



HUMBOLDT-
UNIVERSITÄT
ZU BERLIN



Call for Applications Early Career Researcher

Project: Uni4Democracy – Academic Freedoms & Democracy under Pressure: A Berlin–Belgrade Dialogue

We are pleased to invite applications for two Early Career Researcher positions within the project Uni4Democracy – Academic Freedoms & Democracy under Pressure: A Berlin–Belgrade Dialogue. The project is jointly implemented by Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and the University of Belgrade – Faculty of Political Science. It is funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) with support from the German Federal Foreign Office (AA).

Project Background

Academic freedoms and the role of universities in safeguarding democratic values are currently under significant political pressure across the globe, and particularly in Southeast Europe. Recent student protests in Serbia highlight the fact that universities are not only institutions of education and research, but also key spaces for democratic debate and civic engagement. The Uni4Democracy project responds to these developments and to the documented decline of academic freedom in Serbia. Its overarching aim is to contribute to the development of resilience strategies for universities operating under political pressure, while strengthening transnational academic exchange through research, teaching, and structured dialogue.

Main Responsibilities

The selected Early Career Researchers will be expected to:

Position 1 Responsibilities

- ✓ prepare a literature review on academic freedoms, including selected case studies (approximately 10 pages)
- ✓ assist in the delivery of the online seminar “Academic Freedoms at Risk”, coordinated by Prof. Claudia Matthes and Prof. Nemanja Džuverović, for Master’s students from Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and the University of Belgrade – Faculty of Political Science
- ✓ coordinate and mentor nine student groups working on country case studies where academic freedom is under threat
- ✓ coordinate and work with other Early Career Researcher on design and the preparation of a five-day dialogue workshop to be held in Berlin in autumn 2026

Position 2 Responsibilities

- ✓ coordinate, in close coordination with the project leads, the conceptual, academic, and selected organizational aspects of a five-day dialogue workshop to be held in Berlin in autumn 2026; overall responsibility lies with the project leadership
- ✓ mentor and facilitate students from the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and the University of Belgrade - Faculty of Political Science, within the framework of the seminar, in the joint development of thematic priorities, methodological approaches, and discussion questions for the workshop
- ✓ conduct targeted networking and outreach to identify and approach CSOs, media representatives, foundations, and other civil society actors from Germany and the Western Balkans for participation in the Berlin workshop, in coordination with the project team

Duration and Location

- The research stay for the Position 1 will take place from April to June 2026 at Humboldt-Universität.
 - The research stay for the Position 2 will take place from September to October 2026 at Humboldt-Universität.
- Please note that the dates of the stay are fixed and cannot be modified.

What We Offer

- financial support for a three-month (Position 1) and two-month (Position 2) research stay in Berlin in the amount of EUR 2,300 per month
- travel allowance in the amount of EUR 400
- access to shared office space at Humboldt-Universität
- the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues from the Department of Social Sciences at Humboldt-Universität.

Eligibility Criteria

Applications are open to:

- ✓ doctoral candidates or researchers who obtained their PhD within the last three years
- ✓ researchers and doctoral students affiliated with the University of Belgrade, from all fields within the social sciences and humanities
- ✓ applicants who are no older than 35 years of age at the time of application.

Application Procedure

Applicants are requested to submit the following documents:

- a CV (maximum 3 pages), including a list of the most relevant publications
- a letter of motivation (maximum 5 pages) explaining how the applicant's previous academic and research work relates to the issue of academic freedoms and to the mission of the Circle U. European University Alliance
- a reference letter (optional)
- a copy of the PhD diploma (for applicants who have completed their PhD)
- proof of doctoral status (for PhD candidates).

All application materials must be submitted as a single PDF file via email to:

✉ nemanja.dzuverovic@fpn.bg.ac.rs

✉ claudia.matthes@sowi.hu-berlin.de

The deadline for applications is March 1, 2026, at 17:00 (CET). Please clearly indicate (in the application documentation and the subject of the email) if you are applying for the Position 1 or Position 2.

The project is aligned with the mission of the Circle U. European University Alliance (www.circle-u.eu), which seeks to strengthen European academic cooperation through research excellence, academic freedom, and universities' engagement with key societal challenges.



Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
German Academic Exchange Service