



Brussels Laboratory for Data Protection & Privacy Impact Assessments (d.pia.lab)  
Research Group on Law, Science, Technology & Society (LSTS)  
Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB)

## **CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: PH.D. POSITION ON LEGAL FORESIGHT IN RELATION TO THE DATA ECONOMY FOR FOOD SYSTEMS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The multidisciplinary Research Group on Law, Science, Technology & Society (LSTS) at the Faculty of Law and Criminology at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), established in 2003, has become a prominent European research institute in the area of technology and regulation. The staff comprises more than 50 researchers: professors as well as senior and post- doctoral-, doctoral- and associated researchers. Research staff at the VUB-LSTS have background in a number of areas, including law, ethics, philosophy, political science, sociology, criminology and others. Great emphasis is placed on incorporating a multidisciplinary perspective in all their work.

The Brussels Laboratory for Data Protection & Privacy Impact Assessments, or d.pia.lab, is a sub-unit within the VUB-LSTS, established in 2015, which connects basic, methodological and applied research, provides training and delivers policy advice related to impact assessments in the areas of innovation and technology development. Whilst legal aspects of privacy and personal data protection constitute its core expertise, the Laboratory mobilizes other disciplines including ethics, philosophy, surveillance studies as well as science, technology and society (STS) studies.

**The VUB-LSTS-d.pia.lab is now looking for a motivated doctoral researcher to join the team to work on a research project related to foresight techniques and stakeholder dialogues in the context of the European Union's (EU) actions for improving the Data Economy for Food Systems (DE4FS), i.e. public policy decisions, supply chains, and individuals and groups that influence what we eat.<sup>1</sup>**

As part of their duties, the researcher will work on the 4-year research project '**Pathways towards a fair, inclusive and innovative Data Economy for Sustainable Food Systems' or Data4food2030**, funded by the EU's Horizon Europe Framework Program. The objective of the project is to design principles and a clear roadmap towards fair, inclusive data spaces which support sustainable Food Systems in Europe. The project is coordinated by Stichting Wageningen Research and brings 24 partners having expertise in research, policy making, software developing companies and the food industry, representing 13 countries.

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<sup>1</sup> Call and topic of the call are available at <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/horizon-cl6-2021-governance-01-18>

In particular, the candidate is expected to work on developing stakeholder dialogues in which future scenarios will be assessed. Among others, part of this work is to conduct a “legal backcasting” exercise, which entails two stages. First, the candidate will work “backwards” and connect the future scenarios identified with the current legislative issues, policy agendas and crucial legal design principles. Second, preliminary legal insights for policy recommendations will be provided by creating and assessing multiple “legislative pathways” for regulators and policy makers to reach desirable scenarios or avoid undesirable ones.

Besides the project, the researcher will write an original doctoral thesis (PhD) in the area of law and technology. More specifically, the researcher is expected to develop a research proposal for their doctoral thesis within the first year of employment.

Finally, apart from working on the project and the PhD dissertation, the researcher will have the opportunity to:

- participate in (international) seminars and conferences;
- (co-)author scientific and professional articles in high-ranked journals;
- Take part in the activities of the d.pia.lab;
- contribute to drafting research project proposals for external funding.

#### **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

Candidates are expected to possess the following qualifications and skills:

- a master’s degree, preferably awarded by the deadline for applications, in:
  - law, possibly with a specialization in law and technology, data protection law, consumer law or environmental law, *or*
  - in philosophy, social or political sciences, economics and science and technology studies, provided that the candidate has some experience in legal aspects of emerging technologies (e.g., through university courses, internships, jobs);
- fluency in written (academic) and spoken English;
- excellent organizational and communicative skills;
- the ability to work independently (either in premises or remotely), under pressure, respect deadlines, and produce quality work;
- assertiveness, resilience and ability to “go against the flow” to pursue research goals

It is considered a plus if the candidate also has:

- acquaintance with technology assessment methods, especially in their participatory forms, and of technology foresight;
- experience with stakeholder engagement techniques, including e.g., interviews, focus groups or Delphi method;
- a broad understanding of IT law, data protection law, consumer law and/or environmental law;
- relevant working experience (including internships and traineeships), especially related to European Framework Programs (e.g. Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe)

#### **CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**

The successful candidate will be integrated in a dynamic team, composed of both experienced and early career researchers, working under the guidance of Prof. Dr. Niels van Dijk. The successful candidate will collaborate closely with other members of the Brussels Laboratory for Data Protection & Privacy Impact Assessments (d.pia.lab), as well as other members of the VUB-LSTS, and will have access to doctoral

training offered by the VUB, as well as to all facilities of the University. Successful candidate is expected to work at the VUB premises in Brussels and remotely; yet the position involves travelling – mostly in Europe – for research-related events. Office space and equipment will be provided along with a budget for travelling and other research-related expenses.

The VUB offers employment as a full-time doctoral researcher. The PhD degree will be awarded in law. For more information about facilities and benefits of employment at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, please visit <http://www.vub.ac.be> under the heading ‘future employees’.

Contract: full-time research grant for one year, renewable on an annual basis but for a total potential period of four years. Extension of the contract is subject to the agreement of the doctoral committee. Remuneration is at the level of a full-time research assistant at a Flemish university (i.e., approximately €2200 net per month) and includes contributions for social security. Secondary employment is not allowed.

## **APPLICATION**

The candidate will be selected on the basis of the quality of the application, expertise, work experience and qualifications. The application documents are to be consolidated into a single PDF file and sent by email to Mr. Simone Casiraghi at [Simone.casiraghi@vub.be](mailto:Simone.casiraghi@vub.be), with a copy to Mr. Maciej Otmianowski, Managing Director of the d.pia.lab, at [Maciej.Otmianowski@vub.be](mailto:Maciej.Otmianowski@vub.be).

Applications (in English) must include the following:

- a curriculum vitae;
- a cover letter which explains the motivation and qualifications of the candidate (1 page);
- a draft research proposal for a doctoral thesis (1 page);
- sample of recent work: essay, excerpt from recent (academic) research, article, blog post or working paper written by the candidate (max. 5000 words);
- 1 (one) letter of recommendation.

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Deadline for the submission of applications is **23 June 2022 at 12:00 PM** (Brussels time zone). It is currently envisioned that the successful candidates will be shortlisted by 24 June 2022 and interviews held between 4 and 15 July. The position will start on 1 September 2022 (the start date might be negotiable).

**The hiring institution reserves the right to contact only selected candidates.**

**If you are interested in learning more about the project on which you will be working, its content, team, consortium, or about working as researcher at VUB-LSTS, please visit the LSTS website <https://lsts.research.vub.be> or send us an email. The work will be carried out building upon the experience of the d.pia.lab; more information: [www.dpialab.org](http://www.dpialab.org).**