

Europe as a defence actor, PhD scholarship at the Danish Institute for International Studies DIIS

The Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) is recruiting a PhD candidate to research Europe's transformation into a defence actor. The continent is rearming, building new security institutions, and renegotiating its relationship with NATO and the United States. We are looking for a candidate who wants to examine what this means - whether for EU defence cooperation, European strategic autonomy, defence-industrial policy, or the roles of key states like Germany and France. If European defence and security policy is your field, we want to hear from you.

About DIIS and the position

DIIS invites applications for a fully funded position as PhD candidate within the general theme "Europe as a defence actor". The position runs from September 1st, 2026, or as soon as possible thereafter. The position as PhD is limited to a period of 3 years.

The position is part of Defence and Security Studies at DIIS, a multi-year research initiative funded by the Danish Ministry of Defence. The initiative builds policy-relevant knowledge on European security architecture after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the shifting transatlantic relationship, and Denmark's place in a rapidly changing European defence landscape. This PhD focuses specifically on Europe as a defence actor. Within that frame, DIIS is particularly interested in projects addressing European defence readiness, for instance through a study of

- European strategic autonomy
- The institutional architecture of European defence
- Political economy of European defence
- Nordic multilateral cooperation
- The Baltic frontier and the northern flank

The position is financed by DIIS, and the candidate will be employed at DIIS while enrolled at a relevant PhD School at a Danish University.

At DIIS you will become part of an inspiring, vivid knowledge environment that aim to be at the forefront of multidisciplinary research. It is essential that you are ready to engage in cross-disciplinary cooperation and value input from colleagues with different approaches, as mixing different disciplinary backgrounds and theoretical approaches is essential at DIIS. As a PhD candidate, you will contribute to the thematic and theoretical development of research. You will be jointly supervised by a senior staff member affiliated to the relevant PhD school as well as a senior staff member at DIIS.

We expect the candidate to:

- have obtained a master's degree in a relevant field
- have at least received the grade of 10 (or equivalent) for the master's thesis according to the [Danish 7-point grading scale](#) and a high weighted grade point average
- meet the general requirements for being accepted for enrolment as a PhD candidate (see below)
- have research-related qualifications and interests
- be a skilled communicator in both written and oral English

DIIS as a workplace

We offer an attractive and inclusive workplace where our employees can develop. We consider knowledge sharing and feedback essential to creating a dynamic workplace. We expect you to participate proactively in the common efforts of the institute. We prioritize a high degree of presence but want our employees to have a good work-life balance. Therefore, we offer flexible working hours and some possibility of working from home. We are located very close to Copenhagen's city centre with excellent public transportation options.

DIIS is a diverse workplace, and we encourage all qualified candidates to apply for this position regardless of their personal background. DIIS is also a workplace where we consider the environmental consequences of our activities and strive to adopt more environmentally sustainable practices both in relation to our daily business at DIIS and our global travel activities.

In the assessment, consideration will be given to the following criteria:

- The applicant has a relevant master's degree or equivalent qualifications (corresponding to the 3 + 2 Bologna process), cf. the Danish qualifications framework for higher education
- Quality and relevance of the project description
Quality and relevance of the methodical and theoretical choices
Consistency and coherence between the research problem and the choice of method and theory
The realistic and feasible scope of the PhD project

- Relevance of the project for the general research profile of DIIS

Contract and remuneration

The position as PhD candidate starts on **1 September 2026** and is a 3-year full time position, in which you may expect some travel activity. Remuneration and other job conditions follow the general agreement between the Danish Confederation of Professional Associations (AC) and the Danish Ministry of Finance, local collective agreements at DIIS as well as the 1st of January 2025 Danish state protocol on PhD candidates. As such, the normal starting salary for a PhD Candidate at DIIS is 379,702,61 DKK per year excl. pensions – this may be increased depending on prior work experience after the acquisition of the master's degree. A pension contribution of 18,07 is added to the above-mentioned salary.

Do you want to know more?

Visit <http://www.diiis.dk/jobs> to learn more about DIIS as a workplace. Questions regarding employment and remuneration can be sent to hr@diiis.dk. If you have inquiries regarding the professional focus of the position, you can contact Senior Researcher and Head of Research Unit, Cecilie Felicia Stockholm Banke at cfb@diiis.dk.

The application

Deadline for applying is **June 30, 2026, at 12.00 CET**.

Please note that we only accept applications through DIIS' electronic recruitment system. Apply via button below at this advertisement.

Your application *must* include *all* the following documents:

1. A motivational letter, incl. suggestion of relevant PhD school at a Danish University
2. Curriculum Vitae (CV/résumé)
3. Master's diploma including grades. If you hold a master's degree which is not within the ECTS-framework, please also provide: Your bachelor diploma and bachelor grades
A statement clarifying the subject and length (in years) of the master's degree
An English translation of your diplomas
4. PhD project proposal (max 5 pages)
5. A provisional project plan, incl. suggestions on relevant international contacts and possible research institution abroad
6. Publication list, if any

Applications go through a shortlisting process before being sent to an employment committee for [in-person or virtual interviews](#).

DIIS is an independent public research institution for international studies. We conduct and communicate multidisciplinary research on globalisation, security, development and foreign policy and within these areas we aim to be agenda-setting in research, policy and public debate.

DIIS participates in academic networks and publish in high-ranking academic journals, always striving to excel in academic scholarship.

We continuously assess Denmark's foreign and political situation and inform the Danish media, politicians and the public about our work