

Letter of Invitation to the External Evaluators

Dear colleague,

We write to invite your interest in joining a pool of expert evaluators for the MSCA4Ukraine fellowship programme.

Background: As part of the EU's response to the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine, a new dedicated fellowship scheme – MSCA4Ukraine – has been established to provide support to displaced doctoral students and PhD holders/postdoctoral fellows from Ukraine. The scheme will enable them to continue their work in Europe, while maintaining their connections to research and innovation communities in Ukraine. The selection process is managed by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation on behalf of a European consortium led by Scholars at Risk Europe hosted at Maynooth University, Ireland, and partnering with the European University Association

The role of external evaluators: Informative peer reviews from external evaluators with knowledge of the applicants' respective disciplines are an essential factor in the MSCA4Ukraine selection process. If matched, we shall ask for your expert opinion on MSCA4Ukraine applications in or close to your research area. The evaluation criteria are aligned with those of a standard MSCA-PF scheme but with adjusted weightings. In particular, the evaluation will include the assessment of the potential impact of the fellowship in respect to the host's efforts to enhance temporary integration in the host country's academic community and the quality of measures proposed to prepare for reintegration in Ukraine (when safe conditions for return are met). Consideration will be given to any planned (optional) secondments to Ukraine and efforts to maintain and strengthen connections with organisations and researchers in Ukraine while on the fellowship.

Each application will be reviewed by at least three independent experts. The reviews will be shared with the members of the Selection Committee. Remuneration of external evaluators will not be possible. We are therefore calling on evaluators to donate their time to this process.

The profile of external evaluators:

We are looking for active (or recently retired) established researchers with a PhD/ MD degree or equivalent, working at an academic or non-academic research performing organization anywhere in the world, preferably with experience of fellowship evaluation (e.g., for MSCA-PF scheme). Experience of mentoring of early-career researchers (at PhD student level and/ or postdoctoral fellows) will also be valuable to the initiative. **In addition to the specialist expertise in the respective field of research, we would particularly welcome researchers with Ukraine-related experience (e.g., through education, academic mobility, collaborative research, joint teaching etc.) and/ or those who have already supported (e.g., as a host) scholars at risk.**

Expected workload and timeline:

- We anticipate requesting review of up to **10** MSCA4Ukraine applications per individual evaluator, as to ensure the comparability of the reviews, while maintaining the workload at a reasonable level.
- MSCA4Ukraine is a support scheme in response to an emergency, therefore we must adhere to a very tight schedule. **The first evaluators are expected to be contacted in early December 2022, with evaluations due ca. 3 weeks later.** We have tentatively planned a second selection round with the evaluations being done in January, should the funding be still available after the first selection round.

The success of MSCA4Ukraine and our ability to offer urgently needed support to over a hundred Ukrainian researchers, strongly depends on the solidarity of our network. If interested to contribute your time and expertise – **please send us a short message from your official e-mail address to MSCA4Ukraine-evaluation@avh.de with your name and affiliation.** You will then receive a web-link

to an online form, where – after logging in for authentication – you would be able to select your research area and add keywords to facilitate the matching of expertise and add some other relevant information. Please understand that at this stage we cannot foresee who will be selected to evaluate the applications, as this strongly depends on the numbers and research areas of the submitted proposals.

We would strongly appreciate your expert help and thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

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