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Task Group 9 – Social and cultural factors		
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Overall Aims and Objectives of Task Group		
<p>The overall aim of the work group 9 has been to explore the social and cultural factors influencing appearance dissatisfaction/satisfaction and stigma/discrimination including the role of appearance at the workplace.</p> <p>For this reason, the task group 9 realized a qualitative interdisciplinary and cross-cultural comparative research about the impact of body image, appearance and self-presentation on workers careers in 10 different countries (Ecuador, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Israel, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, Sweden).</p> <p>The research have focused on workers in order to highlight opportunities but also obstacles and discriminations related to body image, body language and self-presentation in the workplace. In particular, the research focused on three main employment sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) marketing; ii) higher education; iii) social services. <p>The research questions were the following ones:</p>		



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1. What is the impact of culture norms on workers' body image and appearance? What is the role of 'significant others' on workers' body image and appearance? What are their life styles? Do they practice sport? Do they follow any diet? Have they experienced any strong discrimination in relation to their body image when they were at school such as bullying or cyberbullying? Do they compare themselves with other persons in relation to their body appearance and in which way?
2. Does the way workers perceive, feel and evaluate their body, the way they appear and the way they present themselves in the workplace have an influence on their careers.
3. Do body image and appearance influence job interviews, daily working life and career promotion?
4. Do body image, appearance and self-presentation to other co-workers bring advantages, disadvantages or cause discrimination in the workplace?
5. How do employers present their workers in the workplace and what body image do they emphasize?

The methodology used were autobiographical narrative in-depth interviews

The selection criteria for choosing the informants were:

- Employment sector: Higher education, social services, marketing/advertising
- Gender: Men (50%) and Women (50%)
- Generations: age group 18-34 years-old, 35-54 years-old; 55-65 years-old
- Visible difference: in terms of disabilities, weight, height etc.

The second aim is to publish a scientific book containing the major results of the interdisciplinary research.

The third aim is to disseminate the results of the research participating in international conferences, presenting the book in different European countries, proposing seminars at the University or part of courses, and creating a facebook page.



Activities of Task Group

The activities that the researcher of task group 9 have done in the last 4 years (2013-2017) can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Discussion about the topic to research on. Silvana Greco came up with a project proposal on body image, body language and self-presentation at workplace in three different sectors: marketing; higher education and social services, which has been approved by the members of the task group.
- 2) Each partner from the 11 different countries will choose 1 to 3 sectors for his/her research according to time availability and financial possibilities.
- 3) Collection of the literature in each country about body image, body language and self-presentation
- 4) Contacting the interviewees, fixing the appointment and making the qualitative interview. The total interview done so far are 319.
- 5) Analysing the interviews with MaxQDA
- 6) Writing the chapter for the book. This activity is still ongoing.
- 7) The research will underline similarities and differences of the impact on body image and appearance in the before mentioned employment sectors.



OUTCOMES, ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS RESULTING FROM TASK GROUP ACTIVITIES

Publications (include only those with at least 3 authors from 3 different COST Countries)

Presented a poster entitled “Body image, appearance and self-presentation in the workplace: Advantages and discrimination for embodied workers” at the Appearance Matters 7 Conference at the Royal College of Surgeons in London, United Kingdom on 28–30 June 2016

Authors of the poster were the following members of task group 9:

- Silvana Greco, Fondazione Palazzo Bondoni Pastorio
- Paolo Antonelli, University of Florence
- Rossano Bisciglia, University of Florence
- Annemarie Calus, University of Malta
- Joanne Cassar, University of Malta
- Katya De Giovanni, University of Malta
- Davide Dettore, University of Florence
- Tali Heiman, The Open University of Israel
- Cheryl Martens, Universidades de las Americas Ana Mercedes Martínez, Universidades de las Américas
- Sigrid Michel, Fachhochschule Dortmund for Applied Science and Arts
- Marceline Naudi, University of Malta
- Dorit Olenik-Shemesh, The Open University of Israel
- Jolanta Sondaite, Mykala Romeris University

NETWORKING

Added value of the Networking (within the TASK GROUP)

- **Enhanced scientific knowledge and opened up new theoretical perspective.** For many researchers of this task group, this field of research concerning dissatisfaction body image and appearance at the workplace was completely new. In addition, many



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researchers were not familiar with the software program, MAXQDA. Hence, being involved in this Cost action programme increased enormously their scientific knowledge and opened up new theoretical perspectives and concepts.

- **Self-development.** Some researcher including the coordinator became much more aware of their bodies, their body language and clothing. It improved their body language and oral presentation, which enhances their teaching and presentation at conferences.
- **Future collaboration.** Márta Fülöp presented Prof. Darja Kobal Grum of the University of Ljubljana to Silvana Greco. Márta Fülöp presented her at the last Cost-Action Is1210 conference in Ljubljana. The three already thought to make a future research project together.
- **Friendship.** Made new lovely friends off-line and on-line!

Please describe any other outputs and achievements that have resulted from Task Group activities, or that are still in progress, highlighting in particular on those relevant to the aims of COST ("COST enables break-through scientific developments leading to new concepts and products and thereby contributes to strengthen Europe's research and innovation capacities.")

Outputs and achievements:

- New concept elaborated by Silvana Greco "social body, image and presentation". Hence, it has enhanced the literature on the importance of "body capital" in upward and downward social mobility and risk of marginalization or for more satisfaction.
- Formed a research group of almost 30 scholars in 10 countries, which will stay in contact
- Publication of scientific book in 2018 (still ongoing)
- Scientific articles in next years in Journal of psychology and sociology
- Possible new University courses, seminars on this topic or topic (one is already programmed at the Freie Universität Berlin realized by Silvana Greco)
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Impacts

Please describe the impacts that have resulted, or might result from the Action in future

Description of the impact	Type of impact ¹	Timing of impact ²
New theoretical concepts	Scientific	Achieved
Publication of the book, of articles	Scientific	Foreseen within 2 years
Learned to use a new software for qualitative analysis (MaxQDA)	Scientific	Achieved
More awareness on the negative (body dissatisfaction, marginalization, downward social mobility) and positive effects of "social body and presentation" (body satisfaction, upward social mobility)	Societal	Foreseen within 2-5 years
Economic benefit due to selling of the book, being paid to talk about this topic in a conference, enhances offer of University courses	Economic	Foreseen within 2-5 years

¹ Scientific/ Technological, Economic, Societal

² Achieved/ Foreseen within 2 years/ Foreseen 2-5 years/ Foreseen 5-10 years/ Foreseen 10+ years

DISSEMINATION & EXPLOITATION OF TASK GROUP ACTIVITIES

Add description here (Add more rows if needed)



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Item/ activity	Country	Target Audience	Number	Result	Hyperlink (if available)
<i>Below are examples of some activities, Please delete before starting</i>					
Newspaper Gazzetta di Mantova (June 6th 2013), article by Luca Cremonesi	Italy	Local Italian Population	2000	Enhanced awareness & knowledge about potential negative impacts of appearance concerns; awareness of the focus of COST Action IS1210	
Conference by Prof. Silvana Greco at the Fondazione Palazzo Bondoni Pastorio (June 7th 2013)	Italy	Italian General population, experts psychologies, policy makers including the Mayor o Castiglione delle Stiviere	100	Enhanced awareness & knowledge about potential negative impacts of appearance concerns; awareness of the focus of COST Action IS1210	http://www.fondazione-bondonipastorio.eu/Calendario%20attivita.htm
Lecture by Dr Joanne Cassar, Dr Anne-Marie Callus, Dr Katya De Giovanni, Dr Brenda Murphy and Dr Marceline Naudi "I don't try to bluff or make myself look prominent. Does appearance matter in academia" At the University of Malta (Faculty pf Social Wellbeing)	Malta	Postgraduate psychology students and scholars	40	Enhanced awareness & knowledge awareness about potential negative impacts of appearance concerns; information about COST Action IS1210	
Conference by Katya Di Giovanni	Malta	Scholars and students	50	Enhanced awareness & knowledge	



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The Role of Psychology in Maltese Society' on (13th November 2015) At the University Of Malta				awareness about potential negative impacts of appearance concerns; information about COST Action IS1210	
Newsletter	Italy	Mailing list of the Fondazione Palazzo Bondoni Pastorio	800	Information about COST Action IS1210	
Facebook of Fondazione Palazzo Bondoni Pastorio	Italy	Italian General Population (from North Italy and Rome) another General Population from other European country such as Switzerland, Germany ect.	7000	Enhanced awareness & knowledge awareness about COST Action IS1210 Information about COST Action IS1210	https://www.facebook.com/Fondazione-Palazzo-Bondoni-Pastorio-322122114480459/?ref=br_rs
Appearance Matters Summit (Poster presentation)	Israel	Professionals and general audience	300	The role of perceived body image, social support, well-being and gender in predicting cyber-victimization.	
Before each concert and cultural event of the Fondazione Palazzo Bondoni Pastorio Prof. Silvana Greco, always mentioned the Cost-Action Is1210 project and explained its aims	Italy	General population	2000	Enhanced awareness & knowledge awareness about potential negative impacts of appearance concerns; information about COST Action IS1210	



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**WERE THERE ANY CHALLENGES THAT WERE ENCOUNTERED IN
YOUR TASK GROUP? WHAT SOLUTIONS WERE USED TO OVERCOME
THESE CHALLENGES?**

The challenges the task group encounter were mostly related to the methodology and the analysis of the interviews.

For all these challenges Silvana Greco find always a solution. The solution came by discussing the challenges during the international meetings, by using e-mails, by using telephone calls or by skype connections.

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR COMPLETING THIS AND FOR ALL
YOUR HARD WORK!**