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Scholarships for Refugees

DBU supports further qualification in environmental protection

Osnabrück. For the first time, the German Federal Environmental Foundation (Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt, DBU) is awarding scholarships to college- and university graduates who have fled to Germany as refugees from countries such as Syria. The newly-launched application process expands the scholarship program currently in effect for graduate students from countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Above-average diplomas and Master's Degrees, and good knowledge of German or English, are prerequisites for the awards. The scholarship makes it possible for the recipients to spend a six- to twelve-month residency in Germany at institutions for research and advanced training, environmental- and conservation agencies, or companies, in order to gain experience in a wide variety of fields related to environmental protection and, ultimately, to implement this knowledge in their native countries. The scholarships begin in November with a four-week introductory phase in Osnabrück which includes intensive language lessons in German, excursions, and a cultural program.

With the new scholarship program, the DBU makes possible advanced professional training for highly qualified graduates, and integration into German society. Recipients also become part of a transnational network of experts which has been developed to aid in the exchange of experience and ideas regarding the solution of challenging problems in the protection of the environment and nature. "Moreover, it is important to us that the new scholarship recipients take the experience with innovative technologies for environmental protection which they have acquired back to their native countries and apply it in the reconstruction process", says Prof. Dr. Werner Wahmhoff, Assistant General Secretary and Department Head for Environmental Research and Nature Protection at the DBU.

Interested persons may apply online in either German or English for one of a total of ten new scholarships, until 20 July 2016. The required language skills must be documented by a language school certificate or diploma, or through an evaluation by a language teacher. Additionally, an application for asylum in Germany must have been filed. Applicants from safe countries of origin are not eligible. Each application must include the detailed description

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of a project idea involving environmental- or nature protection. The DBU welcomes applications from scientists, engineers, agronomists, economists, jurists, educators and representatives from other professional fields, to the extent that they wish to occupy themselves in depth with a subject related to environmental- or nature protection. The scholarship is not designed for persons who wish to carry out a doctoral studies program or other studies program at a German institution of higher learning.

Following a preselection screening process, positively evaluated applicants will be invited to a selection interview to take place in September 2016 in Osnabrück, which may be conducted in either German or English. Decisions on the scholarship awards will be made by a jury. Scholarship recipients will receive € 1,060 monthly. The DBU will also cover the costs of health-, accident- and liability insurance. Initially, a six-month period will be approved. Extension of the project for a further six months is possible in principle.

For implementation of the project idea, an internship or traineeship in Germany is required. As a rule this is organized in coordination with the scholarship recipient by the DBU at a research institution, a company, or an environmental agency. Independent initiatives by applicants who wish to organize their own internships are expressly welcomed. The scholarship begins with a German language course of approximately four weeks' duration in Osnabrück. The program also entails an introductory seminar lasting several days, during which important organizational details are elucidated. The DBU and the professional mentors at the internship locations will accompany the scholarship recipients throughout the entire scholarship period, in order to support the process of integration and language development as well. During the scholarship period the DBU organizes seminars, at which the scholarship recipients have the opportunity to introduce their research subjects and initial results. Further offerings include the DBU Summer Academy in St. Marienthal/Ostritz and the award of the German Environmental Prize.

Since 1998 the DBU has awarded scholarships to highly qualified graduates from Central and Eastern Europe (MOE) with the goal of advanced qualification toward the solution of challenging tasks in the area of environmental- and nature protection in the countries of origin. The following countries are currently represented: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Croatia, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Oblast Kaliningrad, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Hungary. Each year 60 scholarship recipients from MOE nations are supported. Since its inception this program has supported more than 875 scholarship recipients.

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Further information on scholarships for refugees and about the online application procedure can be found on the DBU website <https://www.dbu.de/2509.html>

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