

Call for Applications

Early Career Researchers in Economic Sociology, European Public Policy, Geoeconomics, Industrial Policy, and Political Economy

Deadline for applications: February 10, 2026 at 23:59

The Volkswagen Foundation-sponsored symposium, **‘Europe’s industrial policy options in the digital, green and geoeconomic transitions’** will be held from **15th to 17th April 2026** in Hanover, Germany.

Organized by Helen Callaghan, Timur Ergen and Bob Hancké, the symposium offers an exceptional platform for early career researchers to join leading experts in a critical dialogue on the future of Europe in a rapidly changing economic landscape.

Event Overview

Europe’s democracies are challenged by three interlocking global crises that place competing demands on finite resources: *Geopolitical realignment* necessitates radically increased defense spending while disrupting trade routes and supply chains. The *climate crisis* requires funding for mitigation, adaptation and compensation of affected constituencies in Europe and on a global scale. *Rapid technological change* implies rising demands for state assistance with industrial restructuring and technological upgrading. Our conference brings together leading academics and practitioners to debate European business strategy and industrial policy options in the face of these crises and the competing claims on strained resources.

Benefits of Participation

Selected early career researchers will:

- Discuss their work alongside practitioners and senior scholars in a collaborative setting.
- Gain exposure to cutting-edge debates on Europe’s economic and industrial policies.
- Network with leading thinkers from various scholarly fields and institutions.

Application Details

Eligible applicants hold a Ph.D. in a scholarly field related to the themes of the symposium, or are very close to completing it.

We especially encourage **applications from female early career researchers** to support diverse perspectives in the discussions. Funding for travel expenses is available. Accommodation will be covered for selected applicants.

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Please submit the following documents via email to

callaghan@politik.uni-mainz.de; trgn@uni-bremen.de; r.hancke@lse.ac.uk

- **Short cover letter** outlining your motivation for attending and how your participation will contribute to the conference discussions. Please add a 500-word **summary** of your research project, which highlights its relevance to the conference themes
- **Current CV** (2 pages)

Join us in Hanover to help shape the conversation on Europe's options in a changing global order!