

## Call for Applications 2021/22 – Frequently Asked Questions

### Eligibility

#### 1. Are there any PhD Fellowships available?

The fellowships are intended for applicants whose PhD thesis is **close to completion** (see question 2) or those at a postdoctoral level who have obtained their doctorate **within the last 10 years**. Unfortunately, we do not offer fellowships for PhD students.

#### 2. What does it mean to be „close to completion“ with a PhD?

A PhD thesis is close to completion if the applicant has completed the research and writing phases and is **in the stages of review during the time of application** for the fellowship. A brief summary of the expected amount of work to complete the thesis should be included in the application.

#### 3. Are there any age limits?

Not as such. Applicants for re:constitution fellowships should be in the **early stages of their career**, either as a scholar (of law/legal studies or political sciences, social sciences, philosophy or other neighbouring disciplines (focusing on legal issues and/or the rule of law in Europe)) or as a practitioner with a relevant university degree. **For practitioners, a PhD is not required.**

#### 4. Is citizenship of a European country required to be eligible for the fellowships?

No. **It is important to be a resident of the European Union or the United Kingdom, a non-EU EEA country or Switzerland for the duration of the fellowship.** You do not need to be a citizen of one of these countries in order to be eligible for the fellowship.

#### 5. What do you mean by „in the early stages of your career“?

We accept applications from scholars whose **PhD has been obtained no longer than approx. 10 years ago**. This includes the possibility that you may already have completed your habilitation project. **As a practitioner, you should have obtained a university degree** and relevant practical experience.

## Application

### 1. Is a formal letter of acceptance by the host institution required?

No, we do not expect any formal letters of acceptance by your potential host institutions.

### 2. Do I need to hand in samples of my scholarly work or recommendation letters along with my application?

There is no need to send us any samples of your scholarly work or recommendation letters along with your application. However, in the application platform you will be asked to name two references.

### 3. Is the list of references included in the page count of the project outline (2-3 pages)?

Yes. A short bibliography should be part of your project outline. Naming the two references on a separate page is not necessary. In the application platform, you will be asked to fill in their details.

### 4. Are applicants expected to have published academic papers already?

No. You are not expected to have published articles prior to your application.

## 'Stage' and Mobility

### 1. How is the re:constitution Fellowship structured?

The re:constitution fellowship is structured as follows: The duration of the re:constitution fellowship programme is **one academic year**, e.g. from October 2021 to July 2022. Within this period, you will spend a **period of mobility of 6 months**, the so-called "stage" at two institutions/organisations in another European country than the one you reside in. You do not have to spend the whole academic year abroad! You will receive **the stipend for your 6-month stage period** only. The stipend covers all of your costs for working and living in another European country.

Additionally, the fellows attend **three fellow exchange meetings between October 2021 to July 2022** in different European countries. During the meetings, you will get to know the other fellows and discuss topics related to democracy and the rule of law with other guests.

The costs for these fellow meetings will be covered by the programme entirely – independently of the stipend.

## 2. Am I allowed to spend the 'stage' in one institution only?

We strongly encourage you to **split your stage to spend two shorter periods** in different work environments, e.g. spending 3 months in a university and 3 months in a NGO. That way, you will be able to engage with a variety of experts from various backgrounds, which will be beneficial for your project and your personal development. In the application form, you need to mention two potential institutions. If you do not know the exact institutions at the moment of your application, you can also describe at which kind of institution (NGO, law department, research institute) you would like to spend the stage without mentioning a particular institution. There is also a degree of flexibility, e.g. if your initial plans for the 'stage' are no longer possible for some reason, then you will be able to change institutions during the course of the fellowship.

## 3. Do I have to stay permanently in the city where I am doing my 'stage'?

International mobility is a core element of the re:constitution fellowships, so it is preferable that **you spend most of the time in the city/country of your stage institution**. However, this depends on your obligations in your home institution and on the flexibility of your stage institution. The aim of the fellowship and the six-month stage is to work on your personal project outside of your usual work environment. Therefore, the exchange with other European traditions in another EU member country than the one you usually reside in should be visible. Nevertheless, we try to be flexible concerning the demands of future fellows and we are trying our best to find a solution that is suitable for everyone. In the description of your project and your preferred host institutions, you could add a suggestion on how you would like to plan your stage.

## 4. Where can I do my 'stage'?

You can spend your stage in **all EU member states, but also in the United Kingdom, a non-EU EEA country or Switzerland**. You are free to choose the type of institution for your 'stage', e.g. a court, a lawyer's office, a specialised NGO, a university, an academic institute, a law department that is relevant to the topic of your project. Please see the host institution(s) selected by the first and second group of re:constitution fellows on our [website](#).

**5. Do I need to have personal contacts at the potential host institution?**

If you apply for a fellowship via the application platform, you will be asked to name your potential host institutions. Personal contacts are not required initially, but it might be an option to check beforehand whether there is any interest in welcoming you and cooperating with you on your project. The coordination team is happy to help!

**6. Do I have to split my 'stage' into two 3-month periods respectively?**

The 'stage' period of 6 months in total can be chosen **individually** according to the fellows' personal preferences and other obligations, to take place during the entire academic year 2021/2022. There are several possibilities for splitting the 'stage', i.e. 1 month at institute A in November 2021, then 5 months at institute B from February to June 2022, etc. It is not required to split the time evenly into two 3-month periods.

**7. Is it a problem for the academic institution and the institution of legal practice to be in two different countries?**

No, absolutely not. We welcome as much international mobility as possible (see question 3).

**8. Can you help me find accommodation during my 'stage' period?**

The search for accommodation should ideally be organized individually, but support by the re:constitution coordination team is possible.

## Stipend

**1. Will I receive the stipend for the entire duration of the fellowship?**

No. You will receive the stipend **only for your 6-month period of mobility**, during which you will spend your 'stages' in other European countries than the one you reside in. The 'stage' is the core element of the fellowship, and with the stipend corresponding with your 'stage' we want to ensure that you can focus on exchange and debate with your cooperation partners at your host institutions about your project and beyond.

**2. I already receive a monthly scholarship. Can I still become a re:constitution fellow and receive the stipend?**

By accepting the fellowship the fellow commits himself/herself to adhere to the standards of a German public science institution, i.e. a researcher cannot receive two or more stipends simultaneously. **Double funding, i.e. receiving an additional scholarship from German public funds, is not permitted.** The Forum reserves the right to terminate or interrupt the fellowship in such cases.

**3. Is it possible to receive a salary and the stipend for the 'stage' at the same time? And do I need to pay tax while receiving the stipend?**

In principle, **you can accommodate a re:constitution fellowship with employment**, i.e. at a university, but especially during the 'stage' period, it may be more difficult to accommodate both. Based on our experience, **it might be good to check before the start of the fellowship if your employer supports you in pursuing such a project**, or if it might be necessary to come to an agreement about the terms and conditions of your absence. For example, some organisations suggest a period of unpaid leave, meaning that you stay employed during the time of your stage.

It might be worth **checking with your financial authorities beforehand if there are any rules or regulations regarding double income**. Since the taxation of income varies between countries, **we strongly encourage fellows to seek the advice of a financial expert** in their home country regarding the receipt of the stipend and related questions like the declaration of the stipend as an additional source of income. Unfortunately, we cannot offer any advice on tax-related issues.

**4. Does the stipend also cover the travel and accommodation costs to travel to the fellow exchange meetings?**

The stipend which you'll receive during the 6-month period of mobility should cover your living expenses abroad, you do not need to pay the travel and accommodation costs for the fellow exchange meeting yourself. The re:constitution programme **covers all travel and accommodation expenses** to enable the fellows to attend these exchange meetings.

## Review Process

### 1. Who will be reviewing the applications?

All applications will be reviewed by the academic director, the [research adviser](#) and the re:constitution [Collegium](#).

### 2. What are the review criteria for these fellowships?

The re:constitution Collegium considers every application in terms of **plausibility** of the outlined project in relation to the objectives of the programme (as indicated in the call); and the **relevance and quality** of the applicants' qualification and/or practical training and experiences for the fellowship. Therefore, **you should clearly outline your ideas for your project and ideally describe the potential impact** of the proposed project.

## COVID-19 FAQ

### 1. Am I bound by mobility when taking up the Fellowship?

No. Due to the ongoing pandemic with its massive repercussion on international travel, the re:constitution **Fellows are not expected to travel at this stage**. The Fellowship can start independent of your location. Travel should only be considered if both your personal situation and official regulation allow for personal mobility.

### 2. What counts as a 'stage' in the current restrictive situation?

In general, the 'stage' period refers to the 6-month period of collaboration with two host institutions (see 'Stage' and Mobility). If the host institution has shut down or official guidelines prohibit personal presence at the institution, you can continue to collaborate with your host institution remotely. This is termed a '**remote stage**', and it is equivalent to a personal 'stage'. **A combination of remote and personal collaboration is also possible**. An example: Your first 'stage' with a research institution in France can only take place via remote collaboration. You will discuss your work and participate in meetings digitally. You organised your 'second' stage with a German NGO. The organisation welcomes guests to their premises - in accordance with government guidelines at the time. You will then be able to travel to Germany for your personal 'stage'.

**3. Will I be eligible to receive the stipend for my 'stage' period(s) even if only remote collaboration with my host institution(s) is possible?**

Yes. The stipend directly corresponds to the dates of your 'stage' that you have agreed with your host institution. **You will continue to receive your stipend for the duration of your remote and personal 'stage' periods.** We do not differentiate between these two modes of collaboration.

**4. Will it be possible to interrupt, extend or postpone the 'stage' period(s) because of mobility disruptions caused by pandemic-related travel restrictions?**

You will be in close contact with the re:constitution programme coordination team when your Fellowship kicks off in order to find the best solution for your personal 'stage'. But given the dynamic situation, a situation may arise in which you wish to interrupt or postpone your 'stage' abroad due to the pandemic. **You may return to your home country or refrain from travelling abroad,** depending on your personal situation. In the latter case, a remote 'stage' may be the best option. **Extending the 'stage' will only be possible after prior consultation with the re:constitution coordination team.**

**5. Will it be possible to extend or postpone the Fellowship if my work on the project has been severely curtailed?**

We advise all Fellows whose research has been negatively impacted by the ongoing restrictions to **make full use of the flexibility the re:constitution programme offers in terms of cooperation with host institutions of choice or postponing travel.** See also question no. 4. In case of severe interferences impacting your research, options for extending or postponing the Fellowship can be discussed with the programme coordination team, but should be a decision of last resort.

**6. Will I be able to meet the other Fellows personally at all during the Fellowship?**

Unfortunately, at this time **we cannot guarantee that there will be opportunities for personal meetings.** Digital exchange has replaced both personal encounters and mobility for the time being. During the Fellowship, there will be a number of **networking events in digital formats:** the regular Fellow Talks and the three Fellow Exchange Meetings ensure interactivity as much as possible in these circumstances. We hope to be able to organise hybrid meeting formats combining personal and digitised exchange in due course.