

The Eurodoc Survey on the Situation of Doctoral Candidates
2008/2009

Almost 9000 young researchers gave insights into their situation in the doctoral phase

First findings discussed in Experts Workshop in Bonn.

**EURODOC press release
Brussels, December 2009**

The main findings from the survey were presented in a first experts' workshop, in Bonn, 27th and 28th November 2009. Over 1.5 days, researchers, stakeholders from higher education policy making, and social scientists from all over Europe discussed the survey's first findings. Having a look at the findings from the survey, they deliver data on topics which have been frequently discussed in higher education policy making focussing on the doctoral phase in the last decade. By this Eurodoc aims to back political decision making with a sound data basis.

Issues Eurodoc will pinpoint in the further analysis of the data are for example:

Perceived obstacles to mobility: The main hindrances to mobility are family and partnership reasons, low funding, partners' job opportunities and reduced career opportunities back home.

Qualification of the doctorate is predetermining the career path: The main proportion of doctoral candidates want to stay in research (three quarters) and feel better qualified for a career in academia than outside the alma mater and research institutes.

Perceived status of employability outside academia based on doctoral training: Although around 70% of the doctoral candidates receive additional training while doing

the doctorate, only a smaller proportion feel qualified for a job outside academia.

Stability and availability of funding for and throughout the doctorate: Although around 80% of the respondents receive funding for the doctorate, either as salary or as scholarship or work in the academic sector, there is a large proportion doing the doctorate with private funds (e.g. family, self-employment, unemployment funding). **Gender differences** are not as strong as expected (e.g. mobility is equally high). However a closer look reveals that there seem to be some differences in the funding between those having no children and those having one or several children. Findings from the survey point out that doctoral candidates with children have a harder time to get a stable funding for their doctorate. Besides this, findings reveal that almost 20% felt pressured to postpone having children.

Conclusions from the workshop were that some further analysis of the data has to take place in the next couple of months, before a first public policy paper is presented at the Eurodoc conference 2010 (www.eurodoc.net/2010) in Vienna¹. Having that in mind, a second document will be produced: the scientific report of the evaluation. Both documents will be further elaborated in the months to come, together with the help of some of the experts involved in the workshop, namely Pavel Zgaga, Paule Biaudet, Iain Cameron, Beate Scholz and Harald Schomburg (see also workshop programme).

From 12/2008 to 05/2009, Eurodoc, the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers, conducted the first Europe-wide survey on doctoral researchers –the first survey on this scale – in cooperation with the International Centre for Higher Education Research at the University of Kassel. Approximately **8,900** respondents answered the survey during the six months it was open.

¹ The Eurodoc conference is taking place at the same time as a couple of other events are organised on the axis Vienna-Budapest due to the Bologna Ministerial Conference 2010.

These respondents are, depending on the country, students enrolled in doctoral programmes, academic and research assistants working on their doctoral degree (or equivalent). Efforts were made to match the respondents with the general population, in terms of variables such as gender, field of study and academic status. The questionnaire included 77 questions and took about 30 minutes to complete. The data analysis and evaluation was done between August and October 2009.

Eurodoc is the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers. It was established in 2002 in Girona, Spain.

Eurodoc's objectives are:

- To represent doctoral candidates and junior researchers at the European level in matters of education, research, and professional development of their careers.
 - To advance the quality of doctoral programmes and the standards of research activity in Europe.
 - To promote the circulation of information on issues regarding young researchers; organize events, take part in debates and assist in the elaboration of policies about Higher Education and Research in Europe.
 - To establish and promote co-operation between national associations representing doctoral candidates and junior researchers
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