

Call for Applications: Non-Resident Fellowship Program

Transatlantic Dialogue on the Industrial Heartlands: Shaping the Future

Do you want to shape the industrial heartlands in the U.S. and Germany toward a better, greener, and more democratic future? Then come and join us on this important and grand mission. **Become a project fellow - a part of our community** - and contribute to **shaping the future of the industrial heartlands** with your expertise and passion! Our 16 non-resident fellows from the United States and Germany will be **at the heart of our new transatlantic dialogue project**.

At A Glance

Who are we looking for?

Young leaders, practitioners, and thinkers up until the age of 35 from Germany and the US, who are passionate about the industrial heartlands and interested in shaping a better greener, and more democratic future through transatlantic dialogue.

What do we offer?

You will become the representatives of this important initiative and join us on two week-long delegation trips through the industrial heartlands in the U.S. and Germany. Fellows receive a networked platform to publish and present policy briefs that showcase their work to audiences in both countries. There is no financial compensation.

How to apply?

Fill out the [application form](#), including two short essays on your interest and motivation to join the project. A jury of experts in transatlantic relations as well as in topics of eco and democracy in the industrial heartlands will short-list the most promising candidates. The eligibility criteria for the application can be found below.

How long is the fellowship?

The non-resident Fellowship starts in July 2023 and ends in the fall of 2025.

Eligibility Criteria

- You are a young professional with experience in
 - **Political grassroots work and public administration** (i.e. chiefs of staff, personal advisors to minister presidents or governors, state and local level politicians, city council members, etc.)
 - **Activist networks** (i.e. unions, international chambers of commerce, etc.)
 - **Local corporations and manufacturing companies** (i.e. entrepreneurs)
 - **Applied sciences** (i.e. social sciences, economics, etc.)
- You are a citizen of the United States or Germany under the age of 35

- You can commit to a **three-year Fellowship** that will include virtual work and road trips through the United States and Germany to visit and engage with innovative industrial heartlands
- You have excellent command of the English language (at least C1-level) as well as strong communication skills, both written and oral

The partner consortium especially encourages applications from persons belonging to groups or minorities that are structurally discriminated against. In case of identical qualifications, applicants from such groups or minorities will be favored.

Roles and Tasks

➤ Virtual Work Phases

During the virtual work phases, Project Fellows will work in two thematic working groups:

- **Climate, Work & Innovation:** How can old transportation systems, energy and communications infrastructure be modernised? What is the scope of investments in regional advanced manufacturing clusters? And can regions seed clean energy research and development in older industrial centres and support entrepreneurship with capital and business expertise? How can apprenticeships and work-based training be boosted in order to create more effective and affordable alternatives to college?
- **Perspectives for the Future, Respect & Participation:** How can the changes be navigated so that working people and communities in industrial heartlands feel activated rather than disregarded by politicians and democratic institutions? What are pathways to create a common vision and positive perspectives among people living in the industrial heartlands? How can the chasm between urban elites and people who dwell in smaller cities and towns in the countryside be bridged? Which narratives work in the industrial heartlands to bring forward a better, greener and more democratic future? How can policymakers strike a balance between investments in social and economic infrastructure?

Each working group will develop policy recommendations through a co-written impulse paper and policy paper. In addition, working group results will be multiplied via multimedia communication.

➤ Delegation Trips to Germany and the United States

To gather empirical evidence and to find inspiration, the Project Fellows will go on two delegation trips, in order to discover initiatives in the industrial heartlands on democracy, climate action, work, and innovation in both countries.

The Project Fellows will travel to the Rust Belt Region in the United States in the summer of 2024. In the summer of 2025, the Project Fellows will travel through the industrial heartlands of Germany. Project Fellows will cover the trips on their social media accounts. Both trips will be financially covered by the project's funds.

➤ **Active Role in Exchange and Dialogue Formats: Let the world see you!**

Project fellows will take an active role in the project's exchange and dialogue formats including a kick-off seminar, a large-scale conference, a dialogue seminar, and a wrap-up conference. This entails contributing to the conceptualization process as well as participating and/or speaking.

➤ **Communication**

Project Fellows should view themselves as learning, listening, observing, and reporting ambassadors of a greener and more democratic future in the industrial heartlands. They are expected to contribute to the **visibility of the project through external communication**. This may include social media postings, contributing to the podcast series, video elements (snippets, short films), and opinion pieces in regional and supra-regional media outlets.

Project Background

Over the last decade, the liberal world has been challenged at home by the rise of illiberal nationalism and abroad by authoritarian rulers contemptuous of democracy. But a confluence of events, including the failed Jan. 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol, Germany's *Zeitenwende* and global opposition to Vladimir Putin's brutal attack on Ukraine, suggests that **this could be a watershed moment for democratic societies**.

At this time of significant shifts in geopolitics a new economic paradigm is emerging in response to the polycrisis—the war in Ukraine, the climate catastrophe and the pandemic. Governments are pushing for new industrial and climate friendly policy agendas whilst strengthening democracies. Their urgent challenge now is to grapple more effectively with the **roots of the working class revolt** that's fueling right-wing nationalism across the West. For a generation, people living in the traditional industrial heartlands have been buffeted by a technological and services revolution, the decline of manufacturing, and the rise of a borderless global digital economy. Most people also feel disregarded by politicians and a political system that in their eyes is not working for them.

The result is **deepening inequality, ongoing political support for right-wing populists and a hollowing out of the middle class**. Political leaders' failure to grapple effectively with these trends has stirred simmering resentment among people who feel left behind, economically and culturally displaced, suspicious of globalisation and trade, and mistrustful of democratic institutions that aren't delivering for them. Yet, the dynamics behind this economic paradigm shift present opportunities to improve lives and strengthen democracy for regions, communities and people in the industrial heartlands.

This project and its partners from the U.S. and Germany are dedicated to creating new opportunities in old industrial heartlands. It will do so by forging a transatlantic dialogue and provide rigorous analysis seeking to develop political strategies and policy **solutions for a better, greener and more democratic future** in the "places that don't matter".

Contact

For questions of any kind, please contact industrialheartlands@progressives-zentrum.org.