

Post-Doctoral Researcher (1 Vacancy)

CES/15/2026-PD-DeAppeal

The Centre for Social Studies (CES) – Associate Laboratory - University of Coimbra (Portugal), invites applications for one (1) Post-Doctoral Researcher position (CES/15/2026-PD-DeAppeal) in the project “DeAppeal – Deconstruct and Resist Autocratic Appeal to Reinvigorate Democracy”, funded by the European Commission through the programme Horizon Europe, a consortium coordinated by Cristiano Gianolla at CES.

CES provides a stimulating intellectual environment in the domain of social sciences and humanities. The project is part of the research line Democracy, Justice and Human Rights.

A. Project Description

DeAppeal – Deconstruct and Resist Autocratic Appeal to Reinvigorate Democracy

Democracy is under threat across the globe and, increasingly, within the European Union. Populist and authoritarian actors hollow out institutions and normalise illiberal practices. At the heart of this trend lies autocratic appeal—the capacity of authoritarian projects to resonate with citizens. Despite its urgency, the understanding of autocratic appeal remains fragmented. DeAppeal responds with the first comprehensive, interdisciplinary programme to explain why autocratic projects gain traction and to identify the societal and institutional conditions under which democratic appeal can be revived and mobilised. Using the lens of assemblage, the project examines how affective, discursive, and material drivers interact to generate both autocratic and democratic appeal. The project applies this framework across five crucial domains—gender, youth, everyday, institutions, and transnational—to investigate how authoritarian actors generate appeal and how resistance practices can contest authoritarian encroachment while cultivating vibrant democratic imaginaries.

Expected duration of the project execution: from October 1, 2026 to September 3, 2029.

B. Scientific Field

Social Sciences and Humanities

C. Work plan, tasks:

The selected candidate will have a background in democracy, human rights and information communication technologies with a specialization in citizen-generated data analysis and public policy. He/ She is expected to show methodological rigor and transdisciplinary sensitivity, proven experience in the execution and support of international research projects, the ability to work

collaboratively and manage tasks autonomously, and excellent analytical, written and oral communication skills in English.

The candidate is expected to contribute in the following ways to the project, in close collaboration with the PI and team:

- Contribute to the execution of the project's scientific tasks, as well as supporting any related activities. In particular, the selected researcher will be responsible for literature review; document research; drafting and editing of reports and publications; collect, organize and analyse qualitative and quantitative data;
- Generating project's outputs and outreach activities for academic and non-academic publics. They include preparing and making presentations and drafting, reviewing and editing reports, documents and publications;
- Support the scientific coordination of the project needed for the qualitative and timely implementation of the workplan, including by assisting Work Packages and Tasks leaders;
- Support the technical coordination of the project including: everyday project management; organization and facilitation of project meetings and events; coordinate the communication with partners and funding institutions; support in communication, website and media content updating;
- Liaise with CES management offices and facilitate contacts between CES and the Granting Authority.

D. Applicable Legislation and Regulations

The successful candidate will be hired under Law no. 57/2016, August 29, altered by Law 57/2017, which approves a doctoral hiring regime with a view to boosting scientific and technological employment in all areas of knowledge (RJEC). The hiring will also be governed by the Labor Code approved by Law no. 7/2009 of February 12, as currently worded.

E. Workplace

Research will be performed at the Centre for Social Studies facilities in Coimbra, Portugal, as well as in fieldwork sites. Selected researcher will occasionally need to travel in Portugal and abroad to perform research and research management tasks with the consortium.

F. Duration of the Contract

The temporary contract ("termo incerto") will be signed for the sole purpose of the execution of the project and will automatically end with the completion of the activities foreseen in the activity plan. Moreover, according to Article 112 of the Labour Code, paragraph 2 a), a trial period of 30 days is established.

The contract will foreseeably start in October, 2026.

G. Application dates

Opens: July 15, 2026

Closes: July 29, 2026.

After July 29 (23h59 Lisbon time) 2026, applications will not be considered for evaluation.

H. Application process

Applications must include:

a) Presentation/Motivation letter with the call reference (CES/15/2026-PD-DeAppeal) of maximum 2 pages in English in which the candidate addresses at least four points:

- (1) motivation to be part of the DeAppeal;
- (2) why they consider to be the right choice to execute the project tasks described above;
- (3) to what extent education and previous experience match the selection criteria listed;
- (4) demonstration of oral and written language proficiency in English (with reference to the context where the candidate learned and perfected the language use);

b) Detailed Curriculum Vitae;

c) Copies of PhD degree certificate. It is mandatory to be holder of a PhD degree by the date to start the contract (note: candidates must meet the eligibility conditions and conditions indicated in point "K. Mandatory requirements");

d) One publication which better represents the writing skills of the applicant and their proximity with the DeAppeal project, in English;

e) Other relevant documents for eligibility purposes.

Applications should be sent by email to concursos@ces.uc.pt until the final deadline. Applications must include a clear indication of the reference of this call (CES/15/2026-PD-DeAppeal).

I. Preferred selection criteria and their weighing

Applicants must demonstrate expertise on the topic of the project, and of the research group indicated above, by fulfilling the following criteria:

a) Academic background and research carried out in human rights, international law, social psychology or related fields, with demonstrated research related to citizen-generated data science (publications and presentations, participation in research projects, membership in research groups or networks, relevant work experience in Civil Society organisation) (25%);

b) Experience in the topics of digital rights and communication. Experience with mappings, taxonomies, dashboards and online interactive platforms constitutes additional merit (25%);

c) Experience in over-time qualitative/quantitative data collection and analysis, including literature reviews and mapping of scientific knowledge, drafting of scientific reports and policy documents (20%);

d) Experience in research project administration, team work and communication, organisation and dissemination, event organisation and publication editorial work. Previous international project management experience constitutes additional merit (20%);

e) Level of language proficiency in English (10%);

The jury reserves the right not to select any candidate.

J. Monthly Salary

The monthly salary will be 2 408,11 Euros gross (plus months 13 and 14), meal allowance, and all social security charges, in accordance with the Portuguese Labour Code.

K. Mandatory requirements

a) Applicants must hold a PhD in the subject area indicated above; Applicants with an academic degree and diploma issued by a foreign Higher Education Institution must present proof of recognition of the academic degree by the Portuguese Higher Education System, (law DL66/2018). Any candidate without the recognition of the degree(s) will be admitted to the competition, but during the evaluation process the selection panel, cannot:

- i. recognize the candidate's grades and assess according to the possession of such grades;
- ii. give equivalence to, or validate, the grade of her/his degree;
- iii. use that note or its conversion as an evaluation parameter.

In case of selection, the contract can only be signed after the recognition of the academic degree by the Portuguese authorities, under the terms of the Law-decree n. 66/2018, August 16. The selected candidate must deliver the recognition of the degree within 30 days after the communication of the results. After the 30 days, the jury may decide to (1) either extend the deadline for the candidate to prove the recognition; (2) assign the position to the next candidate for merit; (3) or not award the position.

b) Be proficient in English;

c) Demonstrate expertise on the topics of the project (see criteria A. to C. above).

L. Selection Process

Applicants will be selected based on their scientific merit and curricular path. The candidate best ranked will be selected. As an option, in case of equivalent curricular profiles, the best-positioned applicants will be short-listed for an interview, meant to assess each applicant's potential contribution to the development of the project. The Interview will weigh 10% in the final score. The scale applied to each criterion is 0 to 20.

The jury reserves the right not to select any applicants for the positions, if applications do not meet the necessary standards and/or profiles in terms of absolute merit.

M. Selection Panel

- Cristiano Gianolla (President)
- Inês Amaral (Permanent Member)
- Luciana Sotero (Permanent Member)
- Lisete Mónico (Substitute Member)
- Júlia Garraio (Substitute Member)

N. Communication of Results

The results of the selection process will be emailed to all candidates, and the meeting minutes of the selection panel will become publicly available.

Additional comments

Equality of opportunities

CES abides by the national law that regulates the prevention, prohibition and fighting against discrimination on the grounds of racial and ethnic identity, colour, nationality, family background, territory of origin, and disability (Law nº 93/2017, 23 August; Law nº 4/2019, 10 January).

Data protection

By submitting your application, you are agreeing with the use of your personal data by CES administrative services for the sole purpose of the current call, namely to be contacted directly by CES services and allow the communication of results as in point n. of this call. CES abides by the principles of GPDR.

Contact:

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