

LADENBURG, SEPTEMBER 15, 2022

Call for applications for a cooperative project of the Daimler and Benz Foundation “Historical Narratives in Europe between Conflict and Dialog”

Over the next few years, the Daimler and Benz Foundation will be supporting the topic of “Historical Narratives in Europe between Conflict and Dialog” in its *Ladenburg Research Networks* format and will be providing funding of up to 500,000 euros per year (for a maximum term of three years) for such a Research Network. Independent research group leaders (professors, junior professors, postdoctoral researchers) from universities and non-profit extra-university research institutions are eligible to apply.

1. Description of the research topic

With its *Ladenburg Research Networks* format, the Foundation addresses significant social trends. At a time when nationalistic historical narratives are spreading in Europe, the Foundation would like to support a collaborative project that points out ways of defusing the conflict potential of contested historical perspectives and to initiate open dialog regarding antagonistic narratives. The project is to focus on Europe; it is not limited to conflicts between states, but can also address controversies within societies. International cooperation is expressly encouraged.

1.1 Challenge/Motivation

Historical narratives may involve the glorification of one’s own nation, ethnicity, etc., and intensify enemy stereotypes. Even in Europe, where these had long appeared to be on the decline, they are now once more being successfully instrumentalized by populist movements and authoritarian governments. Among other things, they are intended to legitimize a renunciation of European integration and, more recently, even territorial claims and war. This development poses particular

challenges for the historical, cultural, and social sciences. Their task is not only to critically comment on and to provide enlightenment regarding political instrumentalization of history, but also to lay the foundations for shared historical narratives. In view of this responsibility, projects are to be funded that aim both to critically assess initiatives that have arisen to date, and to develop new ideas, concepts, and formats.

1.2 Focus of the call for applications

The call for applications sets out to encourage project ideas of an interdisciplinary nature from the fields of history, cultural studies, and the social sciences. Participation of foreign project partners is expressly welcomed. The analyses should focus on the tense relationship between historical narratives, based on methodology which can be either empirical-analytical or be directed towards the development of practical approaches.

While public interest is currently concentrating on the antagonistic historical narratives of Eastern Europe, the European focus of the call for applications also extends to other parts of the continent, such as historical accounts that are intended to substantiate aspirations for independence in Western Europe. The German experience of striving to overcome antagonistic and divisive historical narratives may also be addressed, but should not be presupposed as a normative model.

While conflictual historical narratives need not be empirically false in their entirety, they are substantially directed against external and/or internal “enemies” and are politically instrumentalized for this purpose. Shared narratives, on the other hand, do not primarily aim at consensus or a leveling of controversy, but are based on dialogue and a plurality of perspectives. Ideally, the methodological standards of historical scholarship allow open-ended discourse and understanding, but cannot hope to achieve widespread acceptance either in the political sphere or in the media. Where freedom of opinion and scholarship are restricted and historical narratives are rigorously prescribed, the search for shared narratives and multi-perspective memories is difficult and risky. In addition to previous research projects, this call for proposals therefore also explicitly encourages unconventional and untested ideas and formats.

Funding may focus for example on:

- possibilities and limitations of cooperative bi- or multinational school textbook projects
- controversy regarding “legislation of history” that legally sanctions historical narratives
- bi- and multinational initiatives from civil society to reassess history and enable differently perceived memories
- contrastive analysis of narratives in museums, memory rituals, and popular culture

2. Description of the funding format

The *Ladenburg Research Networks* funding format comprises a research project normally funded for a period of three years, the findings of which are published. Under the leadership of a scientific coordinator who assumes the function of spokesperson within the Network, a research topic specified by the Foundation (in this case: “Historical Narratives in Europe between Conflict and Dialog”) is jointly investigated by several research groups at different scientific institutions in Germany and abroad. The members of a Research Network act with a high degree of freedom, autonomously determine the course of their research program, and come together for regular meetings on the Foundation’s premises.

The Foundation primarily finances positions for doctoral candidates as well as travel funds; consumables can only be funded to a very limited extent. Financing of basic equipment, overheads, or administrative costs cannot be applied for. The position of coordinator can only be financially supported if the applicant actively participates in the research activities of the Network. The *Ladenburg Research Networks* are fundamentally open to academics from all disciplines.

3. Applications

The application and evaluation occur as a two stage process: The Daimler and Benz Foundation initially receives project outlines for collaborative projects (not individual projects) in German or English by e-mail (info@daimler-benz-stiftung.de). Following a pre-selection process and initial review, individual applicants are invited by the Foundation to submit full proposals for assessment.

3.1 Application outline (1st stage)

Draft proposals may be submitted up until December 1, 2022.
These should include the following information:

- a) Data of the applicant (scientific coordinator of the consortium; name, function, institution, address, contact details)
- b) Project title and description (max. 3 A4 pages)
- c) Requested budget
- d) List of participating scientists and institutions

3.2 Preliminary assessment by the Foundation

Following receipt, the project outlines are reviewed by the Foundation. This process can take up to four weeks; we ask you to refrain from making inquiries to the Foundation during this phase.

3.3 Full application (2nd stage)

Following a positive preliminary review, the successful applicants are invited by the Foundation to submit a detailed full application. In addition to the information provided in the project outline, this full application should include the following information:

1. Detailed description of the project, with information on the current state of research and context of the planned project (max. 20 A4 pages)
2. Information concerning the relevance of the project in the given context of the call
3. Details of all project participants (co-applicants, project management, cooperation partners, co-financers, etc.)
4. Detailed financial plan
5. Time-line and overview of key milestones

The full application, with all attachments, can only be submitted via the Foundation's online portal. When registering, please note that only persons previously registered in the application portal can access the application data, submit applications, and receive e-mail notifications. It is therefore necessary for applicants responsible for a project to register themselves or, where appropriate, to appoint an employee to set up a user account in the respective name and to provide an e-mail address.

3.4 Evaluation by the Foundation

Following receipt, the full proposal is reviewed internally by the Foundation and evaluated with the assistance of external experts.

3.5 Final decision by the Board of Directors and management

The final decision regarding the full proposal is made by the Executive Board and the Foundation management.

4. Contact

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Foundation's Managing Director, Dr. Jörg Klein.

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