

# re:constitution

## Call for Applications

### Track 1 for Postdoctoral Scholars and Rule of Law Practitioners

re:constitution promotes exchange and analysis on democracy and the rule of law in Europe. For the period from October 2025 to July 2026, the programme invites applications for **10 Fellowships in Track 1** open to academics and practitioners.

**Deadline: 3 April 2025, 12 noon (CEST)**

# re:constitution Fellowships 2025/2026

## Call for Applications - Track 1

### Exchange and Analysis on Democracy and the Rule of Law in Europe

re:constitution is a joint programme of Berlin-based Forum Transregionale Studien and Democracy Reporting International, funded by Stiftung Mercator.

Forum Transregionale Studien invites applications for **15 Fellowships in two tracks** for the period from October 2025 until July 2026.

**Important! This Call for Applications outlines the re:constitution Fellowships in Track 1. These 10 Fellowships anticipate that Fellows will spend a mobility phase of 6 months at TWO host institutions during their time as Fellows.** Please find all information on re:constitution Fellowships in Track 2 (5 Fellowships, open to practitioners only) in the Call for Applications for Track 2.

**Deadline:** 3 April 2025, 12 noon CEST

**Stipend:** € 2.500 per month during mobility periods between October 2025 and July 2026

### What is the re:constitution Fellowship?

The rule of law and democracy are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, however increasingly contested in Europe. A growing European Union needs to rest on a broad consensus of the rule of law and democracy and its components such as freedom, equality and dignity as primary common principles ensuring legitimacy and stability in Europe and beyond. In light of the existing and future challenges in the European Union and its neighbourhood, re:constitution aims to strengthen the common ground for the rule of law and democratic principles by encouraging pan-European mobility, interdisciplinary debate and the formation of a network of scholars and practitioners of law and democracy. Since 2019, re:constitution annually awards Fellowships to early- and mid-career scholars and practitioners to work on individual projects related to the rule of law and democracy in Europe. The programme enables Fellows to contribute to the debate on the state and future of the constitution of democracy and rule of law in Europe, encourages critical debates across and within national positions, across academia and practice. Based on a unique concept centred around Europe-wide mobility for collaboration combined with opportunities of exchange and a European Alumni Network, the Fellowship programme is designed to contribute to safeguarding and strengthening the rule of law, democracy and the respect of fundamental rights.

For more information about current and previous Fellows and the programme itself, please visit [reconstitution.eu](https://reconstitution.eu). Follow us on LinkedIn [@re:constitution](https://www.linkedin.com/company/reconstitution) for up-to-date programme news.

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

re:constitution Fellowships are designed for both academics and practitioners and will be awarded for the period from October 2025 to July 2026. The Fellowships are offered in two tracks to better accommodate individual professional requirements and personal circumstances of the applicants. Fellows from both tracks will have equal access to all parts of the programme and together they will constitute the interdisciplinary and international re:constitution cohort of 2025/26.

### TRACK 1 - Full Time

**10 Fellowships** available

**Mobility period of 6 months** to be taken flexibly between October 2025 and July 2026.

Research stays at **TWO host institutions** in EU / non-EU EEA / EU candidate countries / UK or CH during mobility period, divided between a research institution and an institution working in a practical context and on a full-time basis each. The host institutions' locations must differ from the country of residence during the time of the Fellowship.

Participation in **3 Fellows' Exchange Meetings** over 2-3 days each mandatory:

- First meeting: September 2025 in-person in Berlin
- Second meeting: February 2026 online
- Third meeting: June 2026 in-person outside of Germany

Presentation of re:constitution research project and **full participation** in **Online Fellow Talks** series.

## Who is eligible to apply?

re:constitution invites applications from **residents\*** in the **European Union, non-EU EEA countries, EU candidate countries in active accession negotiations or pursuing the start of negotiations,\*\*** as well as from **residents in Switzerland and the United Kingdom** in the early stages of their careers as

### SCHOLARS

holding/finishing a PhD in

- Law/legal studies,
- Political sciences,
- Social sciences,
- Philosophy,
- Other neighbouring disciplines

and focusing on issues on and around democracy and/or the rule of law in Europe.

Your PhD research should either be almost completed or should have been completed no more than 10 years ago. Scholars who are still working on their dissertation may be eligible if their PhD will be completed within one year.

### PRACTITIONERS

- Government officials (e.g. policy advisors) from central authorities and local self-government bodies,
- Judges, magistrates, prosecutors, law clerks and other legal professions or practising lawyers (attorneys),
- NGO/think tank legal/policy experts working on the rule of law and/or democracy in Europe,
- Journalists reporting on the rule of law and/or democracy in Europe,
- General researchers/legal experts working on questions pertaining to the rule of law and/or democracy in Europe.

This list is non-exhaustive. For practitioners, comparable work experience is expected, but a PhD is not required.

## What are the benefits of a re:constitution Fellowship?

**Independence** to research and publish on an issue of choice connected to democracy and the rule of law in Europe.

**Funding for mobility** via collaboration with selected host institutions across the EU, non-EU EEA, EU candidate countries, the UK or CH, offering new personal and remote work and exchange opportunities.

**Exchange and debate** on topical issues in interdisciplinary, high-quality and flexible environment of mutual learning and professional development among scholars, legal practitioners and journalists from across Europe.

**Networking** through multi-faceted exchange about democracy and the rule of law in personal meetings with leading experts and decision makers from across Europe and different backgrounds offering diverse perspectives.

**Shaping** the re:constitution alumni network to build a sustainable community of knowledge and discussion with potential for further collaboration and support.

\* It is important to be a resident of one of these countries for the duration of the Fellowship. Citizenship in these countries is not required.

\*\* „EU candidate countries“ in the context of the re:constitution Call for Applications include Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Ukraine.

**Support** by the coordination team and access to a secure digital collaborative working space provided by Forum Transregionale Studien.

**Opportunities** to become involved in the broader analytical work of the re:constitution programme run by DRI, based on interests and availability.

**Training courses** to promote Fellows' further career development, particularly in the areas of interdisciplinary, intersectoral and transregional competences and to expand methodological knowledge.

### **With accepting the Fellowship, the applicants will agree**

- ✓ to pursue an independent research project about an issue pertaining to the programmatic scope of re:constitution,
- ✓ to select host institutions across the EU, non-EU EEA, EU candidate countries, UK or CH and to manage their own research stays of 6 months at two host institutions working in academia and practise,
- ✓ to attend the Fellows' Exchange Meetings in September 2025, February and June 2026,
- ✓ to ensure their participation in the Fellow Talk series to present their research and discuss other Fellows' research projects,
- ✓ to publish the project results and outcomes in a suitable format. These can be re:constitution Working Papers (for any academic papers) or alternatively, other output formats (e.g. policy papers, op-eds, reports, essays, podcast episodes, blog posts etc). Producing one type of outcome is the minimal requirement; further publication and dissemination is welcome. Please specify your preference/s in the application!

### **How to apply**

Please submit your application via our secure online application platform by **3 April 2025, 12 noon CEST**: <https://application.trafo-berlin.de/>. Please make sure to choose the correct Fellowship Track (1 or 2) when starting the application process. We only accept one application per person.

**Important! Applications by e-mail will not be considered!**

As part of your application, you will be asked to prepare and upload the following:

- Curriculum vitae including a list of publications (2-3 pages),
- Project outline (max. 1.500 words)
- Short abstract of your project (max. 300 words),
- Two references (university faculty members or practitioners in a field relevant to your project).  
**Please note: Letters of recommendation are NOT REQUIRED.**
- Potential host institutions (your preferred research and practice institutions in Europe to spend part of your mobility period, ideally including an indication of preferred dates and/or existing personal contacts. **By the time of submitting your application you are not yet required to organise your stays.**)

The working language of re:constitution is English.

The diversity of our societies should also be reflected in the Fellowships. We therefore welcome applicants of all cultural and social backgrounds, ages, religions, world views, disabilities or sexual identities. The applications will be evaluated by an evaluation committee of scholars and practitioners working in the fields of democracy and the rule of law. All applicants will be informed of the outcome of the evaluation process by early July 2025.

**If you have any questions, please refer to the FAQ on our website or contact the programme coordination team: [reconstitution@trafo-berlin.de](mailto:reconstitution@trafo-berlin.de)**

**Forum Transregionale Studien**

The Berlin-based Forum Transregionale Studien promotes cross-border cooperation between scholars of different expertise and perspectives on global issues. It provides scope for exchange on questions of science policy, epistemology and ethics, and develops infrastructures and formats that allow transregional research ideas and projects to be tested, implemented and communicated. It appoints scholars from around the world as Fellows and engages in joint research programmes and initiatives with partners from universities and research institutions in and outside Berlin. The Forum is funded by the Berlin Senate Department for Higher Education and Research, Health and Long-Term Care.

[forum-transregionale-studien.de](http://forum-transregionale-studien.de)

[trafo.hypotheses.org](http://trafo.hypotheses.org)

**Democracy Reporting International**

Democracy Reporting International (DRI) is an independent organisation dedicated to promoting democracy worldwide. It is based on the idea that people are active participants in public life, not subjects of their governments. Their work centres on analysis, reporting, and capacity-building. For this, DRI is guided by the democratic and human rights obligations enshrined in international law. Headquartered in Berlin, DRI has offices in Lebanon, Tunisia, Democratic Republic of Congo and Ukraine.

[democracy-reporting.org](http://democracy-reporting.org)

**Stiftung Mercator**

Stiftung Mercator is a private, independent, and non-profit foundation that acts on the basis of scientific expertise and practical project experience. Since 1996, it has been advocating for a society based on solidarity and participation. To this end, it supports and develops projects that improve participation and cohesion in an increasingly diverse community. Stiftung Mercator stands up for a cosmopolitan, democratic Europe, a digital transformation of state and society based on fundamental rights, and socially just climate change mitigation. Stiftung Mercator pursues activities in Germany, Europe and worldwide. It has a particular affinity with the Ruhr region, the home of its founder's family and of the foundation's headquarters.

[stiftung-mercator.de](http://stiftung-mercator.de)