



## Interdisciplinary PhD Positions at the University of Vienna: “Empowerment through Human Rights”

### About the positions:

The University of Vienna announces the vacancy of 12 PhD positions for **college assistants** within the interdisciplinary doctoral college “Empowerment through Human Rights”. Duration of the posts is **three years** each; 20 hours **part-time employment** will be **at the University of Vienna** for the whole period. During this period, the college assistants will work together in the interdisciplinary group and will each write a stand-alone PhD thesis. College assistants can seek participation in related research activities within the institutions involved to an extent of another 20 hours. The **deadline for application is 30 September 2009**; interviews with applicants will be conducted from 15 October onwards; the planned starting date for all 12 positions is 1 January 2010. Remuneration is granted on the basis of the current collective agreement of the University of Vienna, amounting to € 16,780 per annum.

### About the doctoral college:

The development of human rights protection and promotion in recent years has given rise to the understanding that human rights issues cannot be regarded a mere legal problem but that they have to be considered from different perspectives. Against this background, the doctoral college “Empowerment through Human Rights” is comprised of the disciplines of **law, sociology, psychology** and **development studies**. It will focus its research on the **human rights protection of members of vulnerable groups**, such as persons affected by poverty, migrants, refugees, minorities, persons with disabilities and victims of gross human rights violations. “Empowerment” of these vulnerable groups constitutes the central element in this regard.

The four **main topics** covered by the doctoral college are:

- The Protection and Empowerment of Vulnerable and Discriminated Groups
- Poverty
- Migration and Asylum and
- Consequences of Gross Human Rights Violations, in particular Torture, or Disability on the Individual

The interdisciplinary research activities of the doctoral college will be founded on a “**Human Rights Based Approach**” (HRBA), which builds the bridge between the different disciplines. This approach offers the possibility to consider certain phenomena, such as migration, poverty or the consequences of gross human rights violations on the individual from a rights-based perspective. Fundamental elements of this approach are empowerment of persons to exercise their rights; obligations on the part of others, in particular States; a system of effective accountability; and the principle of equality and non-discrimination. In addition, participation of members of vulnerable groups in the research activities is an important element of the HRBA. Please see extended description of the project at <http://human-rights.univie.ac.at/> for further information on the substantive contents of the college.

The college assistants will receive **individual supervision** of their theses within the respective disciplines by the **members of the faculty**, Prof. Ursula Kriebaum and Prof. Manfred Nowak (law), Prof. Christoph Reinprecht (sociology), Prof. Walter Schicho (development studies) and Prof. Germain Weber (psychology). In addition, they will be provided with comprehensive **interdisciplinary supervision** by all members of the faculty. The members of the faculty and other renowned guest lecturers and expert practitioners will hold a variety of courses, workshops and tutorials jointly in the interdisciplinary setting of the group. Instructions in additional skills such as scientific writing and publishing, project acquisition and management as well as involvement in university teaching through individual and joint courses will complete the academic curriculum for the college assistants.



The cooperation between the disciplines will provide the college assistants with an extensive understanding of the complex interactions between root causes of, mitigation strategies against and consequences of human rights violations.

## About the involved institutions:

The **University of Vienna** is the oldest university in the German-speaking world and one of the largest in Central Europe. Currently, about 74,000 students are enrolled at the University of Vienna in 177 courses. With staff of close to 8,600 employees, 6,500 of which are academic, the University of Vienna is the largest teaching and research institution in Austria. It aims to sustain a wide range of studies, but at the same time to promote new and innovative fields of research, and to establish new networks between subjects. Please consult the University's website <http://www.univie.ac.at/> for further information.

The members of the faculty responsible for the doctoral college form part of a broader consortium, the interdisciplinary **Research Platform "Human Rights in the European Context"**. The Platform was established at the University of Vienna in February 2008. It assembles academics of 12 departments of the University of Vienna with the purpose of strengthening the inter-disciplinary research on the topic of Human Rights in Europe. A particular focus of the Platform is being put on a synergetic linkage of project implementation and output in terms of dissertations and postdoctoral research work. Thus, the Platform provides younger researchers with an opportunity to carry out inter-disciplinary research projects under the joint supervision of senior researchers from all relevant disciplines. Please consult the Platform's website <http://human-rights.univie.ac.at/> for further information.

The **Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights (BIM)** serves as the platform's centre of communication and coordination. It is an independent human rights research institution under the umbrella of the Ludwig Boltzmann Society, a leading Austrian research association. The primary focus of BIM is on research activities in the field of human rights, on the national, European and the international level. BIM staff is also engaged extensively in human rights teaching and training. It is BIM's main objective to offer a link between academic research and legal practise. Therefore, a considerable amount of work is devoted to empirical research and project implementation. Through co-operation with international, European and national institutions – like UN, OSCE, CoE, EU, ICTY, Austrian and foreign ministries – as well as other human rights research institutes and NGOs, BIM strives to provide relevant studies, analysis and data on human rights issues in areas such as international, European and national law, politics, education and the media. Besides that, BIM serves as the Austrian RAXEN National Focal Point of the European Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA). Please consult the Institute's website <http://www.univie.ac.at/bim/> for further information.

## About the requirements:

Applicants for the PhD positions must hold a **four year masters' degree or equivalent** in disciplines related to the college's topic. They must demonstrate previous **human rights related experience** in the academic and/or practical field. Very good knowledge of English (academic level) is required as the research work will be conducted in English.

Applicants who wish to be considered for the position should submit **via email only**:

- A letter of motivation.
- A research proposal of maximum 5 pages in English based on the research topics of the doctoral college "Empowerment through Human Rights", planned publications, and a progress plan.
- Curriculum vitae in English. Please use the Europass CV template provided on the Platform website. Include names and contact details for at least two references as indicated in the template.
- If applicable, a complete list of published and unpublished works.



- Copies of grades and transcripts. Foreign applicants are advised to attach an explanation of their university's grading system.
- Applicants who are not native speakers of English must document their proficiency in English.

It is a requirement that the applicant will be able to complete the PhD thesis in the course of the period of appointment.

The University of Vienna wishes to employ more women and scholars with minority backgrounds to academic posts and encourage their applications.

Applications and supporting documents shall be sent by **30 September 2009** via e-mail to: [human-rights@univie.ac.at](mailto:human-rights@univie.ac.at)

In order for the application to be processed properly it must be complete with all documentation as requested.

For further information please contact [human-rights@univie.ac.at](mailto:human-rights@univie.ac.at)

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