Call for Applications: PhD Position on Personal Data Transfers & Borders  
Deadline: 21st January 2020

The Law, Science, Technology & Society (LSTS) Research Group, together with the Brussels Privacy Hub (BPH), is launching a call for applications for PhD candidates in the area of personal data transfers.

The PhD candidate will work on the SRP project *Articulating Law, Technology, Ethics and Politics: Issues of Enforcement and Jurisdiction of EU Data Protection Law under and beyond the General Data Protection Regulation (ALTEP-DP)*. The project inquiries into the continuously evolving articulations of law, technology, ethics and politics, searching for a better understanding of the boundaries that separate them, and that they create and sustain. EU data protection law is taken as a starting point, more concretely the landscape delineated by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This forms the common focus of three intersecting Research Lines (RL), and a transversal RL: RL1 on *Automated compliance with the GDPR*; RL2 on *Elucidating and delivering data protection across borders*; RL3 on *The Ethification of Privacy and Data Protection*; and RL4 on *Transformations of the relations between law, politics, ethics and technology*. The candidate will contribute primarily to the RL2, but also to the intersecting RL4.

Applicants are requested to submit a short research proposal connected to the themes of RL2, focusing upon how phenomena such as globalization and the Internet have led to the routine transfer of data across national borders, and to the adoption of data protection law in all regions of the world, particularly with the GDPR in the EU. Data protection law aims to safeguard the rights of individuals in the processing of their personal data. However, it not only exists in a fragmented space of international instruments, national and regional laws, and the practices of public and private sector organizations, but also evidences a multitude of actors, legal norms, and overlapping jurisdictions. The lack of an overarching legal framework to manage the interaction between systems of data protection law and between data protection and other areas of law, has led to tension between legal systems, conflicts of law, and gaps in the protection of individual rights. It is thus necessary to develop a conceptual framework allowing different data protection regimes to interact in ways that maintain their own values, while at the same time effectively protecting personal data in the current globalized and networked world. The development of such conceptual framework requires an innovative approach towards grasping the way in which law operates (how jurisdiction is defined, how conflicts of law are recognised and solved), grounded on an accurate understanding of the mutually constitutive linkages between the (political and economic) regulation of data flows and borders: that is, on the one hand, of what borders do to data flows and data protection law, and, on the other, of what data protection law and data flows do to the very notion of border(s).
Research and activities:

The PhD Student is expected to:

- Develop an original PhD thesis on a topic related to personal data transfers and borders;
- Contribute to the coordination, execution and implementation of project-related activities, including the organisation of academic events;
- Contribute to the project’s outreach and communication;
- 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 the LSTS Research Group and BPH;
- Represent ALTEP-DP at third party events;

Qualifications:

Candidates are expected to possess the following qualifications:

- a Masters in International Law or other relevant subjects, awarded by the deadline for applications;
- demonstrate enthusiasm by contributing to ongoing research activities and attracting external funding for research projects;
- fluency in English, and the ability to conduct research in at least one other language;
- excellent organisational and communicative skills;
- the ability to work independently, also under pressure, to respect deadlines, and to produce excellent quality work.

Interdisciplinary experience (for example, in an area such as digital methodologies, philosophy, anthropology, computer science) would be an added bonus, as would a background in public international law.

Conditions:

The successful candidate will be integrated in a dynamic team, composed of both experienced and early career researchers, working under the guidance of Prof. Gloria González Fuster and Prof. Christopher Kuner. He or she will collaborate closely with the other members of the ALTEP-DP project, 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 https://www.vub.be/en 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 fulltime research assistant at a Flemish university and includes contributions for social security. Secondary employment is not allowed.
Applications:

The PhD candidate will be selected on the basis of the quality of the project proposal, her/his expertise, work experience and qualifications. The following application documents are to be consolidated into a single PDF file sent by email to info@brusselsprivacyhub.org (subject heading: 'Personal Data Transfers and Borders').

Applications (in English) should include the following:

- your current CV;
- a cover letter in which you explain your motivation and qualifications;
- contact details of two referees;
- a short research proposal (including a potential research question which is suitable for a 4-year project, and a possible methodology indicating various steps in the research, as well as the selected investigative approach. The description of your research proposal should be a maximum of 1 page.

Deadline for the submission of applications is 21st January 2020, 12.00 hours CET. It is currently envisioned that the successful candidate will be notified by mid-February and the position would start on the 1st April 2020 (the start date may be negotiable).