

# Call for Papers

Third Annual ValEUs Conference

## Valeus, Democracy and EU Foreign Policy. Paths to a New Policy Agenda

Sept. 29 – Oct. 2, 2026

European University Viadrina  
Frankfurt (Oder), Germany

The international system is increasingly characterized by shifts in political, economic, and social structures, which challenge state stability and carry significant implications for foreign policy decision-making. In this context, the European Union must navigate an increasingly complex and volatile global landscape. A critical dimension of this process is the role of values in EU foreign policy. Central to the EU's external relations is its commitment to promoting democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. However, in scenarios marked by state fragility, these normative principles are often tested by pragmatic considerations, including the pursuit of stability, security, or strategic alliances.

This call for papers seeks contributions that explore how the EU reconciles its normative ideals with the political realities of engaging with fragile or authoritarian regimes and assess how this balance shapes the effectiveness and legitimacy of EU foreign policy.

### Key dates

**April 30, 2026:** Submission of abstracts

**May 15, 2026:** Notification of acceptance

**Sept. 29 – Oct. 2, 2026:** Third Annual ValEUs Conference

#### ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Timm Beichelt, European University Viadrina, Frankfurt (O)

Randall Halle, University of Pittsburgh

Nico Hallmann, European University Viadrina, Frankfurt (O)

#### PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Timm Beichelt, European University Viadrina, Frankfurt (O)

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Jarosław Jańczak, Adam Mickiewicz University

Ayhan Kaya, İstanbul Bilgi University

Laura Leonardi, University of Florence

Claske Vos, University of Amsterdam

Marta Zorko, Zagreb University

The ValEUs Research and Education Network, supported by the European Commission, is pleased to invite consortium members to submit proposals for its third and final Annual ValEUs Conference. This concluding event is designed to move beyond preliminary analysis toward the synthesis of a "new agenda" for European Union foreign policy. Our objective is to translate the academic exchange of the previous years into concrete strategies capable of counteracting value contestations both within the Union and on the global stage.

### A FOCUSED RESEARCH AGENDA

To ensure the conference achieves a high degree of thematic cohesion, we invite contributions that align with the established focal points of the ValEUs network. We particularly welcome research that scrutinizes the tension between EU values and *Realpolitik* in external action. This includes critical examinations of EU foreign policy and geopolitics, specifically regarding the Union's ability—or at times, unwillingness—to safeguard its normative foundations in an increasingly fragmented global order.

Furthermore, we seek to strengthen our existing insights into the decolonization and postcolonial critique of EU policies. Proposals can also aim to integrate the overlaps between trade agreements, resource extraction, and development aid, with a specific geographic focus on the MENA region, Africa, and Latin America. In parallel with these external perspectives, the conference will address internal challenges, such as the rise of populism and Euroscepticism. Contributions dealing with migration and the evolving dynamics of the EU periphery and enlargement are also highly welcome.

We encourage contributors to explicitly highlight how these internal value contestations undermine the EU's capacity to conduct an effective, value-based foreign policy.

### POLICY INTEGRATION AND SYNERGY

A hallmark of this final conference is its direct engagement with the policy community. In line with our commitment to impactful research, the program will feature non-parallel panels with high relevance to major policy challenges. These sessions will bridge the gap between academic theory and practice, inviting policymakers to participate in the opening and throughout the proceedings to discuss the re-evaluation of security policy in light of contemporary geopolitical shifts.

Reflecting on the successful activities of the ValEUs network to date, we encourage network members to contact us regarding conference elements that go beyond the network's academic discourse. These could be:

- Ongoing policy-writing initiatives, including activities around the Young Generation Policy Briefs (YGPB),

- A civil society component, fostering a debate on how grassroots perspectives can better inform the EU's normative agenda (hybrid format possible),
- A discussion of strategies to mobilize effective support for Ukrainian academia with Ukraine-specific projects.

### SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

Consortium members may submit proposals for individual papers or fully formed thematic panels. Panel submissions should demonstrate alignment with the aforementioned focal points. Proposals which involve policy-makers and/or representatives of civil society organizations will be given special consideration.

All submissions should be sent to [hallmann@europa-uni.de](mailto:hallmann@europa-uni.de) by April 30, 2026. Proposals must include a title, an abstract of approximately 100 words, and a brief statement outlining the policy implications of the research.

Panels can include consortium members and/or external guests. Funding needs to be provided by the member universities of the network or privately by participants from outside the network.

### PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Each ValEUs partner received a dedicated budget for participation in academic activities and conferences under our "Fostering Joint Research Capacity" track (Work Package 3). However, network members may use residual funds from other Work Packages (WPs) as well. For any questions concerning the ValEUs budget or other practical matters related to the conference, please do not hesitate to contact Nico Hallmann ([hallmann@europa-uni.de](mailto:hallmann@europa-uni.de)).

Further practical information, including recommendations on available accommodation, will be shared with all network members soon.