamics that unfold within groups and within yourself ;
- Discover innovative ways to understand the dynamics of change and of resistance to change, and explore ways to deal with them ;
- Become aware of the roles you tend to take up in different systems, and hence become more effective in groups, teams or organisations ;
- Find ways to combine emotions with rationality, both during the conference and afterwards ;
- Prepare yourself for taking up (new) managerial or professional roles.

Every learning is an act of personal authority. However, during the conference you can also expect learning experiences related to :

- Refining or reshaping your leadership roles within your working environment, separate from or in addition to, the functional roles that you are currently assigned to ;
- Gaining a better understanding of the unconscious mechanisms in temporary systems and in organisational structures ;
- Understanding the root causes of repetitive mechanisms of resistance against innovation and change in themselves and in others, and increasing your ability to work with those defenses ;
- Balancing feelings, emotions and thoughts, so that your interventions become more successful ;
- Addressing 'elephants in the room' and facing conflicts.



Testimonials from the previous editions

It has helped me to make a clear distinction between role and organisation. Now I have a helicopter view on situations as they unfold and I can see their interconnections. I pick up signals and feelings better so that can work with them.

Manager Quality and Care – LC&C 2015

After LC&C, I've started to discuss items that lied «under the table» and take leadership to contain possible conflicts about it.

Financial consultant – LC&C 2018

I am more aware of the different roles I can have and better able to play with that.

Independent consultant – LC&C 2018

I'm less holding back in going into a confrontation, expressing my opinion or feeling with regard to the work.

Senior Organisational Advisor – LC&C 2018



Who should attend ?

Who wish to (specifically) advance their ability to work in conferences and apply their group relations experience in other settings.

This Leadership, Contact & Conflict Conference is for anyone who wishes to enlarge their capacity to understand and work effectively with dynamics in teams and organisations and who is curious to the conscious and unconscious processes we create, which impact us as members of groups and systems.

Questions around leadership, contact and conflict, and the way in which people take up or do not take up certain roles in their organisations and institutions, are universal themes.

This conference is for professionals from diverse work settings and roles, like top managers, directors, operational team managers, support staff, consultants, (team-)coaches, educators, researchers, administrators and technical workers, both within private and public organisations.

In the past LC&C conference members came from various continents and countries, and from all kinds of industries; public administrations, medical and social services, political parties and non-profit institutions.

Diversities of members in terms of background, age, education, work experience, nationality, beliefs, gender or sexual orientation and all kinds of social identities, are meaningful resources for working with group dynamics and roles in organisations.



What to expect?

The conference design is based on the assumption that working together on the mentioned primary task gives members and staff the opportunity to discover what it is:

- to take a role in and respond to leadership;
- to have conflict and work with differences.

During the conference the following events will take place:

- 'Here and now' events, called large study system, small study systems and systemic events, which are designed to enable exploration of the intra and inter group dynamics in the here-and-now;
- Reflection and application events, which are designed to collect personal experiences from the "here and now" events and the systemic event, in order to generate insights that can be understood and connected to the everyday personal and professional life of the members.

Testimonial from the previous edition

Quite an eye-opener! There is a lot beneath the surface.

General Manager – LC&C 2018

Methodology

This Group Relations Conference Leadership, Contact & Conflict – *working beneath the surface* relies on the tradition and methodologies of 'Group Relations' working and learning conferences, developed by the *Tavistock Institute of Human Relations* in London, by Wilfred Bion, Ken Rice and Eric Miller and still further developed by others.

It is a residential, experiential conference.

Gaining knowledge through reading or attending lectures and seminars is not the best path to a deep understanding of group processes and human behaviours.

Acquiring knowledge plus learning how to use that knowledge require direct experience. "Experiential learning" means learning from the here and now of immediate experience, followed by reflection and eventually by application. Hence the learning process in LC&C is completely based on doing and being, experiencing and reflecting, working with the mind and the heart.

***"Knowledge is not
a thing we have,
but a link between ourselves
and what we know"***

Wilfred R. BION



LC&C provides an intense and safe learning space to explore the conscious and unconscious dynamics that take place within teams and organisations.

In this conference, participants from any professional field and with any background can explore their leadership and their relationship to contacts and conflicts.

Leadership that involves sensitivity for the feelings and attitudes of others.

Leadership that expresses the ability to understand what is happening in a group at the unconscious as well as the conscious level.

Leadership that represents the skills necessary for acting in ways which contribute to task performance.

The aim of this conference is to enable members to learn through direct experience: it gives them opportunities to experience which forces apply on them when they take roles. It also lets them experience the consequences of not taking up leadership roles when appropriate, and to reflect on why they didn't.

The members of LC&C can explore and learn how behaving both as a leader and a follower feels like. They can experience and explore the conflicts that arise in themselves and in others when they take leadership roles. In doing so they can also experience and explore what the meaning and nature of their contacts are.



Any institution, and hence also this LC&C conference, needs a primary task, which is its reason of being, hence its most fundamental task.

The primary task of this conference is to explore how persons, roles and systems interact, both consciously and unconsciously, and how people reshape their roles in practising leadership, contacts and conflicts, both within the temporary institution of this conference, and thereafter.

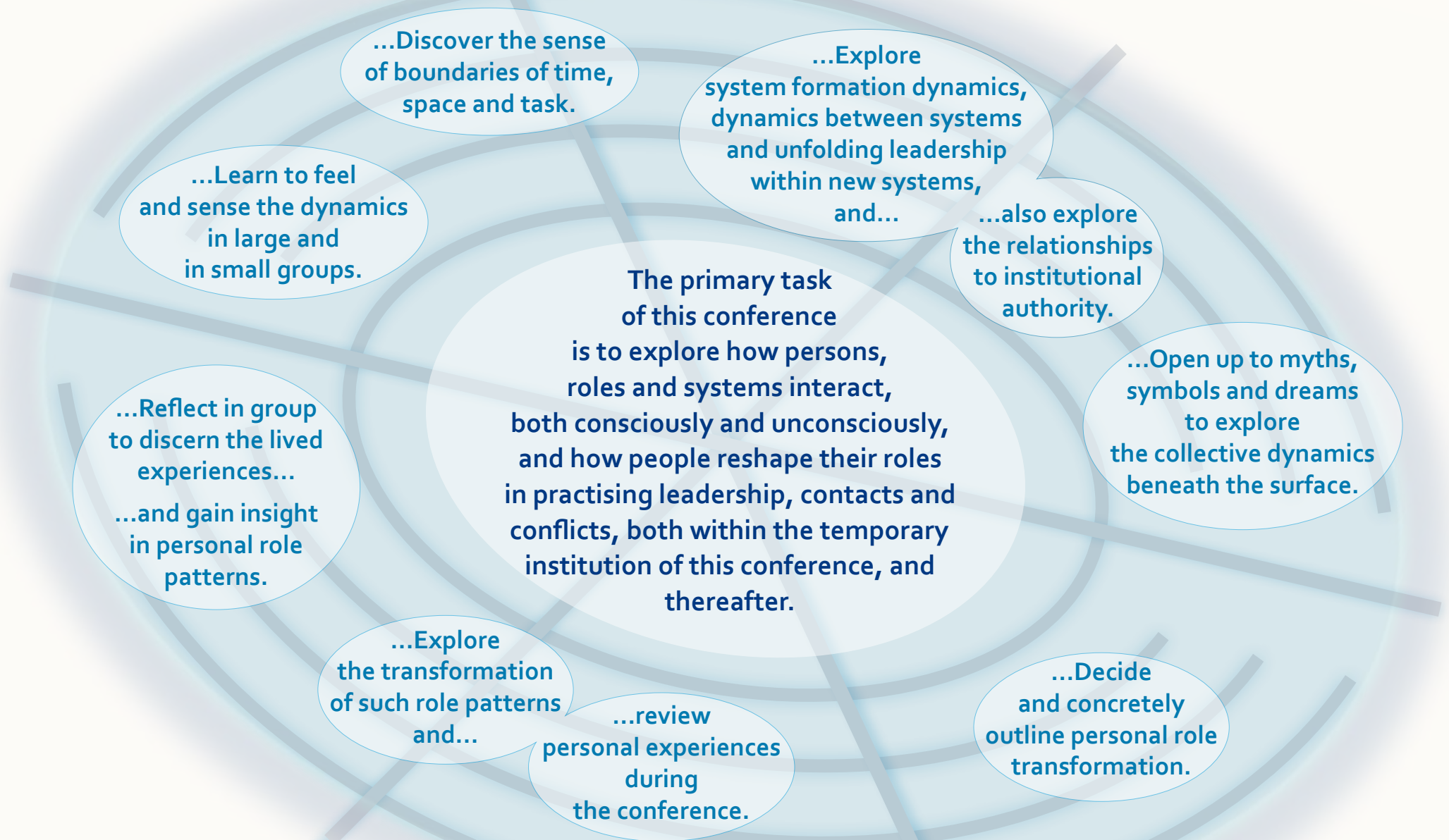
Each session in this conference also has its own primary task and its boundaries of time and territory. These concepts are crucial to system-oriented work and for the exploration of unconscious dynamics.

Experiential learning means, learning from the 'here and now' of immediate experience, followed by reflection and eventually application.

The design of the conference offers many opportunities for questioning, exploring and reflecting on experiences and on the conscious and unconscious dynamics influencing feelings, thinking and behaviour.

The conference is designed as a temporary learning institution. There are no lectures to attend. Questions are explored while being experienced and not debated as in a traditional academic conference.

The conference is structured as an ingenious series of sessions conceived to allow the members to...



(for the participants to the Application sub-conference):

... also learn taking up a consultant role in this conference.

Developing and Application sub-conferences

LC&C consists of two sub-conferences: a **Developing** sub-conference and an **Application** sub-conference, which are intertwined and form one whole conference.

1. **'Developing sub-conference'** is for first time members or for those who wish to deepen their previous learning experience.
The 'Developing' sub-conference will start on **Wednesday 13 October 2021**.
2. **'Application sub-conference'** is for members who want to learn from taking up consultancy roles within this conference. Candidates for 'Application' must have a previous experience of at least two 'group relations' conferences.
The 'Application' sub-conference will start two days earlier, on **Monday 11 October 2021**.

The LC&C conference will end on **Saturday evening, 16 October 2021**.



The staff of the working conference

LC&C is based on 70+ years of proven experience with Group Relations working and learning conferences and on the dedicated work of an experienced international staff brought together by Martha MENS, Conference Director, and Bruno CHEVOLET, Associate Director.

All members of the staff of the conference have experience with this method of working.

The conference staff (directors, administrators and consultants) work together as a collective management of this temporary institution.

Furthermore, the staff will work in the role of consultant in various working sessions, where they will share their reflections about what is happening in the "here- and-now".



Staff of the conference

Martha MENS, Director

THE NETHERLANDS



Drs. Clinical Psychologist and Master Psychodynamic Counselling. She is very passionate in making the group relations perspective more accessible and applicable within the daily practice of organisational life and is a past Chair of Group Relations Netherlands. She works as a senior consultant located within the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations for several other departments. She also works as co-program developer, supervisor and consultant in the Post academic executive program *Inside Dynamics in Organisations* at the Utrecht University School of Governance.

Martha has an extensive international staff experience in Group Relations conferences.

Bruno CHEVOLET, Associate Director

BELGIUM



MSc Eng., EMBA and Certified Transformation Consultant. Bruno's work covers many domains, ranging from organisational development to imagining innovative strategies and boosting management team effectiveness. He loves helping organisation improving their inclusive diversity and reaching more balanced leadership cultures. Following a European executive career in heavy industries he has co-founded *TeamMotivation*, a company that intertwines management consulting and psychodynamics.

Bruno is co-President of *MaTRIS* and has an international staff experience in Group Relations conferences.

Xavier BAS BASLÉ, Administrator

SPAIN



Designer, founder and co-director of Xavier Bas Disseny, a brand and packaging design studio. A lecturer of Graphic Design Projects since 1983, currently teaching at Elisava University School of Design and Engineering. Board member of ADG-FAD, Graphic Designers and Art Directors Association, 2005-08. General Secretary of



FAD, Fostering Arts and Design, 2014-18. Group relations consultant since 2003 in conferences in Spain and internationally.

Xavier is also keen and active photographer. Based in Barcelona.

Silke VAN BEEKUM, Administrator

THE NETHERLANDS



MSc in Social Psychology at the University of Amsterdam (NL) /Australian National University (AU). Trained in systemic and psychodynamic coaching and consulting at Utrecht University/Tavistock Institute, Dipl. Coaching, Counseling and Consulting. She is an experienced trainer and consultant in higher education. Her expertise lies on

the crossroad of education, personal development and leadership. She is Associate Partner at Reflect Academy.

In addition Silke works as an independent psychodynamic coach. Based in Amsterdam.

Leslie BRISSETT, Consultant

UNITED KINGDOM



Director of the Group Relations Programme, Principal Consultant and Company Secretary of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, Leslie has also been Director of the Leicester Conference for the past five years. He believes that Group Relations learning is the closest thing to a spiritual renaissance in the western mind, opening up possibilities for the experience of interconnection. He works with Boards and senior leaders, taking the role of Sherpa and companion as they navigate their journeys of leadership and followership.

Leslie was worked all over the world, and is always amazed at our dual capacity for hatred and love.

Pascaline CHRISTIAENS, Consultant

THE NETHERLANDS



Bachelor in Business Management and Master in Psychodynamic Counselling. She is very enthusiastic about the impact learning by experiencing has for managers and professionals in organizational life and especially in the domain of personal leadership. She works as partner and senior consultant for KennedyFitch for profit and not for profit organizations. She is supervisor and consultant in the Post academic executive program Inside Dynamics in Organizations at the Utrecht University School of Governance.

Pascaline has an extensive international staff experience in Group Relations conferences.

Irina PONOMARCHUK, Consultant

RUSSIA



Irina is a consultant and executive coach for Business schools Skolkovo (Russia), CEIBS (China), EDHEC (France) and IMD (Switzerland), where she works with leaders and their teams. In her coaching she uses psycho-dynamic and systematic approach, which she is passionate about.

Also Irina is the Director of Group Relations Russia, works at a number of group relations conferences and currently studies psychoanalysis at High School of Economics, Moscow.

Irina holds two citizenships, lives in Moscow and works worldwide.

Martijn VAN DER SPEK, Consultant

THE NETHERLANDS



M. General Social Sciences and BSc. Health Psychology. He is dedicated to the application of systems-psycho-dynamic perspectives, including Group Relations methodology, for the development of people and organisations. He works as an assistant professor, senior organisational consultant, coach and is programme leader of the post academic executive programme Inside Dynamics in Organisations, Theory and practice of working with hidden processes in organisations (professional partnership with Tavistock Institute of Human Relations) at Utrecht University School of Governance. He is an associate

consultant of Tavistock Consulting and a member of the International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organizations (ISPSO).

Martijn experienced the transitional space that a Group Relations conference provides, in various roles in many places.

Mónica Rocío VELARDE LAZARTE, Consultant

PERU



Socioanalyst with a Doctorate degree from the Tavistock and Portman NHS (UK). She is a Professional Partner of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations UK and she was a founder of T-Consult Socioanalytic Practice and the Hope of the Amazon Association in Peru. From those roles, she promoted the adaptation of Group Relations Conferences into a variety of commercial and social settings.

In her private practice, she has been interested into the application of the Group Relations framework into complex settings that impact society wellbeing and sustainability, working primarily across public and private energy and health sectors.



Practical information

Location, accommodation and dates

The conference is residential. It takes place at the Boshotel in Vlodrop (Nearby Roermond, The Netherlands, and close to the border with Germany).

<https://www.boshotel.nl/en/>



FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE APPLICATION SUB-CONFERENCE,

it starts on **Monday, 11 October 2021 at 13:00 sharp**: members must have settled and registered beforehand.

Registration upon arrival will be possible as from 11:30.

FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE DEVELOPING SUB-CONFERENCE, it starts on **Wednesday, 13 October 2021 at 13:00 sharp**: members must equally have settled and registered beforehand.

Registration upon arrival will be possible as from 11:30.

**The whole conference ends for all members on
Saturday, 16 October 2021 at 17:00.**

Health and safety

Health and safety instructions and measures have been jointly reviewed by the conference organisers and the hotel management for ensuring a sufficient physical distancing in all the sessions of the conference, as well as all other sanitary provisions.

The evolution of the Covid-19 pandemic and its consequences for events like this conference are closely monitored, and any further measures will be taken and communicated if required.

Click on the button to register online →



Costs

The cost of participating in the third LC&C conference covers both the conference fee and the full boarding hotel accommodation.

DEVELOPING SUB-CONFERENCE: the fee is € 2.500.

For “**early birds**” who have completed their registration before Monday 16 August EOD and for groups of at least 2 participants, the fee is € 2.200.

“**Early birds**” groups of at least 2 participants who have completed their registration before Monday 16 August EOD pay €1.900 per participant.

APPLICATION SUB-CONFERENCE: the fee is € 3.700.

For “**early birds**” who have completed their registration before Friday 16 August EOD and for groups of at least 2 participants, the fee is € 3.300.

Participants who need it can apply for a **bursary**. A limited number will be granted, depending on the individual cases and on the possibilities.

**Registration is completed upon receipt of
the payment of the conference fee.**

Cancellation policy

Paid up fees will be reimbursed if the conference has to be cancelled by the organisers, who therefore encourage early registrations.

Please note: cancellation by participants after more than 14 calendar days following the date stamp of the confirmation of registration can only lead to a partial reimbursement, based on the costs already incurred by the conference organisers. Participants should contact the pre-conference administration beforehand, in order to check the cancellation conditions which are applicable at that time.

Further information and registration : please go to the LC&C online page
<https://www.eur.nl/erasmusacademie/cursus/leadership-contact-conflict-working-beneath-surface>

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Utrecht University

matrice pour
la transformation des rôles
et l'innovation sociale

MATRIS

