

GCE Research Grant

for a junior researcher interested in the governance of vocational education and training in Southeast Europe and the Black Sea Region

Many countries in Southeast Europe and the Black Sea region (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Turkey, and Ukraine) face similar structural challenges such as the threat of the middle-income trap, weak economic competitiveness, emigration, and population degrowth. Extensive reforms in their vocational and technical education (VET) governance systems are increasingly prioritised to achieve long-term economic (higher production, competitiveness, growth), social (education, inclusion, combating youth unemployment) and individual (labour market skills) goals. In the present context, VET governance is understood as the combination of binding and non-binding regulations, norms, negotiations, practices, and cooperation agreements that influence the decisions of a wide range of actors at individual, local, regional, national, and supranational levels to participate in VET. Together, they determine how the main tasks in VET governance are performed, namely

- 1) developing the VET system (e.g. VET reform strategies, VET legislation, VET governance bodies),
- 2) defining the content of VET (e.g. VET curricula, occupational standards, learning plans),
- 3) organising VET provision (e.g. school-based and company-based learning phases, training of teachers and company instructors, learning and training materials),
- 4) financing VET (e.g. training funds, subsidies, remuneration of VET students/apprentices),
- 5) matching demand and supply of VET (e.g. labour market analysis, VET marketing campaigns, career guidance, employment agencies),
- 6) assuring quality (e.g. examination, assessment, qualification).

The modernisation of the school-based, supply-driven VET governance systems in the countries in Southeast Europe and the Black Sea region is taking place at different speeds. First positive developments can be observed, but major challenges remain – especially in orienting VET towards the needs of employers, in developing stronger institutional capacities (e.g. of public VET bodies, private sector organisations, trade unions), and in dealing with post-socialist legacies (e.g. significant size of informal economies, low institutional trust, broken linkages between the world of work and the world of education). At the same time, global

trends like digitalisation and automation and accordingly the need for upskilling and lifelong learning opportunities, increased migration movements, and the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic all challenge the VET governance systems.

In order to increase our understanding of VET governance in this under-researched region, the Center for Governance and Culture in Europe (GCE) and the research project GOVPET (Governance of Vocational and Professional Education and Training) are jointly granting a research fellowship to a promising junior researcher from a research institute located in a country in Southeast Europe or in the Black Sea region to conduct innovative research on VET governance. The grant-holder will conduct independent research on VET governance, collaborate with GOVPET in research projects, and provide support in the organisation of a research conference. Applicants must be in their late PhD phase or have completed their doctoral programme in political science, economics, sociology, or education sciences. The grant is awarded for a funding period of one year and amounts to a maximum of 4'800 Euro. The funding period will start in January 2022 (or upon agreement). The executive board of the GCE and senior researchers from GOVPET will evaluate and select the candidates.

Application

Please send your academic CV, a motivation letter, copies of your diploma and grade transcripts, and one exemplary piece of academic writing (e.g. research article) to **gce-info@unisg.ch** by **14 November 2021**.