

 **Call for Papers for ECSR AND IPS-BAS/ISH-LUH JOINT FALL SCHOOL**

## **Education and Employment in Europe, Sofia/Bulgaria, October 06-09, 2026**



The **European Consortium for Sociological Research (ECSR)** in collaboration with the **Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (IPS-BAS)** and the **Institute of Sociology at Leibniz University Hannover (ISH-LUH)** invites applications from doctoral students and early postdocs (up to 3 years after the PhD) from Central and Eastern European (CEE) and non-CEE countries to participate in the **2026 ECSR Fall School** in Sofia, Bulgaria.

### **The topic for the 2026 ECSR Fall School is Education and Employment in Europe**

There is a long tradition of sociological research into the interrelation of education and employment. For instance, it has been demonstrated how various types and levels of education (e.g. dropping out of school, lower vs. higher education, or the stratification, standardisation, and occupational specificity of vocational education), as well as labour market structures (e.g. labour market policy and the economic environment), are related to the quality of labour market access (e.g. smooth transitions vs. employment insecurities). It has been shown how these patterns are socially structured by social origin, gender, ethnicity, and migration history, resulting in gender segregation, as well as regional disparities at labour market entry.

Schools, universities and employers have been identified as important organisational and social contexts that structure the transition from education to work by providing or recognising degrees and occupational qualifications. Depending on the education systems and employment structures in a given region or country (e.g. the size of the informal economy), youth transitions can differ, resulting in different rates of youth unemployment and employment insecurity. For example, transitions from education to work tend to be slower and less straightforward in Eastern European and Mediterranean countries than in Nordic countries and those in 'Apprenticeship' countries (like DEU, AUT, CHE). The relationship between education and employment has also varied historically. Over the last few decades, for example, higher education has expanded and diversified. New occupations have emerged, while others have become redundant.



Different labour market segments have been affected in different ways by physical automation (robots) and cognitive automation (AI), and platform work has evolved. These changes, along with others, may have reconfigured social patterns of educational and occupational inequalities.

The aim of the **ECSR Fall School** is to bring together early-career and senior researchers from across Europe who are **committed to sociological research on the contemporary interrelationship between education and employment/work**. 18 to 20 doctoral students and early postdocs (up to 3 years after the PhD) will participate in the school. The event will include keynote lectures on key topics in the field, as well as the opportunity to present their work and have it discussed by leading scholars. Around half of the participants will be from Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries, and half from non-CEE countries. The ECSR Fall School welcomes both quantitative and qualitative sociologists.

Lectures will be given and presentations discussed by **Ioana Alexandra Horodnic** (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași), **Vassil Kirov** (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences), **Dominik Buttler** (Poznan University of Economics and Business), **Rebecca Ye** (Stockholm University), **Irene Kriesi** (Federal University of Vocational Education and Training, Switzerland), and **Michael Gebel** (University of Bamberg).

**The 2026 Fall School** will take place from **6–9 October 2026 in Sofia, Bulgaria** and is to be hosted by IPS-BAS. It will be organised by Petya Ilieva-Trichkova (IPS-BAS), Romyana Zheleva (IPS-BAS), Ogniana Glavoussanova-Mereteva (IPS-BAS), Christian Imdorf (IPS-BAS & ISH-LUH), and Christoph Bühler (ISH-LUH).

Applications have to be sent by email to [proskills2work@ips.bas.bg](mailto:proskills2work@ips.bas.bg) by 1 May 2026 and should include:

- An abstract of the paper that will be presented (up to 500 words)
  - A summary of the PhD thesis project or current research (up to 3 pages)
  - A brief CV (one page)
  - Eligible are young scholars from ECSR and non-ECSR member institutions.
- Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their applications by the end of May.

Admission to the international workshop is free of charge. Admitted students will be provided with hotel accommodation, all lunches and one social dinner. PhD students from Central and Eastern European countries may apply for their travel costs to Sofia to be covered. Other dinners and travel expenses to and from Sofia will not be covered.

#### **Questions can be directed at**

Petya Ilieva-Trichkova, [petya.ilieva@ips.bas.bg](mailto:petya.ilieva@ips.bas.bg) or  
Christian Imdorf, [c.imdorf@ish.uni-hannover.de](mailto:c.imdorf@ish.uni-hannover.de)



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