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**YUFE4Postdocs Call**

*Are you an early career postdoctoral researcher wanting to create impact with your research while interacting with potential stakeholders of your research?*

*And do you want to further develop your skills in Open Science and Open Innovation?*

*Then you should definitely apply for a three-year YUFE postdoc position at one of the YUFE universities, and become a research ambassador of one of the first European Universities!*

YUFE is the alliance of nine dynamic, young, student-centred and research-based universities and four non-academic partners from the non-governmental and private sector. They are collaborating to create an impactful European University.

With support of a Marie Skłodowska-Curie program (MSCA) COFUND grant, [the YUFE universities](https://yufe.eu/who-we-are) launch a first call under YUFE4Postdocs for 29 postdoc positions with a duration of 36 months. The indicative starting date for appointment is 1st January 2024.

**For whom?**

The call is open for **early career postdoctoral researchers** from around the world and from **all disciplines** as long as their proposal addresses **one or more societal challenges or opportunities**, framed in an **urban context.** Candidates further define their research training project within one of the two YUFE focus areas open in this call : **Sustainability or Digital Societies.**

Postdoctoral positions are open in the following YUFE universities:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| YUFE university | Number of positions in this call |
| University of Antwerp | 4 |
| University of Eastern Finland | 3 |
| University of Bremen | 3 |
| University of Cyprus | 3 |
| Maastricht University | 5 |
| Universidad Carlos III de Madrid | 3 |
| University of Rijeka | 3 |
| Nicolaus Copernicus University Torun | 3 |
| University of Essex\* | 2 |

*\*The postdoc positions at University of Essex will be supported by the UK Government through the official guarantee.*

The YUFE universities welcome candidates for positions within the entire university.  However, in the University of Maastricht positions are offered only by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences; the School of Economics & Business and the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences.

**Overall objective of the YUFE4Postdocs program and its calls**

Guided by our vision to create a true European University with an integrated R&I agenda, the YUFE4Postdocs call holds a twofold objective. Firstly, it supports and grows research talent and professional career development. Secondly, it will intiate or deepen research collaboration between host universities and beyond.

Firmly embedded within their local urban ecosystems, the YUFE universities want to deliver impact within and beyond their urban communities. This defines the characteristics of this call:

* With YUFE4Postdocs we invite candidates **in all disciplines** to apply. They can freely choose a research topic but it must address **one or more societal challenges**, framed in an **urban context**. Furthermore, as future-proof researchers responsive to societal needs, the selected YUFE postdocs will carry out their research in dialogue with (one or more) external stakeholder representatives with an interest in their research. More stakeholder representatives might get involved if this is in the interest of the postdoc and the project.
* As part of their application, candidates must have identified a **supervisor** at a YUFE host university, and a **co-supervisor** at a YUFE co-host university. Candidates define their own research project, although the project must match within the research groups or department of their prospective supervisors in host and co-host university. Supervision of YUFE postdocs is open for tenured and tenure track academic staff from YUFE universities with at least a 10% appointment. An academic can be involved in more than one application, but can only supervise one selected postdoc in the capacity of supervisor and one in the capacity of co-supervisor for this call.
* YUFE postdocs will be guided and supported by two academic supervisors and one non-academic mentor. They will enjoy a high level of autonomy to pursue their research project and develop and establish their future career plan.

We advise that candidates first identify and secure a supervisor at a YUFE host university, before approaching potential co-supervisors in the other YUFE universities. **All YUFE universities, including Maastricht University, welcome candidates to approach co-supervisors in all their faculties, departments, centres or research groups.**

For support in finding a supervisor or co-supervisor in the YUFE universities, candidates can consult the Inventory available on the YUFE4Postdocs website: [www.yufe4postdocs.eu](http://www.yufe4postdocs.eu) or consult the local contact person, called the Navigator. Contact details of Navigators are also on the website.

**Eligible candidates**

* Candidates should have a PhD degree at the time of the call deadline on 7th May 2023. Applicants who have submitted their thesis and have been allowed to defend before 31st August 2023 are also eligible.
* The call targets early career postdoctoral researchers. They must have obtained their (first) PhD a maximum of 6 years before 7th May 2023. Years of experience outside research and career breaks (e.g. due to parental and other care or medical related leaves) will not count. More information on the conditions can be found in the Guide for Applicants.
* Candidates must comply with the MSCA mobility rule: they must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of the prospective host university for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately before 7th May 2023.

1. **Objectives of the Research Training projects**

**Urban challenges and opportunities**

With the broad character of the research called for, **applications in all disciplines** are welcomed.

Candidates identify **one or more societal challenges** framed in an **urban context** in their project. The urban context refers to people, communities, environments, organisations, structures and processes identifiable within cities and their surroundings. They are to define societal impact on a short, mid or longer term with relevance for one or more **“stakeholders groups” and/or “stakeholder representative organisations”** in an urban context.

* Stakeholder groups refer to groups of people or entities (e.g. students, disabled people, small businesses, museums, city councils…)
* Stakeholder representative organisations refer generically to organisations representing or serving members or individual actors (e.g. business or sector federations, civil society organizations, patient organisations, hospitals…). Specific organisations may be identified in the applications, although this is not required.

An interdisciplinary approach in the research project is not required. However, when considered relevant, it will be positively assessed in the evaluation process.

Project applications should have an interest beyond the agenda and interests of a single stakeholder organisation. Therefore research projects that are tailored one-on-one to the agenda or interests of an individual organisation (public or private) without generic relevance for similar stakeholder organisations, are not compatible with this call.

**Focus areas**

Candidates define their research project within one of the two YUFE focus areas: Sustainability or Digital Societies. The selection of the focus area depends on the primary focus of their project, more specifically the urban challenge or opportunity that the prospective research addresses:

* Where the primary focus relates to the environmental and/or economic, and/or social dimensions of sustainability relevant to an urban context, the application should be directed to the focus area ‘Sustainability’.
* Where the primary focus relates to how digital technologies and digitalisation (can/will) impact, benefit or affect people, communities, organisations, structures, and processes in an urban context, the application should be targeted to the focus area ‘Digital Societies’.

There is no pre-allocation of postdoc positions to the focus areas.

1. **Selection of candidates**

The selection process comprises an initial eligibility check followed by a peer review process, with three independent experts assessing every application. The assessment reports will feed into the Selection Committees, one for each focus domain, that will rank the applications. A ranking will be made within each focus domain for every host university. Subsequently, ranking lists are merged for every host university. Selected candidates are nominated for appointment in the respective host universities, according to the ranking list. In one of the host universities, according to legal requirements, a complementary step (an interview) will follow. This additional step will not require a new application by candidates, nor will it impact on the timing of the appointments.

1. **Program offer and conditions**

A successful candidate:

* will be employed full-time as a postdoctoral researcher at one of the YUFE universities (host university) for a duration of three years.
* will engage in either starting or deepening an existing collaboration with colleagues from (at least one) other YUFE university (co-host university). A minimum of one month and maximum of 6 months secondment in the co-host university is part of the program, either a long stay or several shorter stays. For these intra-YUFE secondments we offer an intra-YUFE mobility allowance for living expenses and a yearly travel allowance.
* will be supervised by two faculty members: one at the host- and one at the co-host university. Both have to state their engagement via signed letters as part of the submitted application. Additionally a non-academic mentor will be involved after the appointment of the postdoc.
* will be part of a community of YUFE postdocs appointed and is expected to take part in the YUFE4Postdoc training program featuring two interactive seminars paid for by the program (Pillar 1), a number of joint transferable skills trainings (Pillar 2), and (optionally) complementary courses in their host university (Pillar 3).
* will develop, with the assistance of the supervisors and non-academic mentor, a Career development plan within the first three months of their appointment. This will indicate major expected research accomplishments, participation in communication and dissemination activities and short and longer term career objectives. This Career development plan will be updated throughout their research training project in YUFE4Postdocs.
* is invited to present their research and research training trajectory at the end of their appointment at the annual YUFE event.

The host universities offer:

* an attractive remuneration composed of a salary and an additional mobility allowance (200 EUR/month). The minimum gross salary is indicated in the Guide for Applicants;
* a specific allowance in support of the intra-YUFE mobility and travel managed for the postdoc by the host university;
* a research allowance for the project of the YUFE postdoc managed by the host university;
* access to YUFE4Postdocs comprehensive training program (supra);
* committed and well trained academic supervisors;
* a gateway for contacts with non-academic stakeholders, including the organisations that are involved as Associated Partners to the YUFE4Postdocs program.

In line with the MSCA regulations, in case of recruited researchers with disabilities whose long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments are such that their participation in YUFE4postdocs would not be possible without extra financial support, a special needs allowance can be requested. The host university will use this allowance to ensure necessary staff assistance or for adapting the work environment.

**How to apply**

Applications should be submitted via the YUFE4Postdocs application portal, that will be open on 1st March, 2023. It is accessible through the YUFE4Postdocs website.

Applicants will be asked to complete key contact and project information on the application portal and to upload the following documents in English, for which templates are provided:

* Structured CV
* PhD diploma or provisional PhD certificate on headed paper from their supervisor/academic institution confirming that the thesis has been submitted and will be defended before 31st August 2023
* Research Training Project (max. 8 pages excluding bibliographic references and an image/figure)
* Commitment letters by the supervisors at host university and co-host university
* Ethics self-assessment form

Applicants can submit one application for this call.

The closing date for applications is 12:00 midnight (CET) on Sunday 7th May 2023.

**More information**

Interested candidates should consult the following information:

* This call document
* The Guide for Applicants (available on 17th February 2023)
* Specific information on the host universities indicated in the Guide for Applicants. They can further contact the local Navigator in the prospective host university for information or for assistance toward finding a supervisor, or co-supervisor. Contact details of Navigators are on YUFE4Postdocs.eu.

Further assistance is available:

The YUFE4PostdocsHelpdesk can be consulted for both general questions about the program and specific questions related to a prospective host university. The email address is: [yufe4postdocs@uantwerpen.be](mailto:yufe4postdocs@uantwerpen.be)

A live webinar will be organised on 10th March 2023, with time for Q&A.