



Postdoctoral position for a researcher in social sciences (3 years full-time, compliant with international mobility condition)

We are recruiting a **postdoctoral fellow** to join our team based at the *Université Libre de Bruxelles* (ULB) in Brussels. The fellow will contribute to the research project entitled 'Rethinking work beyond productivism from labour law and its uses' (*RethinkingWork*).

About the project:

This research is funded by an ERC Starting Grant awarded to Elise Dermine, professor at the *Université Libre de Bruxelles* and financed between 2025 and 2030. In the context of the green transition, the project aims to develop concrete trajectories and public policies to emancipate work from productivism, and to better support activities with eco-social value. The proposed trajectories will be based on a European and comparative study of labour law and its social uses.

About your role:

The successful candidate will be tasked with developing a typology of the post-productivist dimension of national labour law systems, drawing on clustering methods and the results of the European comparative survey. In collaboration with Elise Dermine, he or she will also carry out a foresight exercise that will aim to identify the risks and opportunities associated with potential trajectories through participatory workshops with European stakeholders (including DG EMPL, European social partners and European environmental movements). He or she will also support and/or lead on the following activities: organising national and international conferences and seminars, writing scientific articles, coordinating a special issue or book, and carrying out administrative tasks related to the research project.

Your profile:

We are seeking a postdoctoral **fellow trained in sociology, political science, economy or another relevant discipline**, with **experience in comparative social policies** and **skills in clustering methods**.

⇒ Required qualifications and criteria:

- You hold a PhD in social sciences or can demonstrate that you will hold it by the end of September 2026.
- You will have been holding your PhD for a maximum of 8 years by 1 September 2026.
- You have not been living or carrying out your main activity (employment, studies, etc.) in Belgium for more than 24 months during the 3 years immediately preceding 1 September 2026 (international mobility condition).
- You have an excellent knowledge of written and spoken English.



⇒ ***Desirable skills and professional experience:***

- You have experience in comparative social policies and skills in clustering methods.
- If you have experience in foresight methodologies, this is an advantage.
- If you have experience in collaborating with stakeholders at the EU level (DG EMPL, European social partners and/or European environmental movements), this is an advantage.
- You enjoy working in a team and have experience of successfully managing several projects at once.
- You have excellent written and verbal communication skills.

What we offer:

A three-year full-time postdoctoral fellowship (gross monthly amount indexed as of March 2026: €4,4599,34/net monthly amount: €3,178.71). The fellowship is planned to start on November 1, 2026 and will run until 31 October 2029 (start date can be adjusted depending on the preferences of the recruited candidate).

During these three years, you will contribute to a European research project in close and sustained collaboration with an interdisciplinary team composed of Elise Dermine (principal investigator), Agathe Osinski (postdoctoral researcher), Juliette van Ypersele (PhD researcher) and Valérie Coolen (PhD researcher). Our team is based at the Centre for Public and Social Law. We offer an attractive and stimulating work environment, with committed and highly qualified people. As a research centre, we attach great importance to a pleasant and welcoming working environment. In recent years, our team of PhD and post-doctoral students has grown considerably, and we take great care to ensure their development both within our centre and in their subsequent professional careers. In your day-to-day work, you will report to Professor Elise Dermine, but you will also contribute to the life of the centre.

To submit your application:

We welcome applications from candidates who fulfill the required qualifications and criteria listed above. In your application that must be written in English, please include the following items:

1. A detailed CV,
2. A letter demonstrating interest, motivation and qualifications for the project (maximum three pages),
3. A certified copy of your doctorate diploma,
4. A letter of reference from an academic supervisor,
5. A summary of your thesis.

Applications must be sent by e-mail to Elise Dermine (elise.dermine@ulb.ac.be) by 21 August 2026, 23.59 CET, at the latest.

For more information about the research project an environment, please see the description on the next page. If you have further questions, please contact Elise Dermine (elise.dermine@ulb.be).

More information about the *RethinkingWork* project

In the face of the ecological crisis, it is essential to rethink work beyond the traditional productivist model. However, current research on the future of work is developed at a highly conceptual and abstract level, and its results are therefore not very actionable. To think about the future of work, the *RethinkingWork* project therefore proposes to start from present institutions, and uses, of labour law that already deviate from the dominant paradigm of productivism, to then develop, by extrapolation, **concrete and plausible trajectories and policy proposals for the future of work.**

The project is divided into three Work Packages. Through a European comparative legal survey (10 countries), **WP1** aims at identifying and classifying national labour law resources that secure non-productivist time-spaces for the benefits of individuals, i.e. places and moments that can be dedicated by individual to activities with social or ecological value, independently of their economic productivity. **WP2** then turns to social uses of labour law and investigates, through empirical in-depth case studies (in FR, NL and BE), how individuals engaged in eco-social activities develop strategic uses of labour law in order to secure time and resources for these activities, and thereby push back the productivist limits of labour law. Building on results of WP1 & WP2, **WP3** will outline plausible and desirable evolutions in national systems of labour law to emancipate work from productivism, and better support activities with eco-social value. These developments will be supported by rigorous legal arguments, informed by the extensive socio-economic data collected throughout the WPs. Unlike the first two WPs, this WP thus goes beyond a descriptive approach, by exploring potential for expansion and upscaling.

The fellow will contribute primarily to WP3 by building **a typology of the post-productivist dimension of national systems of labour law**, based on a limited number of significant variables derived from WP1 taxonomy of labour law institutions supporting non-productivist time-spaces. Using scaling methods, he or she will also situate the 10 States under survey in WP1 on the variables to examine the possible **emergence of clusters**. Based on the variables selected to highlight the differences and similarities in States' current approach to supporting non-productivist time-spaces, he or she will participate in outlining, for each of the clusters and ideal-types defined in the previous steps, the **possible ideal-type trajectories** that can be followed by states with a view to reconceptualizing work beyond productivism. For each of these trajectories, we will highlight ideal-type measures that support the development of non-productivist time-spaces. Finally, in collaboration with the PI, he or she will be responsible to carry out the **participative foresight process** aiming at documenting **the risks and opportunities of each trajectory**. This process will unfold in three steps: literature analysis, interviews with social scientists and economists, and participative workshops with EU stakeholders.

More information on the research environment

You will be joining the Centre for Public and Social Law of the Faculty of Law and Criminology of the Université Libre de Bruxelles, which is located on the Solbosch campus, 20 minutes from the centre of Brussels. It is a dynamic centre that brings together a large number of researchers in human rights law, constitutional and administrative law, social security law and labour law, as well as researchers in sociology and philosophy. It is the ideal place to conduct research into the role of social law in the ecological transition. On the one hand, it brings together many researchers specialising in the various branches of social law and, on the other, it has several members who have recently undertaken to develop research on the relationship between law and the ecological transition.