Expression of Interest to Join a Horizon Europe Consortium

Call: Horizon Europe "Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society"; HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-DEMOCRACY-07: Supporting post-conflict democracy and reconstruction

Deadline: 23 September 2026

Research Partner Expression of Interest

dr. Marije Luitjens, assistant professor of peace studies and IR
Department of political science, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Expertise: (local) capacities for peace; (everyday) peacebuilding; complex system thinking linked to peace and democracy; Peace System Analysis

Expertise and Contribution to the Call

In my research I focus on the strengthening of existing capacities (on multiple societal levels) to support the peace process within a conflict-affected society. To do so, I use an analytical model, the Peace System Analysis, to discover the weaknesses and strengths within a conflict-affected context, to constructively support societal reconstruction. The PSA engages with stakeholders on different societal levels and is hence a grass roots tool that also takes into account the larger system in which that conflict-affected context is subject to. I have developed the tool through both in person and digital ethnographic methods, in which the 'stakeholders' are central to the outcome of the analysis. In that respect I want to lead a work package on innovative methods, as I believe I could offer interesting perspectives to this, for example through the PSA. I moreover believe that working interdisciplinary is crucial to achieving sustainable peace, as it is a complex process in which various disciplines need to partake.

This expertise aligns directly with the call's priorities by:

- Thematic background
- Methodological expertise
- Innovative tools (PSA)
- Interdisciplinary approach

Possible Roles within the Consortium

I can contribute to or lead work packages and tasks related to:

- Innovative methods design
- Ethnographic research
- Complex system thinking/analysis
- Stakeholder-grass root engagement (also through previous-experience in peace NGO-sector)

Specific activities include:

- Conducting ethnography, leading qualitative studies
- Developing methodological framework
- Connecting role between multiple disciplines
- Supporting policy recommendations and dissemination stakeholders

Institutional Profile: Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU Amsterdam) is a leading international research university, renowned for its strong profiles in Social Sciences, Humanities, Life & Health Sciences, Artificial Intelligence, Sustainability, and Interdisciplinary Research. The university excels in areas such as conflict studies, democracy and governance, social cohesion, and innovative research methodologies, with a particular emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration and societal impact.

Located in the the capital of the Netherlands, the VU Amsterdam is deeply embedded in both local and global innovation ecosystems. It maintains strategic partnerships with top European and international

institutions, including the League of European Research Universities (LERU), AURORA network, Una Europa, and the 4EU+ Alliance. VU Amsterdam consistently ranks among the top Dutch and European universities in Horizon Europe participation, coordinating and contributing to numerous Horizon, ERC, and Marie Skłodowska-Curie projects across a wide range of disciplines. The university's commitment to open science, diversity, and academic freedom further strengthens its position as a hub for cutting-edge research and education.

Contact

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