MERCATOR-IPC FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

The Istanbul Policy Center-Sabancı University-Stiftung Mercator Initiative invites academics, journalists, and professionals to apply for the Mercator-IPC Fellowship Program. The program aims to strengthen academic, political, and social ties between Turkey and Germany, as well as between Turkey and Europe, based on the premise that the acquisition of knowledge and the exchange of people and ideas are preconditions for meeting the challenges of a globalized world.

Mercator-IPC Fellows work at Istanbul Policy Center (IPC), an independent policy research institute with global outreach located in Karaköy, downtown İstanbul. IPC's mission is to foster academic research and its application to policy making. The Center is firmly committed to providing decision makers, opinion leaders, academics, and the general public with innovative and objective analyses of key domestic and foreign policy issues.

IPC offers Mercator-IPC Fellows access to a broad network of academics, civil society activists, and decision makers, as well as a unique platform for sound academic research to shape hands-on policy work. Fellows benefit from Sabancı University's exceptional intellectual capital and vast reserves of scientific knowledge.

WHO CAN APPLY?

In the 2026/27 round, Mercator-IPC Fellowships will be available for outstanding academics, journalists, practitioners, and professionals who have significant prior work experience. The fellows will be expected to work on academic and/or practical projects at IPC. **A Master's degree (or equivalent) is required for this position, but a PhD degree is strongly preferred. Applicants without a PhD degree will only be accepted if their work experience and expertise meet the program requirements according to the jury. Projects focusing on the German-Turkish nexus are likewise preferred. Applicants cannot apply for fellowships to fund their PhD dissertations.**

Additionally, institutions from Germany/Europe whose areas of work overlap with the priorities of the Program are invited to nominate candidates for the Fellowship program.

Fellowships are available for a period of six to twelve months and are predominantly, but not exclusively, granted to applicants from Germany and/or with a strong connection to German society. Unless the fellows are required to travel to complete their individual projects, they are encouraged to be physically present in Istanbul.

Short-term visiting fellowships are also available to practitioners from Germany/Europe (e.g., policy experts, civil servants, civil society workers, advisors to MPs, and policy officers working in EU institutions). The minimum duration of this type of fellowship is **one month.**

Project proposals can be of an academic or practical nature. However, in order to ensure the socio-political impact of fellowship work, applicants should also include a proposal for an outreach strategy, focusing on how the project results will be presented and discussed with policy makers, stakeholders, media, and/or the general public. Upon receiving the fellowship, the Coordination Team will be assisting you with the process of realizing your outreach strategy in terms of logistics and capacity.

The fellowship program is open to academics, journalists, practitioners, and professionals who work in one of the following two thematic areas: **EU/German-Turkish relations and climate change.**

EU/GERMAN-TURKISH RELATIONS

The Initiative and its fellowship program aim to give new impetus to the EU/German-Turkish partnership. Amid an era of global polycrisis and interconnected challenges, fostering continuous and open dialogue between Turkey and the EU remains essential. This collaboration is vital for addressing shared priorities, including countering terrorism, promoting peace and stability in neighboring regions, and developing joint strategies to navigate complex and overlapping crises effectively. Furthermore, in the midst of economic and foreign policy-related challenges, Turkey's role in preserving stability in the region is now more crucial than ever.

- European security and defense cooperation and its implications for EU-Turkey relations;
- Economic, trade and technology cooperation between the EU/Germany and Turkey in a shifting international order;
- Turkey's role in the wider European neighborhood and its importance in the EU's external actions and foreign policy;
- Energy security; connectivity projects and geopolitics of critical minerals;
- Emerging technologies, artificial intelligence, digital governance and avenues for Turkey-Europe cooperation;
- Geo-economics, industrial policy, global supply chains, and economic security;
- Migration, refugee return, and mobility governance in a changing global order;
- Turkey-Europe and China in the Global South.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Few issues necessitate international cooperation as strongly as the need to respond to the threat of climate change. The reduction of greenhouse gas emissions can only be accomplished through the joint efforts of national and local governments, businesses, academia, civil society groups, and individual citizens. In particular, the transformation of energy systems in Europe and elsewhere toward decarbonization is crucial for reducing greenhouse gases for mitigation and adaptation. The Mercator-IPC Fellowship Program aims to raise awareness among decision makers and the broader public of the threats posed by climate change. The particular focus of the program is on Turkey, where the issue of climate change has so far not received the necessary political and public attention.

The following subtopics are of interest to the Initiative:

- Analysis of the social and economic impacts of climate change mitigation and adaptation policies;
- Mechanisms for effective multi-level governance in climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- Obstacles to policy reform (in developing countries) and overcoming the alleged dichotomy of economic development and climate change mitigation policies;
- Mapping the impacts of climate change in Europe and Turkey;
- Decarbonization of the Turkish economy based on the Paris Agreement and Turkey's net-zero emissions target;
- Turkey's transition to a low-carbon energy and industrial systems (i.e., energy efficiency, renewable energy, grid flexibility, electrification, green hydrogen, zero-emission buildings, alternative technologies, etc.) in the European context;
- European Green Deal and Turkey: challenges and opportunities;
- Just transition;
- Adaptation policies and resilience to changing climate in Turkey in regard to food systems, water management, urban policies, health care, and nature (i.e. biodiversity, forests, etc).
- Climate finance;
- Gender and climate action;
- Climate diplomacy;
- International negotiations.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Candidates applying for the fellowship are invited to submit their applications at one of two stages. The first stage is designed to provide applicants with feedback on their eligibility for the program. Submission at this stage is NOT obligatory. Applicants who do not have any questions on their eligibility can directly move to the second stage. In the first stage, applicants are required to submit the following documents before **March 9, 2026**:

a) A cover letter;

b) A completed application form;

c) A CV including a list of all publications.

Candidates applying at the first stage will receive notification of their eligibility from the Mercator-IPC Fellowship Program Team within two weeks of their submission. Eligible candidates will be invited to move on to the second stage, at which time they must submit the below-listed documents before **April 20, 2026**. Applicants who are sure of their eligibility and are applying in the final stage must also submit **all documents (a–h)** by this deadline.

d) Copies of relevant academic transcripts and/or diplomas (no translations needed);

e) A written proposal of the applicant's project. This proposal must include:

- Discussion of the research/project topic, relevant research questions/project objectives, and an explanation of the academic and political relevance of the project;
- An overview of the state of research or similar projects in the field;
- An overview of the theoretical and methodological approaches to be applied in the project (if relevant);
- Key resources or background information related to the topic.
- The proposal should not exceed five pages (2 cm margin, 1.5 spaced, 12pt Times New Roman font).

f) A second written proposal for an outreach strategy focusing on how the project results will be presented and discussed with policy makers, stakeholders, media, and/or the general public. This proposal must include:

- An outline of the format of the outreach activity and time frame,
- A description of the target group, political relevance, and predicted impact of the outreach strategy,
- A budget plan and a list of possible partner institutions.
- The proposal should not exceed two pages (2 cm margin, 1.5 spaced, 12pt Times New Roman font).
  If the fellowship project described under section e is of a practical nature and already contains a public outreach strategy, it is not necessary to attach a second proposal.

g) A timeline of the proposed project;

h) Two letters of recommendation from professors or employers.

Candidates applying for the **short-term visiting fellowship** should submit the following documents:

a) A cover letter;

b) A CV;

c) A written proposal with a short description of a project designed for public outreach,
The proposal should not exceed two pages (2 cm margin, 1.5 spaced, 12pt Times New Roman font).

including:

- An outline of the format of the outreach activity and time frame,
- A description of the target group, political relevance, and predicted impact of the outreach strategy,
- A budget plan and a list of possible partner institutions.

All applications must be submitted in the form of one single PDF document, and documents must be in English (incomplete applications will not be considered).

SELECTION CRITERIA

Mercator-IPC Fellows will be selected by an international jury consisting of leading experts in the two thematic areas. In choosing applicants, the jury will place particular emphasis on the following criteria:

- **Academic and professional merit** based on the applicant's publications and work experience;
- **Academic and political relevance** of the applicant's project to one of the two thematic areas;
- General impact of the project on **EU-Turkey** and especially **German-Turkish relations**;
- **Applicant's connection to German society**;
- **Coherence and feasibility** of the applicant's project;
- Value of the project's **public outreach** dimension;
- Applicant's **language skills**.

GRANT

Mercator-IPC Fellows will receive a monthly payment of up to EUR 2,700 (net) and a travel allowance of up to EUR 1,500. Fellows may be entitled to additional allowances. Please see the program guidelines in the link below for further details.

The deadline for the first stage is **March 9, 2026.* ****

Candidates will receive notification of their eligibility within this time frame and are invited to submit the remaining documents. The deadline for the second stage is **April 20, 2026.**

The fellowship begins on October 1, 2026.

Please send your completed applications in **one single PDF document** by email to **Program Coordinator, Dr. Pelin Oğuz** (see below for contact details).

All applicants will receive a notice of receipt by email. Applicants are responsible for submitting complete applications. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

*There is no deadline for the short-term visiting fellowship. Applications can be submitted at any time throughout the year. The evaluation of the applicants will be first assessed by the partners of the Program, then selected applicants will be called for an interview. Each application will be assessed individually within six weeks of submission.

**Institutions should nominate candidates until March 9, 2026. Nominated candidates will proceed to the final stage of the application process where they will submit the required documents (items a to h mentioned above) and will be called for an interview.

For further questions, please contact:

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