



VACANCY NOTICE – 2022-SVQ-B6-FGIV-022001¹

Scientific Project Officers – Algorithmic Transparency – Research

Type of contract	Member of the European Commission's contract staff, Function Group IV (article 3b of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants)
Duration of contract	36 months (renewable up to maximum 6 years)
Number of vacancies available	3
Area	Algorithmic transparency, Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence
Place of employment	Seville (ES), Ispra (IT) or Brussels (BE) ² Please indicate in your application your preferred place(s) of employment.
Indicative basic salary	3,710.50 € - 5,374.44 € (applicable as of 1 st of January 2022) For more detailed information please consult: Working Conditions .

WE ARE

The [Joint Research Centre \(JRC\)](#) is the science and knowledge service of the European Commission: our mission is to support EU policies with independent evidence throughout the whole policy cycle.

The current vacancy is with the newly formed **European Centre for Algorithmic Transparency (ECAT)**, which, through its scientific and technical expertise and analyses, will reinforce the European Commission's supervisory role in the context of the **EU Digital Services Act (DSA)** – in close collaboration with the Directorate General for Communication Networks, Content and Technology ([DG CONNECT](#)). The ECAT will be established in the second half of 2022 and will be located **in three JRC sites (Seville, Ispra and Brussels)**.

The **EU Digital Services Act (DSA)** is the world's first platform regulation that seeks to comprehensively address the most pressing societal risks emerging from the use of online platforms. Amongst other challenges, it focuses on tackling the dissemination of illegal content, goods and services online, protecting freedom of expression, and addressing disinformation.

¹ The same vacancy has been published with ESRA reference number: 2022-IPR-B6-FGIV-022000 (for Ispra) and 2022-BRU-B6-FGIV-021999 (for Brussels). Please apply to this vacancy only one time.

² Being posted in other sites of the JRC (Petten, NL, or Geel, BE) can be considered as an option upon request of the candidate.



It imposes obligations for online intermediaries and platforms (e.g. online marketplaces, social networks, content-sharing platforms, app stores, and online travel and accommodation platforms) according to their role, size and impact in society. It seeks to empower users of digital services – for example by regulating advertising and recommender systems on online platforms – and to protect them, by imposing obligations on digital services and holding them accountable through an unprecedented transparency mechanism.

Since a wider reach is coupled with the most severe risks, very large platforms and search engines with a user base of more than 45 million monthly average users (representing around 10% of the EU population) bear special obligations. Most prominently, they will be subject to a supervised risk management obligation and will need to adapt their service, their systems and their algorithms to address the societal risks they may pose. They will be subject to external independent auditing and will be under public scrutiny from civil society, vetted researchers and others.

This adaptive and anticipatory legal framework needs strong regulatory supervision and cutting-edge competence within the regulators. The European Commission will lead the supervision and enforcement of obligations for the largest platforms and search engines. This vacancy is part of the Commission's efforts to strengthen its capability and prepare for the enforcement of the rules. The Regulation was proposed by the European Commission in December 2020 and should enter into force in the last quarter of 2022.

We offer:

- a job in a **dynamic, multidisciplinary research field** at the cutting edge of algorithmic systems transparency and trustworthy artificial intelligence, with a tremendous societal impact in Europe and beyond;
- a unique opportunity to **help make the online space safer and more transparent** for all Europeans and to work hands-on on some of the **most exciting and complex challenges brought by online platforms**;
- a family-friendly working environment, with online collaboration and occasional travel for on-site investigations on the premises of online platforms and cooperative work with colleagues in Brussels, Seville or Ispra.

WE PROPOSE

The jobholder will join an interdisciplinary and multicultural team of researchers working in the ECAT and more broadly contribute to the JRC's research portfolio on Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence and algorithmic transparency. S/he will work in close collaboration with a wide range of partners, in particular legal and policy experts in the enforcement units of the European Commission, in DG CONNECT, external researchers and scientists, and other various stakeholders in EU Member States and civil society organisations.

The jobholder will work at the intersection between scientific research and policymaking. On the research side, s/he will contribute to establishing a research roadmap and carry out independent research in the area of online platforms' and online search engines' algorithms. This will include e.g. defining methodologies for testing risk mitigation measures and for ensuring fairness, transparency, human oversight and social well-being, and for analysing the impact of the use of algorithms in society, including on fundamental rights. On the policy side, s/he will support the ECAT's activities on the implementation and enforcement of the DSA, in close collaboration with other Commission services, other scientists and stakeholders/experts in the EU Member States and civil society organisations.



The work may involve:

- research on methodologies for ensuring fairness, transparency, explainability and human oversight of algorithms;
- collecting, processing and analysing data from various sources to assess the opportunities, risks and socio-economic impact of algorithms;
- defining methodologies for the documentation, evaluation and auditing of algorithms;
- providing scientific support to the implementation and enforcement of the Digital Services Act;
- closely collaborating with colleagues involved in investigations of online platforms;
- engaging and interacting with stakeholders and experts in the aforementioned areas, including algorithm auditing;
- contributing to briefings and delivering input on short-term requests from key partners (under the supervision of responsible team leader);
- nurturing a network of international researchers and research centres, including by drafting scientific publications and reports for a variety of audiences (experts/scientists, policy makers, the general public);
- defining and following up external studies or service contracts.

WE LOOK FOR

We are looking for **researchers** in the area of **algorithms in online platforms and search engines**, including for **moderation and recommender systems**.

Highly motivated outstanding candidates with a keen interest in supporting EU digital policies should have the **following experience/skills (essential)**:

- A university degree and at least 3 years relevant research experience in computer science, data science, artificial intelligence or another field relevant to the position, ideally with a focus on algorithmic design and auditing.
- Very good analytical, drafting and presentational skills, a strong sense of initiative and the ability to work both autonomously and in a team.
- Very good (C1) knowledge of English.

Any of the following skills and experience would be **desirable**:

- A PhD (doctoral diploma) in computer science, data science, artificial intelligence or another field relevant to the position
- Research track record demonstrated by scientific publications in the area of algorithmic decision-making, addressing concerns such as fairness, transparency, explainability, human oversight and impact.
- Practical experience on online platforms' algorithmic decision-making, such as recommender systems or search engines, with a focus on its evaluation from a system-centric and/or user-centric perspective.
- Experience working within interdisciplinary teams, following reproducibility practices and leading community initiatives.



HOW TO APPLY

If you are **already on a valid CAST FGIV reserve list**, or you **have already applied to one of the calls below**, you can directly submit your application at <http://recruitment.jrc.ec.europa.eu/?type=AX>.

If not, before applying to this position, **you must register** for one of the two following:

- the [Call for Expressions of Interest | EU Careers \(europa.eu\)](#) (CAST Permanent FGIV), which is used by a wide range of organisations (institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the European Union), or
- the [specialised call for researchers](#) (JRC Call COM/1/2015/GFIV – Research), which is mainly used by the JRC.

Note that each of the calls above has **different minimum eligibility requirements and different selection tests**.

The JRC cultivates a workplace based on respect for other people and the environment, and embraces non-discriminatory practices and equality of opportunity. In case of equal merit, preference will be given to the gender in minority.