

**Information for  
Applicants 111****Call****Challenges for Europe**

**Next Deadline: [see website](#)**

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## I. Background

For some years now, Europe as a continent has been facing a number of serious challenges which can only be addressed collectively. Especially the European Union is challenged by developments which threaten both its operational capacities as well as the cohesion among its member states. The European financial and debt crisis has not been resolved, and questions remain how to stimulate growth and economic equality in European countries as well as similar social standards and conditions of employment. Furthermore, individual states and the European Union are still struggling to adequately deal with the ongoing so-called “refugee crisis”. The decision of Great Britain in June 2016 to leave the Union is already having effects on the collaboration of member states within the European Union and beyond. Changes in social media communication and public discourses, especially with regard to the presence of ‘fake news’ and populist debates, challenge the public perceptions of democracy and public trust in democratic institutions on the national and European level. An increased threat of terrorism and unsettled questions on foreign relations with some of Europe’s neighbouring countries lead to a need for higher security investments. Furthermore, in some European countries democratic systems are being stressed by national governments, and a rise of populism and even xenophobia have been noticed. It remains to be seen which impacts these developments will have on the (trans)formation of a European sense of solidarity. On the other hand, after a period of nearly constant turmoil, Europe-wide movements like “Pulse of Europe” or the electoral victory of the pro-European politician Emmanuel Macron in France show that parts of the European population still strongly endorse a united democratic Europe. These developments may potentially unfold new dynamics in the European Union. In light of the current political developments in other parts of the world (e.g. the USA, China, and Russia) the European Union will also have to decide on its future role in the world. The European parliamentary elections in May 2019 would perhaps emerge as the decisive turning point for the future of Europe.

In light of these sociopolitical challenges and dynamics within Europe, the Carlsberg Foundation, Compagnia di San Paolo, and the Volkswagen Foundation have jointly set up this call for applications in order to stimulate basic research on issues affecting Europe and the European Union. The Foundations want to enable research-based impulses for future cooperation within Europe, encourage comparative studies, and strengthen academic collaboration among European scholars.

## II. Funding Opportunities

This call is looking towards the future of Europe and the challenges the continent is undergoing. It therefore especially addresses systematically interrelated current problems which can only be dealt with collectively at the European level. These problems comprise a large spectrum of different issues ranging from democratic challenges to migration, terrorism, economic and social inequality, financial and economic challenges, populism and disinformation, and cybersecurity. The scope of the call includes the above mentioned topics, but is not limited to them.

The call targets scholars in the **humanities, cultural and social sciences** who investigate current and long-term developments in Europe in comparative perspective as well as their impact on the European Union. This includes both Europe as a geographical region and the European Union as a transnational entity. Funding can also be provided for projects undertaking a historical classification of the current crises, or which analyze the political, societal and cultural effects of the respective crisis and develop theoretical models for future cooperation within Europe. Furthermore, the theoretical and methodological analysis of best practice examples is also possible. While the

disciplinary focus should be on the social and cultural sciences as well as the humanities, input from other disciplines is welcome wherever appropriate. All projects should address major challenges for Europe and/or the European Union. 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 problems and also assess the impact of the latter on the future viability of the European Union as well as future collaborations of European states.

### **General Conditions**

Funding will be provided for closely interacting research consortia of up to five PIs/partners coming from at least three different countries in Europe. Scholars in the humanities, cultural and social sciences working at European universities and research institutes are eligible to apply. Funds amounting to 1 million Euro can be made available for personnel as well as non-personnel expenses, such as travel costs, consumables, acquisition of data, science communication measures, and equipment for a period of up to four years. 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. All personnel funds have to be calculated according to local standards and according to the regulations of the home institution. Overhead costs will not be covered. With respect to the funds granted for non-personnel costs, the Foundations expect a relatively even distribution amongst the different partners. It is essential that the leading PI comes from one of the three countries represented by the foundations, i. e. Denmark, Germany, or Italy.

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.

Applications must be submitted via the electronic application system of the Volkswagen Foundation portal.volkswagenstiftung.de with the documents mentioned in section V (Application Checklist). The Foundations expect 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 and need to sign the signature sheet.

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

### **III. Application and Selection Procedure**

Proposals are to be submitted in English. The application process will comprise two stages: Applicants are first 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 and defend their proposals in person at an interview with the review panel, after which the final decision will be made (travel expenses will be reimbursed by the foundations). Based on the experiences of the first round of applications, quite a high number of pre-proposals is expected. Therefore, it is not possible to give detailed feedback on those pre-proposals that were not successful in the first stage.

## Timeline

13 December 2018: deadline for pre-proposals

March 2019: decisions on shortlisted pre-proposals

June 2019: deadline for full proposals

September 2019: interviews with shortlisted research groups

Autumn 2019: grant decisions

## IV. Application Checklist

Please submit your pre-proposal using the electronic application system of the Volkswagen Foundation. The following documents need to be uploaded as pdf-attachments:

- Summary of the pre-proposal (up to 1 page)
- Description of the proposed research project (up to 5 pages and no more than 17,000 characters with spaces). The text should cover the following aspects:
  - aim of the project
  - research questions
  - theoretical base and methodological approach
  - significance of the project for the field “Challenges for Europe”
  - participants and their tasks within the project
  - organization of the group and expected synergies
  - work plan
- list of referenced literature (up to 1 page)
- 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, scholarships, 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)
- one signature sheet (generated in the online application system; printed and signed by all applicants – scanned or electronic signatures are accepted)

**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.**

## V. Information (Foundations in alphabetical order)

### **Carlsberg Foundation**

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### **Compagnia di San Paolo**

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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”](#)