



LAW, SCIENCE,  
TECHNOLOGY  
& SOCIETY  
RESEARCH GROUP

#### **CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: PHD POSITION ON BIG DATA, DEMOCRACY AND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS**

The multidisciplinary Research Group on Law, Science, Technology & Society (LSTS) at the Faculty of Law and Criminology at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), established in 2003, has become a prominent European research institute in the area of technology and regulation. The team is led, both administratively and academically, by Prof. Dr. Mireille Hildebrandt and Prof. Dr. Gloria González Fuster. The staff comprises around 50 researchers: professors as well as senior and post-doctoral-, doctoral- and associated researchers. Research staff at the VUB-LSTS have background in a number of areas, including law, ethics, philosophy, political science, sociology, criminology and others. Great emphasis is placed on incorporating a multidisciplinary perspective in all their work.

#### **LSTS is looking for a motivated researcher who will focus on Big Data, Democracy and Fundamental Rights**

As part of his or her duties, the candidate, will be working on a research project co-funded by the European Union which aims to build a European research infrastructure for political text analysis in digitalized democracies. The candidate will be responsible for the work package that provides the legal, ethical and societal framework and monitoring of the project with regards to data management and protection. While working on the project, the researcher is expected to develop a proposal for a doctoral thesis (PhD). In addition, the researcher will have the opportunity to take an active role in LSTS contributing to its research agenda, attending and presenting in seminars, assisting in organizing conferences and workshops, and helping the Centre in competing in national and European funding opportunities.

#### **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

Candidates are expected to possess the following qualifications:

- a master's degree in law, preferably in combination with an additional degree in political science or another social science, awarded by the deadline for applications;
- experience in analyzing the legal, ethical and social aspects of new technologies;
- knowledge of relevant European regulatory frameworks: data protection, fundamental rights, intellectual property rights
- relevant working experience (includes internships and traineeships); acquaintance with EU Horizon 2020 projects is welcome but not required; Interdisciplinary experience is a plus
- good writing skills (published papers are appreciated)
- demonstrate enthusiasm by contributing to ongoing research activities and attracting external funding for research projects;
- fluency in English
- excellent organisational and communicative skills;
- the ability to work independently, under pressure, respect deadlines, and produce quality work.

- knowledge of data management and setting up questionnaires is a plus
- interest in surveillance studies is a plus

The researcher is expected to:

- Develop an original PhD thesis on big data, democracy and fundamental rights
- Coordinate and manage the execution and implementation of the research project
- Participate in international seminars and conferences;
- Publish in peer reviewed journals;
- Draft project proposals for external funding in collaboration with other researchers;
- Contribute to the existing research activities of LSTS;
- Represent LSTS at third party events
- Become actively involved in the organisation of the annual CPDP conference.

#### CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

The successful candidate will be integrated in a dynamic team, composed of both experienced and early career researchers, working under the guidance of Prof. Paul De Hert and Prof. Dr. Rosamunde van Brakel. The candidate will collaborate closely with the other members of LSTS and will have access to doctoral training offered by the VUB, as well as to all facilities of the university. Successful candidates are expected to work at the VUB premises in Brussels. Office space and equipment will be provided along with a budget for travelling and other research-related expenses.

We offer employment as a full-time doctoral researcher. The PhD degree will be awarded in law. For more information about facilities and benefits of employment at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, please visit <http://www.vub.ac.be> under the heading 'future employees'.

Contract: full-time research grant for one year, renewable on an annual basis for a maximum of four years. Extension of the contract is subject to the agreement of the doctoral committee.

Remuneration is at the level of a full-time research assistant at a Flemish university (i.e. approximately €1900 net per month) and includes contributions for social security. Secondary employment is not allowed.

#### APPLICATION

The candidate will be selected on the basis of the quality of the application, expertise, work experience and qualifications. The following application documents are to be consolidated into a single PDF file sent by email to [rosamunde.van.brakel@vub.be](mailto:rosamunde.van.brakel@vub.be).

Applications (in English) should include the following:

- a curriculum vitae;
- a cover letter which explains the motivation and qualifications of the candidate;
- two recent works: essay or excerpt from recent research or article written by the candidate;
- a letter of recommendation.

Deadline for the submission of applications is **16 August 2020**. It is currently envisioned that the successful candidate will be notified end of August 2020 and the position will start on 1 October 2020 (the start date is subject to change).