

eurodoc newsletter #2

Eurodoc 2007 Conference and General Assembly (March 2007)

The Annual Conference and the General Assembly of Eurodoc were held in London from 15 to 17 of March. They were attended by delegates and representatives coming from more than 26 European countries. The Conference, jointly organised by Eurodoc and its UK member, the NPC (National Postgraduate Committee), was held at the University of London Union headquarters.

Keynote lectures on "Advances and challenges in the management of Human Resources in European Higher Education and Research" were given by Mr. Cornelis-Mario Vis (European Commission, DG Research) and Ms. Gill Clarke (UK Quality Assurance Agency). Equally relevant in the programme was another keynote speech on "Gender and evaluation issues in Academia" by Prof. Teresa Rees (Cardiff University). Two interesting round-tables on "Careers outside academia: what training and what jobs?" and "Research, Entrepreneurship & Technology transfer" completed the plenary sessions. Four Workshops, addressing some issues of Eurodoc's internal debates and policy, gave rise to lively discussions: "Implementation of the European Charter and Code", "Eurodoc's European Survey of Doctoral Candidates", "Gender issues & evaluation in Academia", and "Planning ahead Eurodoc's future".

The General Assembly admitted 2 new members in the Federation (Bulgaria's ADSB and Poland's KRD), bringing the membership to 28. The new President of Eurodoc is Koen van Dam, an engineer by training and a doctoral candidate in the Energy & Industry group at the Faculty of Technology, Policy and Management of the University of Technology in Delft (The Netherlands). He has held several positions of responsibility representing young researchers at the local and national level, and in the particular as a Board member of PNN (Promovendi Netwerk Nederland), the Dutch member of Eurodoc.

The composition of the newly elected Board is the following:

- **President:** Mr Koen van Dam, *The Netherlands*
- **Vice-president:** Ms Raquel Santos, *Portugal*
- **Secretary:** Ms Dunja Potočnik, *Croatia*
- **Treasurer:** Mr Rhys Kearney, *UK*
- **General Member:** Mr Armando Carlone, *Italy*
- **General Member:** Ms Judit Fináncz, *Hungary*
- **General Member:** Mr Dmitri Teperik, *Estonia*

The Conference received support from the Quality Assurance Agency of the UK, NPC UK, Research Councils UK, European Science Foundation, European Molecular Biology Organisation and the University of London Union. Possible venues for the 2008 edition, to be selected shortly, include Brussels, Krakow, and another proposal to be decided by the Swiss member of Eurodoc ActionUni.

The relevance of Eurodoc and of the community it represents is witnessed by the increasing importance of young researchers in policy debates and actions at the national and European level during the last period, and is expected to rise significantly over the next years.

For information, see: www.eurodoc.net

To contact: the Eurodoc Board: [board\[at\]eurodoc.net](mailto:board[at]eurodoc.net)

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European Research & Innovation Forum
PARIS 7-9/06/2007
<http://www.salon-de-la-recherche.com/>

Open Access and Research in Europe

The current system of academic publication was developed as a means to disseminate the findings of research. Unfortunately this system can hamper the very process it was set up to serve, with access to articles being limited by publishers to only those who can afford to subscribe.

"Open Access literature is digital, online, free of charge" (Peter Suber)

Published material which is Open Access (OA) can be freely accessed by anyone in the world via an internet connection. This increases the readership of an article by making it available to many people whose institutions cannot afford a subscription. Evidence shows that making articles Open Access significantly increases citations to the article – in some fields increasing citations by 300%.

The importance of Open Access is acknowledged by many research funding agencies within the UK, Europe and internationally. Many research funders now require that publications arising from their funding must be made available through Open Access. For a summary of research funders OA policies and mandates worldwide please see the website: www.sherpa.ac.uk/juliet

Open Access repositories and Open Access journals are the two main options available for making your research publications Open Access. OA journals just use a different business model to traditional journals. Everything else, including the peer-review process is the same as for traditional journals, but the articles are freely available

without a subscription. OA repositories are online digital archives where authors may deposit copies of their articles that they have published elsewhere. Permission to archive is subject to copyright, but the majority of journals allow some form of archiving. Full-text articles held in repositories are available to anyone via search services such as Google and Yahoo as well as via specialised OA search services such as the BASE search engine (www.base-search.net).

DRIVER is an EU-funded project to co-ordinate and support the development of a European network of institutional OA repositories. For further information on Open Access, developments in Europe and what Open Access means for European researchers please visit the DRIVER website: www.driver-support.eu

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The Scientific Publication System from a Young researcher's perspective

The first scientific articles are quite decisive in a researcher's career, as the systems in place for evaluating candidates for postdoc and faculty positions heavily rely on the publication system. This calls for a putting more stress to a young researcher's perspective on the current scientific publication system and on Open Access approaches. In this light, Daniel Mitchen and Wolfgang Eppenschwandtner, both recent PhD graduates in Physics and Mathematics, respectively, present a paper as an invitation for discussion: "Scientific Publishing and Open Access: From the Perspective of Young Researchers – An Invitation for Discussion":

www.eurodoc.net/file/OA_young_researchers.pdf

It is widely acknowledged that, putting European research reality in a global context, we have to increasingly strive for early scientific independence of researchers. As a consequence, funding agencies and publishers should provide that young researchers are free to publish their results on their own initiative, without financial constraints of publication fees. Early stage researchers would have particularly strong scientific reasons to publish in Open Access journals but these are counteracted by the widespread habit of evaluating candidates for postdoctoral or faculty positions on the basis of problematic descriptors like journal impact factors which can be manipulated, do not inform about the quality of individual articles, and are not available for new journals (many of which use Open Access models). Thus we call for abandoning journal impact factor systems for career decisions and developing and use individual article metrics instead.

The discussion paper also follows a recent petition to the European Commission to ensure public access to publicly-funded research results (optionally subject to delay of six months). These initiatives were targeted to European Commission's recent initiative to launch a policy debate on the scientific publication system at EU level, which led to a communication and a conference in mid-February. Eurodoc follows the developments and expects to see young researchers' concerns included in the policy debate. It is often overlooked that in fact it is the younger generation of researchers who contribute to the majority of scientific publications.

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The members of Eurodoc

The members of Eurodoc come from different backgrounds, are different in size, have different approaches and priorities. As organisations for young researchers, run by young researchers, they share the common aim to improve the conditions for researchers in the

doctoral cycle and in the first years of their post-doctoral research career. This series of the Eurodoc newsletter presents the activities of our national members to a European audience, with the aim to learn from other countries and models. To learn more about who contributes to Eurodoc, now even stronger with 28 member organisations, see: www.eurodoc.net/articles.php?lng=en&pg=16

>>> ADI (Italy, member)

ADI, the Association of Doctoral candidates and holders of Italy (Associazione Dottorandi e Dottori di Ricerca Italiani), as the name itself suggests, gathers Italian doctoral students and doctorate holders. ADI was born in January 1998 to provide mutual help and support among doctoral candidates and doctorate holders in Italy and abroad. It is a national nonprofit association, not tied to any political party.

The aim of ADI is to promote the awareness of the doctoral degree into the Italian society, the professional placement of doctorate holders, the improvement of higher education, university and research, and other cultural matters. Indeed, one of the most important accomplishments has been to act as a stimulating and inventive pressure group to the Italian government institutions in charge of research and higher education.

From an organizational point of view, ADI is spread over several local branches that enjoy individual budgets. In addition, each local branch elects a representative in the national Board where all the collective political decisions are taken. The Board meets at least once per year, in addition to the annual general meeting of all the associates. Moreover, its members are constantly in touch through a dedicated electronic mailing list. The association operates also through several WorkGroups, each of which has its own web page and electronic mailing list. There are also two general mailing lists (discussion and news) that are open to everyone interested, also to non-members.

ADI has approximately 1000 active members to date and 3500 have subscribed since 1998; more than 50 workgroup coordinators are active to promote our initiatives; over 4000 people have subscribed our mailing lists; moreover ADI is made up of 20 local branches, to date, and others are going to be set. ADI's achievements are numerous; the most remarkable ones to the wider community are:

- Survey on doctoral candidates and doctorate holders (2006)
- Increase of the postdoc scholarship (2004)
- Increase of the doctoral scholarship (2000)
- A set of minimum social rights and benefits for doctorates (1999)

ADI has delivered several publications, the most important ones being:

- "Guida di sopravvivenza al dottorato" (Survival Guide for PhD candidates)
- "Cervelli in Fuga" (Brain on the Run – dealing with researchers that leave Italy seeking for better conditions)
- "Cervelli in Gabbia" (Brains in a Cage – dealing with the difficulties that researchers have to face Italy)

ADI has some campaigns on and others are being organized; the most prominent ones ongoing are:

- Charter for the PhD candidate's rights
- Campaign for the increase of the doctoral scholarship to €1000 (presently it's about €800)

ADI's web site and its mailing list integrated with a forum system is the highest reference point for Italian doctorate related topics; to date it's the only almost-comprehensive means of information, continuously updated, existing in Italy. In 1999 ADI's website was awarded the "best web site among Italian associa-

tions” by the prestigious Italian financial newspaper “Il Sole 24 Ore”. ADI has organized the Eurodoc annual meeting in 2006, Bologna2006.

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Portuguese Young Scientists Association ABIC launches a proposal to incorporate the Charter and Code into the national legislation

Investment in Research and Development (R&D) has been publicly recognized as having a vital importance for the economic, social and cultural development of Portugal. As a result, since the early 1990s, there has been a significant increase in the training of human resources and funding of research projects, made possible largely through EU funds. However, the number of researchers and PhDs per capita is still far below the EU25 average. Concomitantly, this expansion in human resources has not been accompanied by necessary structural measures to foster their professional insertion, to stimulate R&D in private enterprises, or consolidate R&D in the public research centers. Apart from a few scattered measures of low impact, Portugal has yet to implement a science employment strategy that is consistent with the proclaimed objectives of economic development sustained on R&D.

For years now, there has been a freeze on hires in public research facilities and universities. These have to a large extent fulfilled their human resource needs by recruiting young researchers, paid by scholarships (bolsas, in Portuguese) attributed by the national Science and Technology Foundation (FCT). These are given not only to researchers pursuing a PhD, but also those serving as lab technicians, managers and accountants of research projects, and post-docs. Many young researchers receive a scholarship for short periods, having no clear training program, in clear contradiction with the present legislation. The use by public research centers of researchers on scholarship has become so central that these researchers often guarantee permanent needs of these centers. Most young researchers manage to continue practicing science only through consecutive scholarships, for 10 years, sometimes longer, without ever having any perspectives of celebrating a labor contract that guarantees them social benefits as other workers.

An urgent reform is necessary, which ABIC holds should be based on the following principles:

- guarantee that all human resources in R&D have their quality as workers recognized, with associated social benefits;
- that national legislation incorporates the recommendations of the European Charter for Researchers
- put a stop to and reverse the trend towards a decrease in attractiveness of scientific carriers;
- allow an adequate articulation with other legislation that frames and regulates the activity of the generality of science workers;
- adapt to the modifications introduced in the national science and technology system by the Bologna Treaty

As stated by the European Charter for Researchers, researchers, even at the beginning of their careers should be treated as professionals. They develop scientific work and should be considered workers and offered conditions according to that status, which should be recognized through the signing of a labor contract.

ABIC understands that recognizing their status as workers in sci-

ence is the coherent manner in which to improve their social and economic conditions and their future prospects in a science career. The present system that relies heavily on scholarships limits access to social security benefits, associates precariousness with a career in science, and underrates researchers as students, continually in training, rather than as professional workers. It would also put an end to the misuse of scholarships to fulfill the needs of research centers, forcing them to appropriately hire technicians and researchers. The adoption of labor contracts underlines the indisputable labor component of R&D, without ignoring the training component, inherent to scientific activity.

ABIC therefore proposes that the present statute that frames researchers on scholarship be revoked, that labor contracts become the norm, and that a new statute be elaborated for Early-Stage Researchers and those obtaining a doctoral degree, given the specific nature of these stages. For those in doctoral programs, ABIC proposes funding via scholarship during the class/seminar stage, and subsequently a labor contract. ABIC considers these proposals to be viable, fair and necessary for the resolution of the problems faced by researchers on scholarship – a substantial component of human resources in R&D, particularly its youngest segments.

AC*

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Introducing the new board

Koen van Dam (The Netherlands), President

Koen is researcher and doctoral candidate at the faculty of Technology, Policy and Management of the Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands. He completed an MSc in Artificial Intelligence at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam with a specialisation in knowledge engineering. His current research topic is the modelling of socio-technical infrastructure systems (such as energy or transport infrastructures) to support decision makers in finding and implementing the best configuration of the system.

He has had a long interest in research policies and representation of the interests of doctoral candidates, first as council member of a research school but soon as vice-president of the PhD organisation at the university level. Since 2005 he was on the board of PNN, the Dutch member of Eurodoc, and he was mostly involved in career perspectives and mobility of early stage researchers. As president of Eurodoc he hopes to follow up on the excellent work of the previous boards in strengthening the position of Eurodoc in Europe and in professionalizing the organisation.

Raquel Santos (Portugal), Vice-president

Raquel graduated in Urban and Regional Planning (1999) and obtained a Master on Innovation and Development Policies (2003) from the University of Aveiro, Portugal. Presently, she's a doctoral candidate in Political Sciences.

Between 2000/2002 she developed her professional activity as junior consultant in the field of strategic local planning and regional development. In 2002, Raquel was invited to integrate the research team of the Centre for Studies in Innovation and Entrepreneurial and Territorial Dynamics/ Centre Of Governance and Public Policies, Faculty of Social, Juridical and Political Sciences, University of Aveiro, where she remains up to present. Her scientific areas of interest are: higher education, human capital and regional economic development and innovation policies.

Since 2005, she is a board member of the Portuguese National Association of PhD Candidates and Young Researchers (ABIC, Portugal) and, since March 2007, Vice-President of Eurodoc.

Her main reason to join Eurodoc was the relevance of working as an active stakeholder on the development the European research policies to actively contribute for a better research career, particularly for early stage researchers. Being on the board, first as a general member (2006), and presently as a vice president, was a way get closely involved, to share experiences and to learn how to be a better researcher and individual. Within Eurodoc, due to her personal background and experience, she is particularly interested in the European Charter and the Code issues, research career paths and gender equality. Being the voice of thousands young researchers, she believes Eurodoc has a legitimate role to play on the development of a proper and balanced European Research Area.

Dunja Potočnik (Croatia), Secretary

Dunja graduated in Sociology at the University in Zagreb, Croatia. Currently she is a research assistant at the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb and a PhD candidate in Sociology at the University of Zagreb. Her first professional experiences were teaching at high school and a counselling position at the Croatian Employment Service. Her research activities have been focused on youth related issues, particularly on education, employment, new technologies and political issues (i.e. European integration), but also on scientific policy, professional aspirations and intergenerational professional mobility. She is one of the founders (2005) and the Board member of the Young Scientists Network (YSN) in Croatia. She has been Eurodoc's Secretary since March 2006.

Joining Eurodoc was a unique opportunity for exchanging views and discussing the challenges and consequences of policy developments in Europe. For Dunja, Eurodoc represents a great basis for initiating new platforms for cooperation in both Higher Education (HE) and Research and Development (R&D). This way, young researchers have a chance to better comprehend ways of promoting and fostering networking among associations, professional societies and industry, both in Europe and worldwide.

Dunja has also been active in the Eurodoc Survey work-group. Besides filling in the gap in data on the PhD candidates, the survey will strengthen the position of Eurodoc as a stakeholder participating and proposing actions related to HE and R&D level in Europe.

Rhys Kearney (UK), Treasurer

Raised in North Wales in the United Kingdom, Rhys completed an undergraduate masters degree in mathematics and statistics at the University of Manchester before working as a statistician in a psychology research group. He then completed an MSc in Salford University in applied statistics and operations research and is currently in his second year of a PhD at Salford studying operations research with the focus on reliability modelling; he also works as a research assistant on an EPSRC funded construction project applying system dynamics methodology. As a project officer for the National Postgraduate Committee of the UK, Rhys is working to promote the activities of the organisation to a wider audience. In Salford University, he organises social activities for postgraduates, sits on the council of the students' union and is also the chair of the rowing club.

Armando Carlone (Italy), General Member

Armando is a PhD candidate in chemistry. He has been living in Bologna for nine years, though his hometown is Campobasso, in the south-center of Italy. His experiences abroad include one year in Utrecht (NL), five months in Paris (F) and nine months in Aarhus (DK). Having this background, he learnt that cultural exchanges and opinions from different people can greatly improve the contributions

that an association can give to the wide community. Moreover, he believes that a board position could be a stimulating activity to his passion of contributing to the research environment and doctoral candidates' and young researchers' conditions in general. He feels that an international federation that takes up visions from national associations can implement the contributions into a wider area and indirectly help each individual national association to resolve its issues.

Judit Fináncz (Hungary), General Member

Judit is a lecturer at the University of Kaposvár, Faculty of Pedagogy. She is a qualified sociologist and German teacher. She finished her PhD work in educational sciences in 2006, and is now writing her thesis about the situation of doctoral students in Hungary. She was board member and secretary general in the Association of Hungarian PhD candidates (DOSZ) where she took part in the development of the regulation of Hungarian doctoral training. That inspired her to complete a survey among Hungarian PhD candidates. As board member in Eurodoc, she would like to take part in the European Survey of Doctoral Candidates and hopes that the activity of Eurodoc can contribute to the development of doctoral training and the improvement of young researchers' position at the European level.

Dmitri Teperik (Estonia), General Member

Dmitri (M.Sc.) is a PhD student in human physiology at the University of Tartu, Estonia. Since 2005, he is Coordinator of the Estonian Academy of Young Scientists and became involved with Eurodoc at the Bologna conference in Salzburg. His motivation to be on the Board is very strong as he has many ideas to promote and improve internal communication between the member organisations. His main responsibilities include: Eurodoc enlargement; foster greater activity of existing members; Eurodoc involvement into multilateral thematic projects in Europe.

European Survey Update

The Eurodoc Survey Workgroup has reached several major steps:

- the questionnaire was revised based on the pre-test results. Some of these results are available online:
www.eurodoc.net/file/2007_London_TimBrown2.ppt
- the European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO) agreed to be a sponsoring partner on this project.

Partners for the survey are still cordially welcome, especially for the implementation of and the public relations for the survey. Eurodoc would appreciate the cooperation and support of universities and ministries. The technical side of the online survey is prepared in cooperation with the International Centre for Higher Education Research (INCHER) Kassel. The start of the survey is currently scheduled in May. We will keep you informed as we make further progress. To contact us: [survey\[at\]eurodoc.net](mailto:survey[at]eurodoc.net)

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