

PhD Student (4 years fixed-term, 1,0 FTE) Open external – Erasmus University Rotterdam

## **Job Description**

### **Research Theme “Sustainable Agriculture: Agribusiness and its Alternatives”**

We seek an interdisciplinary doctoral researcher in law and philosophy to contribute to the research theme “Sustainable Agriculture.” This research theme is led by two core faculty members of the Dynamics of Inclusive Prosperity Initiative.

The health and flourishing of food systems and distribution of healthy food to all members of populations worldwide is a fundamental cornerstone of inclusive prosperity. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and extensive research indicate that addressing the questions of how food is grown, where it is distributed, and finding a plurality of local options to agricultural production are essential to ensuring food security for all.

This research theme contains two parts. The critical investigation examines the historical, economic, legal, and political components that have created an agricultural sector progressively requiring increased inputs controlled by a small group of transnational corporations. Review of current agribusiness practices and how they came into being will focus on the history and consequences of dependence upon pesticides and herbicides such as glyphosate and atrazine, the proliferation and rationale for mass adoption of genetically modified organisms, and the role of industry in events such as environmental disaster, industrial animal farming, land grabbing, and path-dependent policies disallowing regionally-providing production. This analysis questions whether the goal of short-term profit maximization can be compatible with the tenets of sustainable agriculture.

The second element of the theme surveys the tenability of organic agriculture, regional food production and markets, and low- or no-exogenous input agriculture (such as permaculture). In comparing agricultural practices that ascribe to non-instrumental values and various other decentralized yet coordinated methods of meeting food security needs, the project aims at distilling best practices for transitioning unsustainable food production to a matrix of agricultural actors able to meet the food security gap, especially in developing countries.

The PhD researcher will develop her or his own research agenda in accordance with these two research aims under the supervision of both faculty members, and will actively shape the direction of the larger research project.

### **The Doctoral Researcher is Expected To**

- Conduct original interdisciplinary research on the research theme, co-authoring scientific articles to be published in leading journals in social science, law, politics, political theory, and applied philosophy, on questions regarding issues such as pesticide regulation, agricultural safety, environmental justice, history of agriculture, and sustainable agricultural practices;
- Disseminate research at international academic conferences in law, social science, and philosophy as well as at interdisciplinary workshops and events;
- Co-organize events and disseminate research in the public domain;
- Collaborate closely with core faculty of the Erasmus Dynamics of Inclusive Prosperity Initiative, as well as researchers in the Erasmus School of Law and researchers at the Erasmus School of Philosophy;
- Complete the necessary work (including courses) for earning a doctoral degree at Erasmus University Rotterdam.

## Requirements

### **The successful candidate will have:**

- Knowledge in the project area
- A Master degree in one (or more) of the following disciplines: law, political science, philosophy, sociology, geography or similar field (or proof of being able to obtain the Master degree by the starting date of the contract)
- Technical skills to research both data sets and conduct interviews; preferably trained in mixed methods;
- Fluency in both spoken and written English;
- Ambition, energy, and flexibility;
- Ability to produce excellent quality work;
- Keen interest – and possibly experience – in multidisciplinary social science research on law, regulation and governance.

### **Conditions of employment**

100% of this position is dedicated to the “Sustainable Agriculture” research and the related (course) to obtain the PhD. The successful candidate is expected to start between June 1, and September 1, 2020. The student must be physically based or relocate to Rotterdam. A full-time, **four-year contract** with Erasmus University Rotterdam will be offered. The initial contract will be for one year (1.0 fte). If you have given sufficient proof of your abilities, the temporary contract will be renewed for a further three years. The work conditions are in accordance with the Collective Labour Agreement of Dutch Universities (CAO NU). The salary is **€ 2,325 gross per month during the first year, which will increase annually up to € 2,835 gross per month in the third year**. In addition, EUR pays an 8% holiday allowance and an end-of-year payment of 8.3% and offers excellent secondary benefits.

### **Employer**

#### **Erasmus University Rotterdam**

The (EUR), named after Rotterdam-born humanist and theologian Erasmus, is a research university with a strong international orientation and a pronounced social focus, both in its education and research activities. On the lively, modern campus, more than 28.000 students and scholars of more than 100 nationalities are constantly encouraged to develop their talents and meet their ambition. Our more than 2700 scientists and employees work together with all our students to solve challenges faced by global society, drawing their inspiration from the consistently dynamic and cosmopolitan city of Rotterdam. The academic education offered at our faculties is intensive, engaging and strongly focused on practical application. We increasingly perform our research in multidisciplinary teams, which are closely interwoven with international networks. In terms of research impact and the quality of its degree programmes, EUR competes with the foremost universities in Europe, which is reflected in its consistent top-100 position worldwide in most major universities rankings. Erasmus University Rotterdam's key values are daring, curiosity, social involvement, breaking new ground and striving for success

### **About the Departments**

#### **Erasmus School of Law (ESL)**

Erasmus School of Law (ESL) employs 490 members of staff and is attended by around 5000 students. The fundamental premise underlying academic research conducted at Erasmus School of Law is that law cannot be considered in splendid isolation or as an end in itself. It is embedded in an economic and social context that shapes law. At the same time, law itself shapes society and defines economic relationships. In line with this vision, our mission is to conduct innovative research on the function of law in its economic and social context. Erasmus School of Law is committed to promoting international and interdisciplinary research, as shown by its participation in several international research collaborations. The PhD programmes at Erasmus School of Law are also firmly embedded in international networks. Erasmus Graduate School of Law is part of the Association of Transnational Law School (ATLAS), which aims to bring together talented doctoral students in the field of law.

### **Erasmus School of Philosophy**

The Erasmus School of Philosophy has research strengths in a number of different areas of philosophy, including analytic, continental, bioethics, and environmental philosophy. It offers a three-year bachelor programme in philosophy, a one-year master programme in philosophy and a two-year research master programme in philosophy and economics. Moreover, the Faculty offers a double degree (honours) undergraduate programme for students from other faculties at the Erasmus University. In total the Faculty has about 500 students and 20 staff members.

### **Erasmus Initiative 'Dynamics of Inclusive Prosperity'**

The Erasmus Initiative 'Dynamics of Inclusive Prosperity' focuses on enabling as many people as possible to benefit from increasing prosperity, while minimizing the harms in achieving these aims. Increased prosperity requires constant coordination of the changing needs and values of governments, businesses, citizens and entrepreneurs. In order to chart this dynamic field, scholars from Erasmus School of Law, Rotterdam School of Management and the Erasmus School of Philosophy work in multidisciplinary partnership.

### **To Apply**

The application, written in English, consists of the following documents:

- Letter of motivation/cover letter (2 pages maximum)
- CV
- Masters and Bachelors transcripts (including all grades obtained) (if you have not yet obtained the Master diploma, but expect to do so by the end of the current academic year, please include a list of available transcripts and a declaration from your Programme coordinator that you are expected to obtain your diploma)
- Two letters of recommendation
- A two-page A-4 research proposal outline addressing how you plan to contribute to the the research theme

Please send the complete application packet to Remi van der Leer: [inclusiveprosperity@eur.nl](mailto:inclusiveprosperity@eur.nl) by March 30, with the subject: "PhD position Sustainable Agriculture"

Please note that if you are selected for an interview, interviews will take place on May 13, 2020 and you may be informed on short notice. Interviews may be conducted via videoconference.

**Additional information**

For further questions, prospective applicants can contact Prof. Alessandra Arcuri, [arcuri@law.eur.nl](mailto:arcuri@law.eur.nl) or Dr. Yogi Hale Hendlin, [hendlin@esphil.eur.nl](mailto:hendlin@esphil.eur.nl).