

Prague Civil Society Centre



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Пражский гражданский
центр

Centrul Civic Praga

Пражский гражданский
центр

Пражскі грамадзянскі цэнтр

Прага азаматтық орталығы

Прага жарандык
коом борбору

Маркази ҷомеаи
шахрвандий Прага

პრადის სამოქალაქო
საზოგადოების ცენტრი

Praqa Vətəndaş Cəmiyyəti
Mərkəzi

Praga rayat merkezi

Praga fuqarolik markazi

Прага фуқаролик маркази

Պրահայի քաղաքացիական
հասարակության կենտրոն

PCSC Fellowship guide

Information about the programme

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About the PCSC Fellowship programme

Three fully funded months in Prague to focus on your research, network and think.

What is the PCSC Fellowship Programme?

Fellowships are fully funded three-month research residencies in Prague for individuals from Eastern Europe and Central Asia. This includes activists, experts, researchers and people working on civic-minded projects and social issues in their country or region.

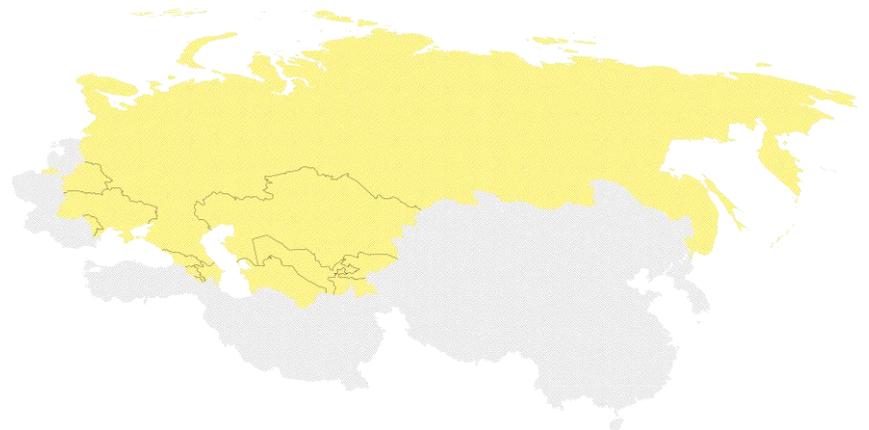
This is an opportunity to:

- Research challenges, opportunities and trends affecting civil society and human rights in your country or region
- Write a book, training manual, policy paper or analytical work for the benefit of the people and/or the civil sector in your country
- Conceptualise and initiate a new project.

The Prague Civil Society Centre will cover travel costs, modest living expenses and accommodation, as well as visa assistance. Fellows are also provided with a shared office space with an internet connection and meeting facilities.

Who can apply to be a Fellow?

Fellows must be from one of the Eastern European and Central Asian countries highlighted in yellow and be involved with civil society, journalism, or social issues in their country, through either their work, research or activism. We expect applicants to have a proven



track record of achievements in the civil sector or journalism, with enough experience to conduct and complete a three-month project.

Fellows are often:

- in the advanced stage of working on a research paper or book, and need a few months to finish it without the distractions of everyday life or challenges of a repressive political environment
- experienced trainers or someone who provides educational programmes for civil society who are looking to develop a new curriculum or re-think their current approach
- people with extensive knowledge and experience of a certain type of activism who are on the lookout to document or share their experience with others
- people with knowledge of either successful or failed reform processes in their country who want to document this experience to guide future reforms in their country or elsewhere
- looking to write a comparative analysis of reform experiences between their country and another
- those with fresh ideas on how to reinvigorate civil society activism who need time to develop their ideas and work out their approach
- people with extensive experience of social entrepreneurship or other ways of combining profit making and pro-bono work who want to record and share their knowledge
- individuals with extensive experience using technology or smart communication tools for social change and activism who are ready to share their experience and approach
- people living and working in repressive environments who need a safe place for a productive respite

What are we looking for in your proposal?

Your Fellowship project proposal should aim to reflect and elaborate upon your current work or experience in your home country or region. You should demonstrate how participating in the fellowship programme will aid your work upon returning home, how you will share the knowledge and expertise gained during the fellowship, and how you plan to develop cross-country and regional collaborative projects and networks.

You are free to propose a Fellowship project on any topic, but some topics will be given higher priority in the selection process. More information can be found in the section *Priority Topics* below.

If selected as a PCSC fellow, you will be asked to commit to a specific project output before the start of your Fellowship. The Prague Civil Society Centre may also ask you to assist on our other projects or activities.

How to apply and the selection process

Applications must be made through the Prague Civil Society Centre website on the Fellowship [application page](#).

There are **two steps** to the application process. First, you must fill out the [application form](#). Next, you must send your CV to fellowships@praguecivilsociety.org.

You must complete both steps to be considered for the fellowship.

Make sure that you fill out the application form very carefully, without any mistakes or inconsistencies. The Fellowship programme is extremely competitive, and only the best candidates with the best profiles and applications will be chosen.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to a phone interview to discuss their project idea and motivation. Candidates will be notified by the end of November 2019 if they have been selected or not. We will provide updates on the selection process on the PCSC website.

Please send any questions regarding the application process to fellowships@praguecivilsociety.org. We will not be able to respond to questions after September 20.

Priority topics

Although we welcome proposals for any research topic or project, special consideration will be given to proposals related to our priority topics listed below. The applicant should have a proven record of accomplishment in the field of research proposed.

New modes of operation for civil society: How can civil society become less dependent on foreign donors and better cater to the needs of the community? How can the civil society sector become more sustainable? How can it survive in a repressive environment? How are crowdfunding, business models, philanthropy, and monetisation strategies relevant to the countries in question?

Youth programs and initiatives: How can youth be more actively included in society? How do we reduce youth marginalisation? How can young people be inspired to work or volunteer in the civic sector and become agents of positive change in their countries?

Media and propaganda: What is the state of the information space in the country in question? What kind of influence does local or foreign propaganda have? What tools are used to control the media and how can this be countered? What are the innovative media outlets already having an impact? How do exiled media operate outside repressive countries? What are the overarching propaganda narratives, and what tools, messages, channels and formats are used to convey them? How can civil society respond to and counter this?

Innovative use of “smart” technologies for effective civil society initiatives and activism: How can technology be used to transform society, spread civil society groups’ messages, and push for positive change?

Anticorruption initiatives: What are the successful anticorruption initiatives and investigative media projects in the region? How can the results of anticorruption investigations be used to mobilise the public to engage more with civil society?

Urban initiatives: How is public space used and how does it meet the needs of residents? How do we define and understand public and civic space in Eastern Europe and Central Asia? How can the public space be reclaimed by communities? What are the successful urban initiatives? Why were they successful? What hasn’t worked?

Online education: How can we improve access to free education online? Which initiatives have worked in the region and why? What

sustainable ideas are out there, ready to be developed? How do we best engage our audience for online civic learning?

State capture: How can we overcome kleptocratic and authoritarian regimes? What are the challenges and positive examples from the region? What are the prospects for the economy and democratic development in the oil- or resource-dependent countries? How can oligarchy be reformed or dismantled?

Conflict mongering and authoritarianism: What characterises the frozen and active conflicts in the region? How are these conflicts exploited to the benefit of authoritarian regimes? How is state-propagated nationalism used to mobilise society? How are threats of “extremism” used to legitimise increasingly repressive policies in some countries?

Shrinking space for civil society: How is civil society being suppressed and marginalised? What are the specifics of new laws, policies, defamation campaigns and other tactics used to muzzle and delegitimise civil society and independent media? How are civil society organisations and activists coping and responding? How can activism be sustained, capacity built and new spaces created for civic activism? How do regimes and governments co-opt, accommodate, corrupt, suppress or eliminate potential challengers?

Identity, nationalism and state building: What role does post-soviet nostalgia, historical myth and historical memory play in the construct of national identity? What are national identities built on and what role does nationalism play? What are the alternative foundations for national identity? How does state propaganda influence national identity?

Practical information

Travel to and from Prague. The Centre will arrange and cover the cost of the fellow's travel to and from Prague.

Duration and the location of the fellowship. The maximum length of the fellowship is three months. This cannot be extended. Fellowships take place in Prague.

Accommodation. The Centre provides modest and comfortable accommodation in apartments for the duration of the fellows' stay in Prague. Some fellows may be placed in a private room in a shared apartment.

Health insurance. If the fellow does not have travel health insurance, they must obtain an insurance policy for the duration of stay in Prague. The Centre will reimburse the cost of insurance, or purchase the insurance for the fellow.

Visa. Obtaining information about the visa process and ensuring that the visa is received in a timely manner is the responsibility of the fellow. There are different types of Schengen visas. Please bear in mind that if selected for a fellowship you have a limitation of stay in the Schengen area for a period of 90 days per 180 days. If you already have a partly used 90-day Schengen visa or visa-free stay (citizens of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia), then you will be able to use only the remaining unused number of days during your fellowship and you will not be able to prolong the visa or stay in the Czech Republic after you have used all 90 days. If you need a visa, the Centre will provide confirmation of accommodation, airplane tickets and a letter of invitation. You can calculate your remaining days with the [visa calculator on the europa.eu website](#).

Per diem. The Centre will pay a per diem of 500 CZK per day for the first three weeks and 400 CZK per day thereafter throughout the duration of the fellowship period. This provides a decent living for one person. The per diem should be spent on food, mobile phone services, public transport, admission fees to cultural events and other daily needs of the fellow (not including accommodation, as this is covered by PCSC separately). The Centre does not assume responsibility for all the expenditures a fellow can have during the stay in Prague beyond covering travel, visa, per diems and accommodation, and cannot be held responsible for any unforeseen expenses, such as broken laptops and damaged luggage.

Travel. Travel plans have to be communicated to the Centre in advance. Travel that is not related to the fellowship is not encouraged, and the fellow will not receive per diems for these travel days. Please bear in mind that traveling back to the country of origin for the purposes of a fellowship project or research is strongly discouraged. All research and preparation related to the fellowship

project which needs to be done in the country of the origin should be undertaken before the beginning of the fellowship. Any exception has to be agreed in advance.

Office space. Fellows will be provided with a shared office space next to the Centre. Each fellow will have a desk, access to the internet, printer and coffee/tea free of charge. Please bring your own personal computers; the Centre will not be able to provide you with one.

Project output. During their fellowship, fellows are expected to prepare a concrete project output such as an article, book chapter, or a presentation for a public or semi-public audience, a training workshop, etc. The project output should be proposed in the project plan and discussed with the Centre in advance. Project outputs are expected to be presented at the end of fellowship.

Examples of previous Fellows' projects

- An activist from Azerbaijan wrote his prison memoirs.
- The founder of an independent media outlet from Kyrgyzstan used the fellowship to learn from other media outlets forced to work in exile.
- A Russian LGBT activist and human rights defender spent time in Prague studying the Czech dissident movement and the writings of Czech philosopher Jan Patočka to rethink the concept of human rights and write several chapters of his book.
- A Kyrgyz lawyer used the fellowship to investigate successful philanthropy from the non-governmental sector in the Czech Republic and planned how to apply similar strategies in Kyrgyzstan.
- A researcher from Armenia looked at ways to transfer methods used by Czech civil society for domestic fundraising and policy influence to Armenia.
- A journalist from Russia conducted a comparative study of high school history books from several Eastern European and Central Asia countries. He also canvassed opinions about historic monuments in order to collect material for an animated series dealing with history, politics and propaganda.
- A Kazakh independent journalist spent the time in Prague researching repressive tools used against the media in Kazakhstan, and how exiled media can be part of the solution.
- A founder of one of the leading civil society organisations in Azerbaijan and former political prisoner worked on a paper that evaluated the negative impact of the growing repression of democratic institutions in Azerbaijan. This resulted in recommendations to the international community on how to prevent and reduce political repression in Azerbaijan.
- An Azerbaijani scholar used the fellowship in Prague to explore and compare civil society conditions under repression in Azerbaijan and Central Asia.
- A senior researcher from an independent Ukrainian think tank worked on several articles exploring the transformations

of Ukrainian national identity as a result of the conflict.

- A scholar from Belarus spent the fellowship exploring disputes concerning narratives of historical memory in Belarus.
- The director of one of Kazakhstan's leading human rights organisations worked on a paper that analysed the tools used by Kazakh authorities to reduce space for civil society.
- A project manager from Ukraine spent the time in Prague exploring philanthropy in the Czech Republic with the goal of introducing best practices in this field to Ukraine.
- Two researchers, one from Belarus and one from Azerbaijan, worked together to map successful urban initiatives in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia and Kazakhstan.
- An activist from Moldova researched the harmful impact of foreign aid on Moldovan civil society and researched positive examples from Moldova and other countries of how to empower a self-sustaining civil society.
- The founder and long-time director of a youth organisation from Kazakhstan used the fellowship to research and analyse new strategies and methods for working with young people in five countries: Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia.
- A Kyrgyz lawyer spent time in Prague writing a book about innovative business strategies for the civil society sector as a way of becoming independent from donors.