

CALL

CHALLENGES AND POTENTIALS FOR EUROPE: THE GREYING CONTINENT

Projects: Next Deadline: 23 July 2021**Summer Schools: Next Deadlines: 23 June 2021, 17 November 2021...**

Profile Areas: Societal Transformations



area of research: humanities, cultural and social sciences (lead); natural, life, data and technological sciences possible



type of funding: international research projects and summer schools (thematically open)



up to 1 million EUR for 3 partners, up to 1.5 million EUR for 5 partners



up to 4 years



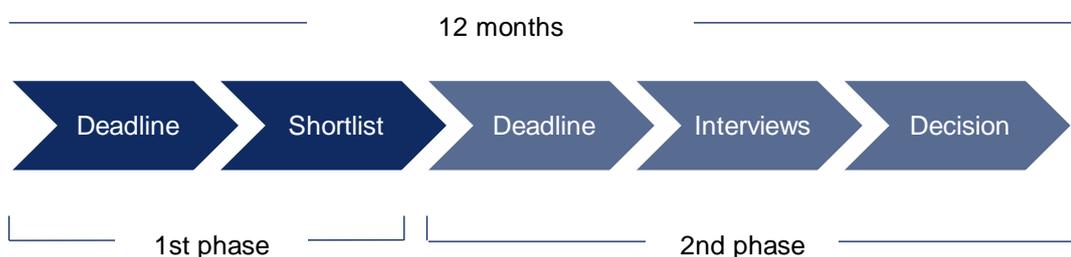
research teams working on European challenges on “Ageing Societies”



consortia involving 3-5 principal investigators from at least 3 different European countries (main applicant has to be a member of a German university/research institution; max. 2 PIs from the same country)



additional benefits: funding for communication of science and research

For projects:

1 OBJECTIVES

Profile Area “Societal Transformations”

This is one of three profile areas. In this profile area the Volkswagen Foundation supports research addressing multifaceted aspects of transformation processes. It encourages cross-border and multi-perspective approaches and wishes to open up new ways to participate in shaping social transformations.

The “greying” of Europe clearly has the potential to transform its societies and therefore lies at the heart of the new profile area “Societal Transformations”.

Call: Challenges and Potentials for Europe: “The Greying Continent”

“Europeans are living longer than ever before and the age profile of society is rapidly evolving. (...) Such developments are likely to have profound implications, not only for individuals, but also for governments, business and civil society” (*Ageing Europe*, EUROSTAT 2019). Once called a “silent revolution” this development is becoming more and more the decisive challenge for Europe in the future.

Research on ageing has been going on for some years, but for most of the time the main work on it was delegated to the life and technological sciences. Humanities, social and cultural sciences often only contributed when it came to ethical questions or questions of transfer. However, if Europe wants to master this challenge and to really tap the potential of “successful” ageing, these disciplines need to become key players of the research done on ageing.

Ageing does not only affect the elderly, but is an important issue for all generations and all parts of society. Amongst “typical” issues, such as health care provision and mobility support for senior citizens, topics like life-long-learning, work migration, the sustainability of “healthy” ageing as well as generational justice, social inequality and voting behavior come to mind amongst others. Ageing is also not experienced similarly in all regions in Europe. There is a great heterogeneity of ageing on the continent. Therefore, comparative research is needed to address this imbalance, for the program especially addresses systematically interrelated problems which can only be dealt with collectively at the European level.

2 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

2.1 International Cooperation Projects on Ageing Europe

The focus of this call is on the broad field of challenges and potential of ageing for and in Europe, especially its transformative power on societies. While the main applicant has to come from the humanities, social or cultural sciences as lead disciplines, interdisciplinary projects with e.g. data or life sciences are also possible.

The call encourages projects on life course research, focusing either on Europe as a geographical region or on the European Union as a transnational entity. The theoretical and methodological analysis of best practice examples as well as the development for future oriented scenarios are also possible. The originality and innovativeness of both the research question(s) and the methodology of the project have to be highlighted in the proposal. It is crucial that the projects go beyond an analysis of current challenges of ageing and also consider its transformative potential and importance for the future of European societies. Both a micro-level and a macro-level research as well as mixed-methods approaches are possible. The consortia should consider new and creative ways to communicate the results in exchange with relevant stakeholders and/or the general public. A participation of non-academic actors in the projects is optional where appropriate.

2.2 Summer Schools addressing “Challenges for Europe”

In addition to the call for large cooperation projects, funding is also available for summer schools that aim to equip selected young academics (particularly doctoral candidates but also post-doctoral researchers) with new insights and knowledge on the broad field of “Challenges for Europe”. Participants from at least three different European countries should be involved. Interdisciplinary approaches are appreciated.

In order to ensure efficient working conditions, the number of participants should not exceed 60 persons, including the speakers; depending on the theme, a smaller number may sometimes be advisable. In line with the summer

schools' focus on young scientists, the participants should significantly outnumber the lecturers. It has to be ensured that all participants are proactively involved in the event. Speakers should be available beyond their lectures for exchange and discussion with the participants. A summer school can last anything between four days and two weeks.

In order to promote the active participation of all participants and a comprehensive exchange of opinions, programs should contain varied and especially interactive event formats. There is to be a substantial share of doctoral candidates and post-doctoral researchers from German research institutions. The general idea is not only to extend the participants' knowledge, but also to enable them – at an early stage of their career – to develop and establish contacts beyond national borders and individual disciplines. Experts from other countries should also be invited to participate as speakers.

The main applicant has to be affiliated with a German university or research institution. The summer school itself can take place in Germany or in another European country. We are also open for applications that wish to establish new kinds of formats for a summer school.

If you are interested in the summer school program, please contact us directly via email (see contact addresses below).

3 WHAT WE OFFER

For Projects:

Project Design:

- Scholars at all career levels post-Ph.D. in the humanities, cultural and social sciences working at European universities and research institutes are eligible to apply.
- Funding can be provided for closely interacting research consortia of up to 5 PIs/Partners coming from universities of at least 3 different countries in Europe (no more than 2 from the same country). It is essential that the leading PI comes from a German institution.
- The inclusion of research institutions from Southern and Eastern Europe is particularly desirable
- The further qualification of young scholars has to be a central element of each research project. The main share of the funds provided for staff must therefore be allocated to junior scholars (Ph.D. students and young postdocs, i.e. max. five years after obtaining the degree
- Please note: only for junior scholars can regular positions be included in the budget. A teaching buy-out or short-time sabbatical can be considered for senior researchers (a top-up for senior researchers from European countries with significant lower wages can be considered and is up to approval). A position for an academic project coordinator (50% of a TV-L E13 position) can be included in the budget and is up to approval.

Budget and Duration

- The project duration should be up to four years with a maximum gross budget of 1 million EUR for consortia of three PIs and up to 1.5 million Euro for consortia of five PIs per project.
- Funds can be made available for personnel (according to local standards and the regulations of the home institution; top-ups for senior researcher may be included and depend on approval,

please contact us beforehand) as well as non-personnel expenses, such as travel costs, workshops, consumables, acquisition and storage/management of data, open access, science communication measures, and equipment.

- Overhead costs will not be covered. However, funds to finance part time administrative support at the main-applicant's institution may be included in the budget to a reasonable extent as well as a lump sum for administrative costs of 10.000 EUR for the partners.
- With respect to the funds granted for non-personnel costs, the Foundation expects a relatively even distribution amongst the different partners
- Scholars at all career levels post-Ph.D. working at European universities and research institutes are eligible to apply.
- Non-academic actors/institutions can participate in a project but cannot act as PI. Travel costs or contracts for work can be included in the budget.

4 APPLICATION AND TIMELINE

Projects: Proposals are to be submitted in English. The application process will comprise two stages

- Applicants are firstly asked to hand in a 5-page pre-proposal outlining the research project.
- After an internal review regarding the formal criteria an international and interdisciplinary review panel will assess the pre-proposals with regard to their quality, potential, and originality.
- Shortlisted project consortia will be invited to turn in a full proposal and to present their proposals in person at an interview with the review panel, after which the final decision will be made.
- Based on the experiences of previous calls, quite a high number of pre-proposals is expected. As this is a comparative review process, it is not possible to give detailed feedback on those pre-proposals that were not successful in the first stage.

The following criteria are essential for the review process:

- innovative research question linked to Ageing Societies in Europe
- top-of-the-shelve research on the transformative nature and potential of this topic
- clear methodology and strong theoretical framework
- high feasibility of the workplan
- partnerships at eyelevel
- strong capacity building/involvement of junior researchers
- convincing concept for dissemination/knowledge transfer/science communication to policy makers and/or the general public

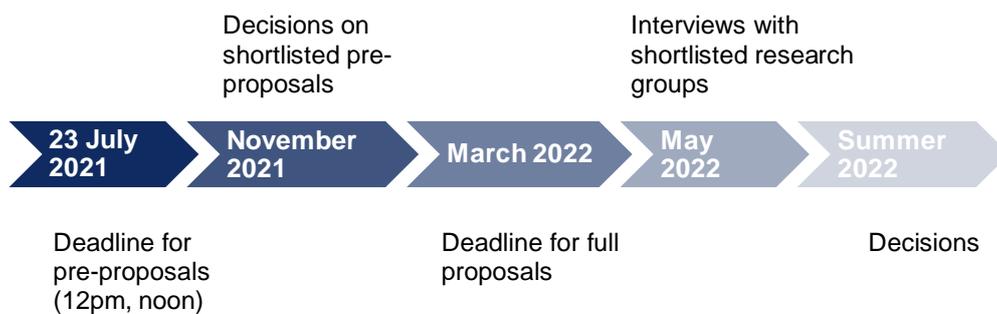
Applications must be submitted via the electronic application system of the Volkswagen Foundation portal.volkswagenstiftung.de/ with all documents mentioned in section 5 (Checklist). The Foundation expects that applications

are submitted jointly by all cooperating partners. Therefore, **all applicants (main applicant and co-applicants) have to be registered** in the electronic application system.

The Foundation will not process applications that have been submitted to another funding institution in identical or similar form.

Grants can be awarded to universities and research institutions only. Applicants working outside of universities and well-known research institutions are asked to provide details on the legal status, statutes, trustees and boards, charitable/non-profit status, budgeting, and auditing of the institution to be funded. An annual report of the applying institution should also be included.

ESTIMATED TIMELINE



Summer Schools: Proposals are to be submitted in English. Applications for summer schools are subject to written review.

There are three separate deadlines per year for applications for summer schools. In the interest of a smooth review process, applications have to be submitted at least six months prior to the event date.

The Foundation limits its financial support to the following items:

- Funds for student/research assistants for preparing and running the event, including the costs for the compilation of working materials and their publication in the internet (or photocopying where required).
- Expenses for catering and accommodation; rental of premises.
- Travel expenses for participants and speakers.
- Funds for child care within the scope of the event.
- Up to 500 EUR for non-personnel costs (e.g. for materials and event programs).
- Funds for open access publications and/or science communication measures can be applied for

The budget for a summer school is limited to 80,000 EUR.

No funds can be provided for the following items:

- Partial financing of a summer school already funded elsewhere.
- Travel cost subsidies for individual visitors to a summer school.
- Costs of honoraria, assistants and similar items (in exceptional cases it is possible to apply for an allowance for lecturers who are not part of the scientific community, public administration or business representatives, e.g. self-employed persons).
- Any supplementary programs, costs of travel to the event or accommodation and catering for accompanying persons.
- Travel and accommodation costs for participants from industry.



5 CHECKLIST AND GENERAL CONDITIONS

Please submit your pre-proposal using the electronic application system of the Volkswagen Foundation.

For Projects:

The following documents need to be uploaded as pdf-attachments:

- Summary of the project (max. 2,500 characters, incl. spaces, Arial 12)
- Description of proposed research project (max. 17,000 characters, incl. spaces/max. 5 pages), including the following information:
 - › aim of the project
 - › research questions
 - › theoretical base and methodological approach
 - › significance of the project for the research field “Challenges for Europe”
 - › criteria for success on achieving the set goals of the project
 - › participants and their tasks within the project
 - › organization of the group and expected synergies
 - › work plan (incl. Gantt chart)
- list of referenced literature (up to 1 page)
- Short CV’s of all team members (up to 2 pages each) including up to five publications (e.g. monographs, articles, blogs, science communication) and a focused short self assessment about the previous main contribution to the respective research field.
- budget in Euro (up to 1 page per budget plan)
 - › divided according to the working groups in the respective countries (i.e. one budget plan per country)
 - › divided into staff costs (research personnel, other personnel), recurring non-personnel costs (e.g. travel costs, consumables), and non-recurrent expenses (e.g. acquisition of data and literature, science communication measures)

For Summer Schools:

The following information and data (.pdf) are required:

- Details on the applicant, co-applicant(s) where applicable and grant recipient (institution).
- The summer school title and proposed date.
- Budget and justification.
- Short scientific curriculum vitae (max. 2 pages) of the applicants
- A list of up to five publications of each applicants (e.g. monographs, articles, websites, blogs, science communication) including a short self assessment of their impact in the respective field
- German and English summary of the project (in each case max. 300 words) including the date the event is planned to take place.
- The proposal itself (detailed description and reasoning, max. 5 pages) with explanations on how the event is to be advertised and how the participants will be selected. It should also be clarified which “Challenge for Europe” the summer school addresses and in how far it supports knowledge on transformation processes in Europe.
- A self-assessment with answers to the following three questions (max. one page): What is the innovative aspect of your summer school topic concerning “Challenges for Europe”? How do the contents of the summer school differ from regular courses? Which new fields are opened up for the participants by attending the summer school? You can use the template under *Further Information* to create your self-assessment.
- List of speakers and participants, their home institutions and area of studies (please list lecturers and young researchers separately). The list of participants can be completed or replaced by details on the announcement of the event and the planned selection procedure for participants. You can use the template under *Further Information* to create the complete list of participants. If required, the list of participants can be supplemented by the call for the event and the planned selection procedure for the participants.
- (Tentative) Program of the event including details on the respective event formats.

If the event is organized by both German and foreign colleagues, the person in charge should be an academic from a German university or research institute. According to the statutes, the Foundation can only grant funding to universities and other scientific institutions.

6 CONTACT AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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For telephone appointments:
Assistant Nicole Richter
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Additional Information

- › [Application FAQs / Information for Applicants from Abroad](#)
- › [Frequently Asked Questions – “Challenges for Europe”](#)
- › [Electronic Application System – Instructions and Tips](#)
- › [Personnel Rates Scientific Personnel](#)
- › [Link to Webpage “Challenges for Europe”](#)

Please inform yourself about the electronic application system of the Volkswagen Foundation prior to submitting your application. Information can be found in the document [“Electronic Application System – Instructions and Tips”](#). Please also read the responses to the [“Frequently Asked Questions”](#) thoroughly as they are part of the call.