



**Call for applications:
2 Ph.D. fellowships (social and political science) in the field of Caspian Studies.**

Deadline for applications: Monday, 16 February 2015, 17:00 CET.

The Conflict Research Group of the Department of Conflict and Development Studies of Ghent University is looking for 2 Ph.D. researchers in the framework of the project **Around the Caspian: a doctoral training for future experts in development and cooperation with focus on the Caspian region** (CASPIAN 2015-19). This is an Innovative Training Network that has received 3.8 million € under a Marie Skłodowska Curie scheme funded by the Research Executive Agency of the European Commission with the goal of training the next generation of experts on the Caspian region. The full partners of this project are Dublin City University, Ghent University (Universiteit Gent), Tallinn University of Technology (Tallinna Tehnikakõlikool), Oxford Brookes University, University of Saint Andrews, the University of Coimbra (Universidade de Coimbra) and the Forschungsstelle Osteuropa Bremen.

1. Offer

- a 36-month, full-time Ph.D. researcher position (subject to a positive mid-term evaluation);
- a salary in accordance with Marie Curie payment scales and a sufficient research and travel budget;
- start of assignment not later than 1 September 2015;

2. Job description

The selected Ph.D. students will respectively work on the **research projects, and complete a Ph.D. thesis**, on:

- topic a.: **The existence, characteristics and dynamics of the middle class in Azerbaijan**
- topic b.: **The societal impact of the oil and gas economy in Western Kazakhstan**

These planned research projects focus on the societal impact and the effect on identities, social organization and the daily economies of rapid economic change in specific provinces and urban areas in the Caspian region, using mixed research methodologies.

The **training component** of the fellowships will have three main parts:

- the researchers will have to undergo an extensive academic training; based at Ghent University, they will attend regular network events and will have access to a network of universities where to receive complementary training;
- in the course of their fellowship, our fellows will be encouraged to spend a period in one of our non-academic partners to get a work experience and learn how to use academic skills for non-academic sectors;
- the researchers will also be encouraged to spend a research period in one of our non-EU university partners to gain an alternative, and non-Eurocentric, vision on the Caspian region.

3. Profile and requirements

Eligible candidates should:

- have a Master's degree in Political Science, Sociology, Social Geography or Cultural Studies completed by the application deadline at the latest;
- have knowledge of and experience with qualitative research methodologies (ethnography, semi-structured interviewing, field observations, ...);
- have knowledge of and experience with quantitative research methodologies (opinion surveys, ...) is an asset;
- be organized, field-oriented, and able to work and manage a research independently;
- have excellent knowledge of and writing skills in English, and good or at least workable knowledge of Russian; knowledge of Azerbaijani, Kazakh or Turkish is an asset;
- be able to maturely cope with hardships, practical problems and unforeseen circumstances that may emerge during the research and on the research locations in general;
- be prepared to travel often: although they will be based at the Department of Conflict and Development Studies of Ghent University during the assignment period, candidates are expected to spend a sizeable amount of time away for fieldwork, secondment to a private partner and/or a to a non-EU university, and/or for conferences and meetings related to the project;
- finally, familiarity with, and previous field experience in, the former USSR or/and Eastern Europe form a great asset.

Please note that these are junior and international mobility positions. **Eligible candidates should therefore:**

- **have less than 4 years (full-time equivalent) of research experience** after their Master's degree (this means that, from the moment they have completed their Master's, they may have held a research position, but for a total of less than 48 months);
- **not have been resident or carried out activities in Belgium** for more than 12 months in the past three years prior to the recruitment date.

4. How to apply?

Candidates should apply either by **e-mail** at secretariaat.dcds@ugent.be (mention 'CASPIAN application' in heading/subject space), **or by regular mail** at Department of Conflict and Development Studies, Ghent University, attention of Prof. dr. Bruno De Cordier, Universiteitstraat 8, B-9000 Ghent, Belgium (mention 'CASPIAN' on the envelope), **before Monday, 16 February 2015, 17:00 CET**.

The application must be in English and the application package should **contain the following items:**

- a **letter of application** outlining the candidates' interest for and, if applicable, experience in, the Caspian region ;
- a **detailed CV** including, if applicable, a list of relevant publications ;
- a 2-page **project proposal** on one of the topics mentioned in section 2.;
- the names and contact details of **3 reference persons** who can comment on the applicants' capabilities and abilities.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an interview either in person at our department, or through Skype if the candidates are based more than 300 kilometers from Ghent. The submission deadline can

be extend if no of too few suitable candidates apply. **Given the expected high number of applications, we regret to be unable to provide individual feedback to non-selected candidates.**

For more information on the type of research conducted at the **Conflict Research Group**, please refer to <http://www.conflictresearchgroup.be>

For more information on the **Marie Skłodowska Curie Research Fellowship Programme**, please refer to <http://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/>