

TERMS OF REFERENCE: Programmes Fellow (Support and Protection) **Updated: February 2026**

Job Title: Programmes Fellow (Support and Protection)

Department: Programmes and Partnerships

Reports to: Grants and Coordination Officer, in close coordination with the Head of Programmes and Partnerships

JOB SUMMARY:

Based at the Secretariat's office in Brussels and reporting to the Grants and Coordination Officer, the Programmes Fellow will support the dynamic and energetic team of the Secretariat. Their primary responsibility is to act as a point of contact and **guidance function** for incoming requests for support, ensuring an initial assessment, prioritisation, and **referral of requests to the most appropriate support and protection options** within the ProtectDefenders.eu ecosystem.

The Fellow will contribute to ensuring that Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and at-risk communities receive **timely, relevant, and appropriate responses**, in line with programme criteria, risk levels, and available protection pathways.

MAIN TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Monitoring and managing programme inboxes as a first-line response mechanism, including screening, categorising, and prioritising incoming requests;
- Conducting an initial assessment of requests for support, based on eligibility criteria;
- Guiding applicants and partners through available support and protection options, including internal programmes and external referral pathways;
- Engaging through secure communication channels to clarify requests, request additional information, and manage expectations of applicants;
- Supporting the follow-up of referred cases, ensuring that information flows are maintained and that applicants are informed of next steps;
- Contributing to the maintenance of an accurate and structured case-management database;

- Gathering relevant information and support in the preparation of datasets and summaries to support programme analysis, trend identification, and reporting;
- Participating in internal coordination meetings and contributing to briefings related to patterns of requests, emerging risks, and protection gaps;
- Working collaboratively with the ProtectDefenders.eu team and undertaking other relevant tasks as needed and specified by management.

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED

- Bachelor's degree in law, human rights, international relations, social sciences or related field.
- Demonstrable interest or previous experience in case assessment, programme support, protection-related work, or coordination roles within human rights or humanitarian contexts.
- Ability to analyse complex situations, assess risk and urgency, and identify appropriate support pathways in sensitive contexts.
- Familiarity, sensitivity, and knowledge of issues related to human rights, human rights defenders, civil society, or EU institutions.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English **and** at least one of the following languages: Spanish, French, Arabic, or Russian.
- Excellent drafting and editing skills.
- Excellent database management skills.

PERSONAL SKILLS

- Committed to the defence of human rights and the values of ProtectDefenders.eu. A strong desire to support human rights defenders at risk.
- Strong judgement and discretion when handling sensitive information and protection-related requests.
- Ability to communicate clearly and empathetically, including when delivering difficult information.
- Capacity to work under pressure and manage emotionally demanding content responsibly.
- Attention to detail and accuracy in all tasks.
- Ability to adapt to multidisciplinary work in the environment of a multicultural team.
- Strong organisational and coordination skills, with the ability to engage effectively with diverse stakeholders.
- Ability to process and synthesise complex and diverse information, and translate it into clear, actionable outputs.

STARTING DATE & CONDITIONS

- **Preferable starting date:** 1 April 2026.

- The selected candidate will be offered a **CIP contract** with a remuneration of **EUR 1,078 per month**, for an initial period of **6 months**, with the possibility of **renewal for up to an additional 6 months**, in line with the applicable legal framework.
- **Working time:** 38 hours per week. The fellow may dedicate the equivalent of **one working day per week** to training and learning activities.
- **Meal vouchers** are provided.
- The candidate must be **based in Belgium** and hold a **valid work permit**.
- **Hybrid working model:** combination of in-office work in Brussels and home-based work.

Additional Benefits

- PD.eu internal conditions regarding **holidays and sick leave** apply to fellows, including:
 - **10 extra-legal days of annual leave** for a 6-month contract.
 - **Paid sick leave** in accordance with internal rules.
 - **5 days of paid leave for pressing reasons**.

Additional Information on the CIP Framework

- Prior to the start of the CIP, an **individual training plan** must be prepared and approved by **Bruxelles Formation**.
- Under the applicable legal framework, fellows **who are neither Belgian citizens nor graduates of Belgian universities** may be eligible for **CIP contracts of up to 12 months** (compared to a maximum of 6 months for Belgian citizens or Belgian graduates). Renewal conditions must therefore be interpreted in compliance with these rules.

HOW

TO

APPLY?

Please send your CV and cover letter (please include information about your availability and confirm that you have a valid work permit) before 6 March 2026 by email at recruit@protectdefenders.eu with the subject: 'SP Fellow – Your surname'.

In your cover letter, we would particularly appreciate it if you could elaborate on the following points: *i) What values and personal commitments lead you to work within the human rights protection field in general, and at ProtectDefenders.eu in particular?*

ii) What previous experiences, personal qualities, and professional skills make you a good fit for the position?

iii) What are your expectations as a one-year fellow at the Secretariat (including learning objectives, engagement with the team, and contribution to the mission of the organisation)?

The use of AI tools to generate or substantially edit application materials is not permitted. Early applications are encouraged, as the position might be filled before the deadline. Please note that only short-listed candidates will be contacted. Interviews will be held online or in-person.