

**Call for Applications
PRO ORIENTE Emerging Scholars (PO-ES) 2026/27**

New Theological Approaches to East-West-Dialogue(s) in the 21st Century

Background:

The history of interconfessional interaction and dialogue(s) and the search for the right expression of faith is just as long as that of the estrangements and divisions between the churches. Every era and every network of church relationships has faced its own challenges. Since the beginning of the worldwide interconfessional movement and bilateral and multilateral dialogues on the one hand, and the scholarly-theological study of interconfessional themes on the other, there has been a range of methodologies, visions of unity, and proposals as to how productive and serious cooperation among the churches might succeed, remaining in the meantime each church committed to her own confessional identity.

Aim:

Since the 1990s, theologians active in interconfessional dialogue have witnessed many established practices reaching their limits, not only in face of global crises and war, but also in face of an increasingly secular world in the Global North. How can this joint perspective, the theological and ecclesiological collaboration (whether continued, renewed or reimagined), succeed for the future of the Church? In what ways can theology be beneficial and useful to future dialogue between the churches? The following topics will be addressed and discussed together with the panelists and experts:

- Liminal spaces and boundaries of interconfessional dialogue: How have the goals and purposes of this dialogue been framed in the past, and how are they framed today?
- Future models and challenges in interconfessional settings and initiatives: Noticeable changes in the religious landscapes; Church and state; Church and politics; Multiscale affiliations at the denominational and individual levels
- Interaction/Tension between denominational identity and a church unity open to dialogue and exchange PRO ORIENTE is committed to strengthening communion between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches, drawing on longstanding experience in bringing together churches that have been separated for centuries. To attain that goal, Pro Oriente promotes research and

documentation through research projects, symposia, conferences, consultations, lectures, and other scholarly events; through the publication of scholarly works; and through building networks of knowledge and scholars.

PO-ES 2026/27:

The new PRO ORIENTE Emerging Scholars program (PO-ES) invites up to 15 Early Career Scholars from theology and related disciplines to apply. Scholars who are in the early stages of their academic careers (age limit 40; exceptions may apply) and are working on a research project (Master, Dissertation, Habilitation) are kindly encouraged to apply.

The program consists of two phases: one online and one in-person.

The online phase will take place on the following dates:

- 30th November 2026, 4-7 p.m.: Introduction, Getting to Know Each Other, Introducing the Reader
- 22nd February 2027, 3-7 p.m.: Working Phase I
- 24th June 2027, 3-7 p.m.: Working Phase II

At the first online meeting, participants will receive a reader for preparation, as well as further information about the shared reading material. The in-person phase will take place in Vienna from 29 August to 3 September and will be led by established and renowned theologians with different academic and church backgrounds.

The PO-ES format is a collaboration between PRO ORIENTE and the Department of Catholic Theology at the University of Regensburg (Chair for Medieval and Modern Church History). Upon successful completion, participants will receive 4 ECTS credit points and a certificate of participation by PRO ORIENTE. Active engagement in both the online and in-person phases, as well as the completion of a portfolio, are required.

Organizers:

Prof. Dr. Andrea Riedl (Regensburg); Prof. Dr. Pablo Argárate (Graz); Dr. Viola Raheb (PRO ORIENTE)

Speakers (in alphabetical order):

Prof. Dr. Peter De Mey (Leuven, Belgium)
Dr. Ani Ghazaryan Drissi (Geneva, Switzerland)
Dr. Alexandru Ioniță (Sibiu, Romania)
Prof. Dr. Astrid Kaptijn (Fribourg, Switzerland)

How to apply?

PO-ES is aimed at Early Career Scholars (see above). PRO ORIENTE will cover accommodation costs from 29 August to 3 September 2027. Participants are kindly asked to cover their own travel costs. Applicants from outside Western Europe may apply for a (partial) travel allowance. The working language is English.

To apply, please submit the following documents by **October 19th, 2026**, to projects@pro-oriente.at

- CV
- Motivation letter emphasizing the concrete interest in PO-ES 2026/27 (max.2 pages)
- Abstract of dissertation or research project (max. 2 pages)
- Academic letter of recommendation
- Copies of certificates (BA, MA, Dr/PhD)