

Post-Doctoral Researcher (1 Vacancy)

The Centre for Social Studies (CES) – Associate Laboratory - University of Coimbra (Portugal), invites applications for **one Post-Doctoral Researcher position** (ref^a: CES/14/2026-PD-PROTEST) in the project “Protest as a Democracy Test: Protest Culture under Transformation and as a Transformative Power” (Grant Agreement 101177963), funded by the European Union, granting authority the European Research Executive Agency (REA) under the framework HORIZON Research and Innovation Actions, and coordinated at CES by the Principal Investigator (PI), Maria Raquel Freire.

Scholars working on social movements, with experience with critical discourse analysis and Q-methodology, with a background in International Relations, or other relevant fields are welcome to apply.

A. Project Description

There is a steady trend of global democratic decline (de-democratization), transforming political opportunity structures and creating new knowledge gaps about how protest cultures evolve and adapt to changing contexts. Addressing this gap, the project’s aim is twofold: First, to reveal whether and how ongoing de-democratization processes affect patterns of protest culture and how these effects vary according to democracy (consolidated, new and developing); second, to trace whether and how affected patterns of protest culture influence the state of democracy in target countries, by focusing on representation as inclusion of citizen preferences in political agendas. Research findings will shed light on two dimensions of protest culture, particularly its internal capacity and its external constraints. This will be done via analyzing historical contexts of variations in protest cultures across different types of democracy, factors intersecting to trigger or shape pro-democratic/anti-democratic protests, political elite manipulation of legal and discursive frames to curtail public discontent, role of traditional and social media creating opportunities or obstacles for actors engaged in contentious politics, generational differences in perceptions of and participation patterns in protest culture, and finally, influence of protest culture itself on the state of democracy through representation as an outcome of civic participation. The interdisciplinary project relies on methodological pluralism and integrates: desk research and legal analysis, biographical narrative interviews and focus groups, quantitative and qualitative content analysis, critical discourse analysis and visual analysis, network analysis for mapping actor-discourse coalitions, and Q methodology. ProTest started on January 1, 2025, with a duration of 36 months.

B. Scientific Field

Social Sciences

C. Requirements

PhD degree in International Relations, or other relevant fields. Applicants need to have a PhD degree by the deadline of this call.

Applicants with an academic degree and diploma issued by a foreign Higher Education Institution must present proof of recognition of the academic degree by the Portuguese Higher Education System (law DL66/2018). Any candidate without the recognition of her/his degree will be admitted to the competition, but during the evaluation process the selection panel, cannot:

- 1) recognize the candidate's grades and assess according to the possession of such grades;
- 2) give equivalence to, or validate, the grade of her/his degree;
- 3) use that note or its conversion as an evaluation parameter.

Should that candidate be selected, she/he will need to provide proof of the recognition of her/his academic degree by the Portuguese authorities before signing the contract.

The selected candidate will have to deliver the recognition of the degree within 30 days after the communication of the application results. After 30 days, the jury may decide to:

1. extend the deadline for the candidate to prove the recognition;
2. assign the position to another candidate;
3. or not fill the position.

D. Candidate' Profile

This call will select a candidate for **one Post-Doctoral Researcher position** with the following scientific profile:

The selected candidate will have International Relations, or similarly relevant as the main scientific background. Applicants should demonstrate an excellent command of specific methodological tools, such as critical discourse analysis and Q-methodology, with publications and/or projects' participation. Knowledge about social movements and related issues is highly desirable. Knowledge of English and Portuguese is a requirement.

The selected candidate will work with the coordination of the project's PI, Maria Raquel Freire.

E. Selected Candidate's Responsibilities

The selected researcher will have the following responsibilities:

- a) Actively contribute to the intellectual life of the project, including, but not limited to: participation in research activities, including literature review and analytical contributions; participation in internal meetings; participation in meetings with the project's advisory board;
- b) Contribute to the planning of fieldwork; carry out fieldwork; gather, analyze and organize data;

- c) Regularly publish research results in academic journal and books; and regularly participate in academic conferences to disseminate research results;
- d) Contribute to the activities organized by the project, such as seminars, summer schools, boot camp event, and other scientific events;
- e) Contribute to the organization of all type of project events;
- f) Contribute to the project's public outreach activities;
- g) Contribute to drafting the project's reports;
- h) Contribute to the project's daily management tasks, namely scientific reporting; monitoring of project milestones; and all other tasks required to guarantee the successful implementation of ProTest various WPs.

F. Applicable Legislation and Regulations

The successful candidates will be hired under Law no. 57/2016, August 29, altered by Law 57/2017, which approves a doctoral hiring regime with a view to boosting scientific and technological employment in all areas of knowledge (RJEC). The hiring will also be governed by the Labor Code approved by Law no. 7/2009 of February 12, as currently worded.

G. Workplace

Research will be performed at the Centre for Social Studies facilities in Coimbra, Portugal. Selected researcher will occasionally need to travel to other locations to perform research tasks. The successful candidate is expected to move to Coimbra – Portugal for the duration of the contract.

H. Duration of the Contract

The contract will be signed for the sole purpose of the execution of the project, foreseeably starting in October, 2026. The contract is fulltime, in exclusive dedication until the end of the project. Selected researcher is subject to yearly evaluations by the PI, upon which depends the continuation of the contract.

I. Monthly Salary

The monthly salary is 2 408,11 Euros gross plus two additional months of salary (total of 14 months of salary a year). Full protection by Social Security is included in the contract. Researchers will be covered by Portugal's national health insurance plan.

Salary is set in accordance with the provisions of Portugal's scientific employment law, namely line a) number 1, of article 15, Law nº 57/2017, corresponding to level 33 of the single salary scale approved by Decree no. 1553-C/2008 of December 31.

J. Selection Process

Applicants will be selected based on their scientific merit and curricular path. In case of equivalent curricular evaluations, the best-positioned applicants will be short-listed for an interview, meant to assess each applicant's potential contribution to the development of the project. If applicable, the interview will weigh 10% in the final score. The scale applied to each criterion is 0 to 20.

The jury reserves the right to not select any applicants for the positions, if applications do not meet the necessary standards and/or profiles in terms of absolute merit.

K. Selection Criteria

Applicants must demonstrate expertise on the topic of the project, by fulfilling the following criteria:

1. Academic background and research experience with critical discourse analysis and Q-methodology, knowledge on social movements (60%);
2. Excellent language skills in both oral and written Portuguese and English, including the ability to independently write in these languages (25%);
3. Experience in research and dissemination (15%).

L. Selection Panel

- Maria Raquel Freire (President)
- Sofia José Santos (Permanent)
- André Saramago (Permanent)
- Inês Amaral (Substitute)
- Bernardo Fazendeiro (Substitute)

M. Communication of Results

The results of the selection process will be emailed to all candidates, and the meeting minutes of the selection panel will become publicly available.

N. Application Deadline:

Call opens on: July 27, 2026

Call closes on: August 14, 2026

After August 14, 2026, applications will not be considered for evaluation.

O. Application documents and process:

Applications must include:

- a) Presentation/ Motivation letter (max. 2 pages);
- b) Curriculum Vitae of max. 5 pages, highlighting the items most relevant to the call;
- c) Copy of qualification certificates and other relevant documents for eligibility purposes (**applicants need to have a PhD degree by the deadline of this call**). If, for the duration of the application period, the applicant does not have proof of recognition of their academic degree by the Portuguese Higher Education System (law DL66/2018), they must submit a declaration of honor committing themselves to deliver the recognition of the degree within 30 days after the communication of the application results.
- d) electronic copy of the PhD dissertation and 3 relevant publications.

Applications should be sent by email as a PDF document to concursos@ces.uc.pt until the final deadline. Applications must include in the email subject a **clear indication of the reference of this call (CES-14-2026-PD-PROTEST) and the name of candidate**.

Additional comments

Equality of opportunities:

CES abides by the national law that regulates the prevention, prohibition and fighting against discrimination on the grounds of racial and ethnic identity, colour, nationality, family background, and territory of origin (Law nº 93/2017, 23 August).

Data protection:

By submitting your application, you are agreeing with the use of your personal data by CES administrative services for the sole purpose of the current call, namely to be contacted directly by CES services and allow the communication of results as in point n. of this call. CES abides by the principles of GDPR.

Contact:

Centro de Estudos Sociais
Colégio S. Jerónimo, Apartado 3087
3000-995 Coimbra, Portugal
concursos@ces.uc.pt