

“Cancel culture”, iconoclastic movements and cultural heritage: A minority rights perspective

Call for candidates

**Marie Skłodowska-Curie Week
(23-27 May 2022)
Eurac Research, Bolzano/Bozen (Italy)**

***NB:** Eurac Research organizes the MSC Week to offer postdoctoral researchers from across the globe the opportunity to work together with Eurac Research on their applications for the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship. During the MSC Week, researchers develop their fellowship proposal together with senior researchers from Eurac Research, learn from current MSCA Fellows in Eurac Research, and are trained by MSCA experts and an MSCA evaluator on the dos-and-don'ts of the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship proposal. After the MSC Week, the trainers accompany the researchers through the writing and fine-tuning of their fellowship proposals until the submission deadline.*

Recent acts of defacement of controversial monuments across the globe, coupled with heated discussions on “cancel culture”, have highlighted the politicisation of free speech and expression both in academia and beyond.

The underlying intensification of cultural contestation over issues related to the interpretation of the past can be associated with various social trends. This includes new conceptualizations of global justice and equality and the struggle for inclusion through the coexistence of multiple, often opposing, narratives in a globalized world (Frank & Ristic, 2020). In this context, material and immaterial symbols such as monuments, statues, historical sites, but also language, literature and pieces of art or music become focal points because of their embodiment of controversial pasts. As such, they may express the collective trauma or stigmatisation of a social group which in turn may provoke political tension, polarisation and conflict (Macdonald, 2009). The contestation of historic symbols is an essential element of freedom of expression and democracy in increasingly diverse contemporary societies, particularly by marginalized people (Bouvier & Machin, 2021, Bridges 2022). At the same time, the removal or modification of historic symbols, as well as instances of so-called “cancel culture” may also be interpreted as intolerance or fundamentalism, often by those whose heritage, reputation or privilege is at stake.

Against this background, the Institute for Minority Rights at Eurac Research is looking for a candidate for the Eurac MSC Week (23-27 May 2022 – <https://www.eurac.edu/en/research-support/marie-sklodowska-curie-week>) to investigate the ambiguous and intertwined roles of “cancel culture”, iconoclastic movements and cultural appropriation with minority rights and cultural heritage. In particular, the candidate for the Eurac MSC Week will look at how issues revolving around “cancel culture”, iconoclastic movements and cultural appropriation interplay with minority rights. Which dynamics trigger processes of fundamentalism and intolerance, particularly with regards to the memorialization of the past? How, if at all, can we balance freedom of expression and legitimate critique and contestation of historical symbols by minority groups with the prevention of conflicts and the promotion of cohesion between majorities and minorities? Which policies should be implemented to achieve this aim?

The selected candidate will have a background in law, anthropology, history, sociology, and/or political science.

The programme is open to PhD-degree holders who want to apply for the Postdoctoral Fellowship with Eurac Research as a Host. To be eligible for MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship, a researcher must hold a PhD degree, have maximum 8 years of research experience, and comply with the “mobility rule” (as defined in the [Work Programme](#)). For a detailed overview of the eligibility conditions of the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship grants, please also consult the [Guide for Applicants](#).

If interested, please send your research proposal (max. 500 words) and your academic CV, by **28 March 2022** to Roberta.Medda@eurac.edu. If your pre-application is accepted, you will then have to submit the following form (incl. CV, personal statement) by 3 April 2022: https://webassets.eurac.edu/31538/1645471633-msc-week-application-form_2022.pdf

Further information: <https://www.eurac.edu/en/research-support/marie-sklodowska-curie-week>