ANNEX III
RATIONALE AND CONTEXT OF THE CALL

Migration and the protection of refugees constitute one of the European Union's (EU) main political, social and humanitarian challenges in the 21st century. These phenomena are closely linked to the European Union's founding values —human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights— enshrined in the Treaties and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and which inspire the Carlos V European Award.

From its origins, European integration has been shaped by the mobility of people, initially associated with free movement within the internal market and with overcoming the divisions that marked the continent's history. While free movement was one of the pillars of the internal market, over time the EU has had to develop specific policies to respond to the new political, legal and social challenges that require common responses to migratory flows from third countries, to asylum applications, and to humanitarian crises arising from armed conflicts, persecution, economic inequalities and, more recently, climate change.

The creation of the Common European Asylum System and the development of common policies on migration marked a significant step towards a more coordinated response at European level. Nevertheless, these policies have evolved unevenly, reflecting tensions between solidarity, shared responsibility, national sovereignty and the protection of fundamental rights.

A key milestone in this field has been the consolidation of the international legal framework for the protection of refugees and migrants, in particular the 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol, as well as the main international human rights treaties, which constitute essential reference points for EU policies.

In recent years, the European Union has promoted new initiatives to reform its approach to migration, culminating in the adoption of the European Pact on Migration and Asylum, which demonstrates the search for a balance between solidarity, shared responsibility and respect for fundamental rights. This Pact seeks to provide a more predictable and supportive framework, while at the same time strengthening the protection of human rights, the management of the external borders and cooperation with third countries.

The EU's migration policy cannot be understood in isolation from the international framework for the protection of human rights and refugees, and it is also embedded in a global context committed to multilateralism, in which international cooperation, the promotion of peace, humanitarian action and sustainable development play a fundamental role. The EU thus presents itself as a key actor in promoting multilateralism, respect for international law and the protection of the most vulnerable.

Nevertheless, significant challenges persist: the effective protection of human rights at the

borders, reception conditions, social and labour integration, combating discrimination and xenophobia, and the management of recurrent migratory crises. The COVID-19 pandemic and recent international conflicts have highlighted the need for more coordinated, solidarity-based and human-rights-centred responses, capable of strengthening the Union's internal cohesion and its credibility.

Looking ahead, the European Union will need to continue adapting its policies to respond to a changing international environment, reinforcing its commitment to human dignity, solidarity and social justice. In this context, academic research and critical analysis are essential for understanding the current and future challenges of migration, asylum and human rights, and for contributing to public debate and the design of fairer and more inclusive European policies.