



GEM DIAMOND

# PhD POSITION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & EUROPEAN STUDIES

Fellowship Call for Application

DEADLINE: July 3rd, 2022 – 17.00 CET

EARLY-STAGE RESEARCHER 9

**Contesting national sovereignty?  
Transnational civil society activism  
and EU external action against deforestation**



Doctoral Fellowships are funded as part of a European Joint Doctorate supported by the European Commission's Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action.

## RESEARCH PROJECT

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### ENVIRONMENT

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This 3-Year-long doctoral fellowship is offered as part of a specific collective project within a multiannual international research effort on **Globalisation, Europe, and Multilateralism (GEM)**. This project (2022-2026), coordinated by the Institut d'études européennes (IEE) at the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB), will assess the EU's capacity to act given the challenges facing **Democratic Institutions**, the rise of **Alternative MOdels** and mounting **Normative Dissensus (DIAMOND)**.

**GEM-DIAMOND** is a *Marie Skłodowska Curie Action - Doctoral Network* (MSCA-DN) involving 7 European and 4 international degree-awarding Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) alongside 6 well-established non-academic institutions. The project will hire and train 16 doctoral fellows to help address knowledge gaps associated with the growing normative tensions undermining multilateral and democratic practice – for further information see [www.gem-diamond.eu](http://www.gem-diamond.eu).

GEM-DIAMOND's overall research program will collectively tackle three shared knowledge gaps regarding contemporary strains on liberal democracy:

- **Objective 1:** Conceptualising the seemingly mounting dissensus surrounding liberal democracy.
- **Objective 2:** Unpacking the ambiguous role different actors can play as both champions and challengers of liberal democratic norms, values and practices.
- **Objective 3:** Assessing the impact of increased dissensus regarding liberal democracy on the policy instruments of the EU and its capacity to act in its internal and external policies.

Early-Stage Researcher n°9 (**ESR9**) is part of **GEM-DIAMOND's** 3<sup>rd</sup> Work Package (WP3) entitled '*Internal contestation and its impact on the EU*'. WP3 includes 5 individual doctoral projects that will each develop a detailed analysis of a given case study elucidating the processes by which contestation regarding liberal democracy shapes the EU's capacity to act.

Both individually and collectively, the 5 PhD fellows associated with WP3 will produce detailed analyses of a range of case studies. These will explicit the processes by which contestation regarding liberal democracy shapes the EU's capacity to act. The five PhD fellows involved will adopt a process-centric approach, with each Researcher working on a different type of EU policy instrument. Ultimately, WP3 will **process-trace the institutional mechanisms connecting evolutions of the EU's regulatory, parliamentary, legal and trade instruments with the internal contestation** shaping these controversial policy fields.

## INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH PROJECT (IRP)

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Entitled '*Contesting national sovereignty? Transnational civil society activism and EU external action against deforestation*' the individual research project of **ESR9** is in the fields of **International Relations** and **European Studies**

**ESR9** will focus on contested governance practices championed by the EU. This IRP will analyse the EU's role in, and response to, transnational campaigns centring on global governance challenges where national sovereignty is a key issue. It will focus on environmental governance and in particular deforestation. The IRP will analyze the policy-making process in Brussels on this issue, including the potential influence of civil society organizations, as well as the interactions with stakeholders in producer countries. It will unpack the impact of the policy contested instruments available to the EU to advance its goals in its own external action. The empirical case study associated with this IRP is EU external action efforts in the fight against deforestation.

Fighting deforestation has quickly risen towards the top of the EU's external action agenda. Not only is deforestation a major source of environmental degradation and greenhouse gas emissions, but it also contributes in many countries to rampant illegality and violations of indigenous community rights. Yet multilateral institutions for forest governance such as the UN Forum on Forests remain extremely weak, while global efforts to prevent deforestation, e.g. through the UNFCCC process and the Paris Agreement, are hotly contested by resurgent claims to national resource sovereignty, of which the Bolsonaro government in Brazil is a prominent example. Spearheaded by transnational civil society organizations and advocacy networks spanning developed and developing countries, multinational corporations and national governments, including a number of EU member states, have made high-profile voluntary commitments to fight tropical deforestation and reduce its impact on their supply chains, but with limited effects to date. In response, the European Commission has recently proposed a path-breaking new [regulation](#) which prohibits businesses from placing agricultural products derived from deforested land on the EU market and requires them to demonstrate due diligence that they have mitigated the risks of doing so, subject to stringent penalties.

The proposed PhD project will analyze the EU's role in the transnational campaign against deforestation and the policy instruments available to the Union to advance this goal through its own external action. Key instruments to be examined include unilateral measures, such as restrictions on deforestation-related products entering the EU market and due diligence requirements for importers of agricultural forest-risk commodities. They likewise include bilateral and plurilateral measures, such as partnership and trade agreements with producer countries, as well as cooperation with other consumer countries. The research will also examine the responses of producer country governments, business, and civil society organizations to EU measures that may be perceived as challenging national sovereignty over natural resources and development strategies. Depending on the PhD researcher's specific interests and expertise, the project could include a comparative analysis of major regional/sectoral cases, such as palm oil in Indonesia and Malaysia; cocoa in Ghana and Ivory Coast; or beef and soy in Brazil. Addressing a crucial contemporary policy challenge, this project will shed valuable light on the EU's capacities to promote its core norms and values, such as environmental sustainability, the rule of law, and fundamental rights, in an age of contested multilateralism and resurgent national sovereignty.

**As part of their application, candidates will be asked to submit a personal interpretation of the research project in the form a specific project proposal of 2-3 pages, including a research question, a theoretical framework, and a methodological strategy**

## OBJECTIVES

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ESR9 will:

- Be hired for 36-months by UvA as a Doctoral Researcher
- Work under the direction of a Joint Supervisory Trio involving:
  - **Pr. Jonathan Zeitlin** (UvA) – Co-Supervisor
  - **Pr. Thomas Christiansen** (LUISS) – Co-supervisor
  - **Dr. Vasileios Rizos** (CEPS) – Non-Academic Mentor
- Individually work towards a double doctoral degree in 'Political Science' under the joint supervision of Pr. **J. Zeitlin** (UvA) and Pr. **T. Christiansen** (LUISS)
- Contribute to the collective work in WP3 seeking to describe the processes of contestation within the EU by focussing on regulatory contestation
- Participate in all collective research and training activities and submit to the program's regular joint evaluations

## EXPECTED RESULTS

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ESR9 will:

1. Complete the Scheduled Mobility Agenda:
  - a. Training & Research Stay @ UvA (Oct. 2022 - Aug. 2023)
  - b. Training & Research Stay @ LUISS (Sept. 2023 – Aug. 2024)

- c. Non-Academic Secondment @ CEPS (Sept. 2024 - Dec. 2024)
- d. Research Stay @ UvA (Jan. 2025 – Sept. 2025)
2. Successfully accomplish the doctoral training scheduled both at the local and GEM-DIAMOND levels.
3. Secure a doctoral training certificate from LUISS and UvA
4. Contribute to a WP3 '**Joint framing paper on Contestation**'
5. Contribute to two-project wide manuscripts:
  - a. A Handbook on 'Rethinking Impact in Political & Social Sciences'
  - b. An Edited Volume reflecting the shared conclusions of the project
6. Submit an article to the Journal of European Public Policy (JEPP)
7. Write an original PhD dissertation on 'Contesting national sovereignty? Transnational civil society activism and EU external action against deforestation'

#### CO-SUPERVISORS

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**Pr. Jonathan Zeitlin**  
E-mail: [j.h.zeitlin@uva.nl](mailto:j.h.zeitlin@uva.nl)

**Pr. Thomas Christiansen**  
E-mail: [tchristiansen@luiss.it](mailto:tchristiansen@luiss.it)

#### HOST INSTITUTIONS

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UvA (NL)

LUISS - Guido Carli (IT)

#### PHD PROGRAMME

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PhD in Political Science

PhD in Law and business

#### TRAINING AND MOBILITY

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##### MOBILITY PROGRAMME

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- Oct. 2022 - Aug. 2023 @ UvA (Amsterdam, Netherlands)
- Sept. 2023 - Aug. 2024 @ LUISS (Rome, Italy)
- Sept. 2024 - Dec. 2024 @ CEPS (Brussels, Belgium)
- Jan. 2025 - Sept. 2025 @ UvA (Amsterdam, Netherlands)

##### TRAINING PROGRAMME

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- 2022-2023 (Y1): Methodological training @ UvA + GEM-DIAMOND Joint activities
- 2023-2024 (Y2): GEM-DIAMOND Joint activities
- 2024-2025 (Y3): GEM-DIAMOND Joint activities

## NON-ACADEMIC SECONDMENT

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Year 2 (Jan. 2024 - April. 2024)

Non-Academic Secondment at **Center for European Policy Studies** (Brussels, Belgium)

Non-Academic Mentor: Dr. **Vasileios Rizos**

E-mail: [vasileios.rizos@ceps.eu](mailto:vasileios.rizos@ceps.eu)

## POST DESCRIPTION

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### TITLE

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Marie Curie Doctoral Fellow

### HIRING INSTITUTION

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UvA (Amsterdam, Netherlands)

### DURATION

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36 Months (1 October 2022 – 30 September 2025)

### INCOME

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4000€ Gross per month (48.000€ / year).

*NB: this is a gross EU contribution to the salary cost of the researcher. The net salary will result from deducting all compulsory (employer/employee) social security contributions as well as direct taxes.*

### ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

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Full Social Coverage

Travel & Research Funds

Family Allowance per month - *When applicable*

## REQUIREMENTS

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### DEGREE

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Top level graduate degree (Master or equivalent providing access to PhD programs - EQF Level 7). Having a background in Political or Social Sciences will be a plus.

## MINIMAL CREDITS

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Applicants must submit at least one diploma meeting one of the following requirements: (1) a two-year master program (120 ECTS) or equivalent, (2) a one-year graduate program following a prior undergraduate degree if both diplomas total at least 300 ECTS or equivalent; (3) a single four-year higher education program offering 300 ECTS or more.

## LANGUAGE

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English proficiency must be attested either through a previous English language diploma, or an internationally recognised proficiency test (i.e., IELTS, IBT, TOEFL or Cambridge).

## CAREER

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The researcher should be in the first four years of their research careers at the time of recruitment and have not been awarded a doctoral degree so far.

## SPECIFIC SKILLS

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Knowledge of European integration and EU policy-making processes, as well as of EU external policies

- Familiarity with and interest in researching transnational environmental governance
- The ability to critically read and comment on research reports and academic publications
- A proven record of writing and presentation skills
- A willingness to organise, moderate and contribute to events
- A desire to invest in building and maintaining a growing research network
- An ability to organise own activities, enjoys teamwork and is open to giving and receiving feedback

## MOBILITY

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At the time of recruitment, the researcher must not have resided, or carried out his/her activity in the country of the first host institution (i.e., Netherlands) for more than 12 months cumulatively in the 3 years prior to October 2022

## NON-DISCRIMINATION

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No discrimination will be made on the base of nationality, gender, race, religion, or disability.

## APPLICATION

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Complete and timely submission via the on-line application system.

## HOW TO APPLY

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MAY 20th, 2022 TILL JULY 3rd, 2022

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Online application system open and accessible through the GEM-DIAMOND website ([www.gem-diamond.eu](http://www.gem-diamond.eu))

BY JULY 3rd, 2022 17.00 CET

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Candidates must apply through the GEM-DIAMOND online application system, which will request the following information:

1. A personal profile form (incl. CV overview)
2. A scientific profile form (incl. ESR's expression of interest, statement of motivation and personal interpretation of the research project)
3. A full academic CV
4. An academic record with scan of the degree qualifications
5. A proof of language proficiency
6. Two academic recommendation letters

BETWEEN JULY 11th & JULY 20th 2022

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Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an online interview with their supervisory trio (two academic supervisors + internship mentor).

BY JULY 21st 2022

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Shortlisted candidates will be informed about final decision.  
This offer is conditional to the signature of the Grant Agreement.

BY OCTOBER 31st 2022

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Selected candidate to arrive at the UvA (Amsterdam, Netherlands) to start his/her training and research.

**Project Management Office (PMO)**

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