

CALL

## CHALLENGES AND POTENTIALS FOR EUROPE: INTERGENERATIONAL FUTURES

**Projects: Next Deadline: 14 December 2022**

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



up to 1 million EUR for 3 partners, up to 1.2 million EUR for 4 partners, up to 1.5 million EUR for 5 partners



up to 4 years



research teams working on European challenges on “Transforming 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



August 2022

# 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 societal transformations.

Intergenerational relationships and fairness have the potential to transform European societies and therefore lies at the heart of the profile area “Societal Transformations”.

## Call: Challenges and Potentials for Europe: “Intergenerational Futures”

“An increasingly older population presents both diverse challenges and opportunities (...) at the individual, societal and economic level as well as between generations.” (Dubravka Šuica, Vice-President of the European Commission, Democracy and Demography). The European population is expected to shrink over the next years due to relatively low fertility rates and a rising median age of population. The war in the Ukraine and migration might affect this development to a certain extent, but overall the European countries are greying. This influences the lives of older generations, but also changes the living environment and experience of the younger generation in Europe. Still, this situation does not have to be a negative occurrence, but can also carry potential. To reap this potential it might be necessary to develop utopian visions for Europe and to answer the questions “In what kind of society do we want live?”

To cause a positive transformation of European societies, fresh perspectives are needed. Therefore, research that crosses physical, disciplinary and methodological boundaries is encouraged in this call. Solution-finding approaches from the humanities, cultural and social sciences are often overlooked for overcoming intergenerational challenges but can be crucial. Combining these with expertise from the life sciences and technological sciences might further open new ways for positive developments.

# 2 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The focus of this call is on the broad field of challenges and potentials of intergenerational relationships in Europe, especially its transformative power for 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 that develop new research perspectives on intergenerational co-existence, 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, utopian scenarios are 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 intergenerational relationships 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. Innovative co-operation on the European level is encouraged in this call. 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 welcomed where appropriate.

# 3 WHAT WE OFFER

## 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 (up to 20% FTE) or short-time sabbatical (up to 6 months) can be considered for senior researchers (a top-up of up to 20% 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, 1.2 million EUR for four 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 European 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 demographic change in Europe
- top-of-the-shelf 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/](https://portal.volkswagenstiftung.de/) with all documents mentioned in section 5 (Checklist). The Foundation expects that applications August 2022

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



# 5 CHECKLIST AND GENERAL CONDITIONS

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 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 at the respective institutions
  - › 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)

# 6 CONTACT AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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For telephone appointments:  
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## Additional Information

- › [Application FAQs / Information for Applicants from Abroad](#)
- › [Frequently Asked Questions – “Challenges and Potentials 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.