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## Editor's note

Dear Readers,

This Newsletter marks the final of a year that began in Lisbon and will be complete with EURODOC Conference and AGM in Budapest. In a few days we will have the chance to be together again discussing the future of EURODOC. The [website](#) is already online with all the information regarding both Conference and AGM.

But before, with this issue, we can tell you about the activities of Eurodoc and our colleagues all over Europe from the past months.

In the name of all the members who have organized the Newsletter during this year, I must say that it was a pleasure and an honour to keep you informed.

*Ivo Neto, Portugal*

## About Eurodoc

Eurodoc was founded in Girona (Spain) on 02/02/02. Eurodoc is the **European Council of doctoral candidates and junior researchers**. It takes the form of a federation of national associations of doctoral candidates and young researchers.

Eurodoc's objectives are:

- To **represent doctoral candidates and junior researchers at the European level** in all 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**, organise 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 **within Europe**.

## Crisis Line

The national Grad Crisis-Line was set up in 1999 to provide doctoral candidates with free and confidential telephone counselling. Professional trained staff who understand the needs of young researcher are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year.

You can SKYPE the Crisis-Line at 800-472-3457.

## Eurodoc Conference 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> March 2014

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In just a few weeks Eurodoc members from across Europe will meet in Budapest for Eurodoc's annual conference and AGM. The event is organised by Eurodoc's Hungarian member association DOSZ.

Registration is free, and there are still a few places left!

The conference will include a number of plenary sessions which will consider a variety of issues affecting ESRs such as the structural changes being made to improve the position of ESRs, and the professional development of researchers. Contributions are being made by many important organisations in ERA including the EUA, Science Europe, LERU, Coimbra Group, Euroscience, MCFA and many others. Three parallel workshops will be organised to discuss the issues of women in science, open access, and interdisciplinarity.

Participants in the conference will include representatives from Eurodoc's members associations, representatives from other ERA stakeholder organisations, journalists, and other interested persons.

Full details of the programme can be found on the [conference website](#).



## Eurodoc Comments on Dual Careers, Interdisciplinary Mobility, and Journal Rankings and Interdisciplinarity

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Dual career services at higher education and research institutions are an important measure for researchers to have both a research career and a family life. However, doctoral candidates and early stage researchers are often excluded from these services. This paper emphasises the significance of dual career opportunities for young researchers and makes recommendations how institutions could support dual career couples in academia.

More information can be found [via this link](#).

Interdisciplinary, international and intersectorial mobility are often used terms by doctoral candidates. However, interdisciplinary mobility is not (currently) tracked. Definitions and methods for monitoring are not developed. The Interdisciplinarity Workgroup would like to stress the necessity of tracking interdisciplinary doctoral candidates and ESRs. The policy paper "Recommendations for Implementing Interdisciplinary Mobility" overviews the steps that need to be implemented.

More information can be found [via this link](#).

The paper "Journal rankings and interdisciplinarity" stresses the importance of interdisciplinary ranking system at European level. Current scientometrics undervalue interdisciplinary efforts. The limitations of scientometrics are especially significant when the research being considered is interdisciplinary. This paper suggests alternative interdisciplinary measuring devices.

More information can be found [via this link](#).

## News from Eurodoc Members – Thesis (Germany)

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Eurodoc's German member association Thesis e.V. ([www.thesis.de](http://www.thesis.de)) held its annual general meeting in mid-February. After elections of a new board and other positions, Klaus Neumann (board chairman), Kathleen Hielscher (chief executive) and Nadja Jehle (treasurer) together form the new board. While the maintenance of Thesis' regular activities



(providing different social as well as career related activities for both doctoral candidates and postdocs, e.g., organisation of trainings, maintaining current and developing new local groups of doctoral candidates, involvement in national higher education and research politics) remain the central aims for this year, strategic issues will also be addressed. Anyone interested in joining Thesis is invited to get in contact with us by either sending an email or visiting one of our events (contact and list of events is available on the website).

## LERU publishes advice paper on doctoral training

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'Creative, critical, autonomous, intellectual risk-takers, pushing the boundaries of frontier research.' That is how the European Commission describes doctoral candidates in its seven principles for innovative doctoral training, or at least that is what they want doctoral candidates to be trained to be. These days the majority of doctoral graduates will go to work outside academia; the chances of any individual doctoral candidate becoming a full professor are very low. The PhD is no longer the means to a research career that it once was. But as we continue to hire more doctoral candidates the question of what to do with them afterwards becomes ever more pressing.

The non-academic world does not always look so favourably on doctoral graduates, with many still viewing recent doctoral graduates as having no professional experience, and see them as only having skills in one, often very narrow, area. In response to this, universities and research institutions have been slowly trying to improve the quality of their doctoral training, developing and raising awareness of the other knowledge and skills acquired by doctoral candidates during the course of their research training. Whereas in the past, doctoral training was seen as training to become an expert in one's discipline, these initiatives aim to have it seen more as developing a person, someone who can then take their skills in organisation, in research etc. outside academy and add value to them.

This more formal and professional approach to doctoral training has been developed in numerous different ways by some of Europe's leading research universities, amongst them the 21 members of the League of European Research Universities (LERU). The best examples of doctoral training from LERU members have recently been collected and published in [an advice paper](#).

The paper builds on LERU's previous [2010 position paper](#) on doctoral training by giving more practical examples of how innovative doctoral training can be implemented. The paper describes the examples of good practice and offers some advice to employers, funders, universities, and policy makers. It is hoped that by developing these professional development programs for early stage researchers, the vision of doctoral candidates as creative risk takers will be fulfilled.

## News from Members – CJC (France)

In January 2013, CJC (Early-Stage Researchers Confederation), in collaboration with Andès (Doctors National Association), launched a monthly review called “*Le Doctorat à la loupe*” (“*PhD under the microscope*”).

Every month, the review aims to

inform all the actors involved in the PhD experience about the best practices to be used at every step of the PhD process.



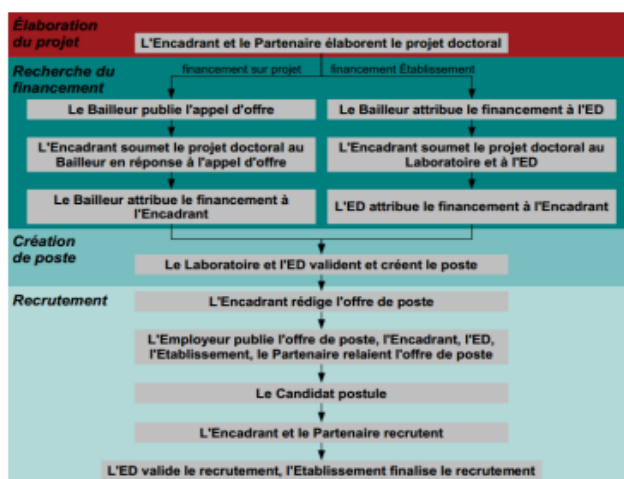
**WHY?** The PhD is one of the most important issues in the reflexion about the future of research in Europe. That is the reason why it is an absolute necessity to mobilize everyone on its evolutions, regulations and practices.

**HOW?** The “*Doctorat à la loupe*” is integrated in a long-term project: publishing a complete handbook about the PhD for candidates, supervisors, universities and companies. This project is financially and morally supported by the French Ministry of High Education and Research. Since 2009, more than 50 people - members from ANDès and from the local associations federated in CJC - have been involved in this project and have met during several workshops. The participants are both PhD candidates and doctors, from various ages and levels of their career, from every regions of France and various academic structures (institutes, research centers, universities, etc.). They all work in different scientific fields, from humanities to exact sciences.

A year after the “*Doctorat à la loupe*” launching, 8 reviews have already been published. They describe all the process “before the PhD”: who is and must be involved in it? How is the scientific project defined? What kind of funding is better? How is it possible to find it? What are the good practices in hiring PhD candidates? The redactors are now working on the second part, “during the PhD”, and on the last one, “after the PhD”.

More information: see <http://cjc.jeunes-chercheurs.org/doctorat-a-la-loupe/>

### Étapes du projet doctoral du montage au recrutement du doctorant



## Baku Forum 2014

After the success of “New Challenges in the European Area: International Baku Forum of Young Scientists” in May, 2013, it was decided to organise an even bigger event for 2014 – The Baku World Science Forum. The event will bring together participants, young scientists, from all over the world to share their experiences, promote cooperation, and strengthen the network of young scientists across the world.



Young scientists from all countries and all disciplines are invited to attend this unique event which will bring together around 300 participants from around 100 countries. The topic of the forum is “New Challenges in the World Science: Joint Approaches of Young Scientists”. Within this topic participants will consider the many emerging challenges that can require the expertise of many different research fields.

Within the structure of the Forum, five following sessions will be held simultaneously:

**Technical Sciences:** “Technical sciences as the basis of the modern innovation systems”

**Medicine, Biology and Chemistry:** “Natural processes on the basis of a new technology creation”

**Ecology, Earth and Agriculture:** “Interdisciplinary approach in earth, agrarian and environmental investigations”

**Economy and Sociology:** “Economy and sociology as the combination of the successful development of the global society”

**History, Philosophy, Culture:** “Problems of the social-humanitarian sciences in modern world”

The forum will also include many cultural events, ensuring that participants will leave having experienced something of Azerbaijan.

The event is hosted by the Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijan National Academy of Science will convene the conference together with Azerbaijan Young Scientists, Postgraduate and Masters Union and European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers.

For more information, and to register for the conference, go to the [conference website](#).



Azerbaijan Young Scientists, Post-Graduates & Masters Union (AYSPMU)



## DocLinks PhD Course

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### CALL FOR PHD COURSE ON GLOBAL CHALLENGES: URBANIZATION, LIVELIHOODS AND FOOD SECURITY

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences  
University of Botswana  
EU-Africa Doctoral Student Network (DocLinks)  
African Network for Agricultural Education (ANAFE)

#### Dates:

- Pre-course work - July 7th- July 27th 2014
- Residential School takes place in Botswana - July 28th – Aug 8th 2014
- Post-course work (individual assignments and submission) - Aug 9th – Aug 15th 2014

#### Residential School Venue:

- University of Botswana, 4775 Notwane Rd., Gaborone, Botswana

#### Who should attend:

- PhD students from SLU, African Universities and other universities in Europe

#### Programme:

- The course will include lectures, discussions and four field trips. The detailed schedule can be found under this link.

#### Financial matters

- Funding from SLU will partially cover PhD students' travel costs, accommodation, meals, and other costs related to the course depending on need and availability of funds. The number of participants is limited to 30 students and it is necessary to apply to attend the course.

For more information please visit the course home page

<http://phdcourseulfs.weebly.com/>

## The Open Access Button

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**Everyday, people are denied access to research behind paywalls.** People are denied access all the time, but the problem is invisible. The **Open Access Button** has been developed to make the problem of paywalls impossible to ignore. The button **tracks and maps the paywall problem collecting truly invaluable data on its scale.** The button will also **help you find an openly available copy of the paper you want**, helping you to work within the broken system.

Website: <http://oabutton.wordpress.com/>

twitter: [@OA\\_Button](https://twitter.com/OA_Button)

The open access button is a project supported by the [right to research coalition](#) and [Medsin UK](#).



## Cultural differences in business practices – Finland

*A Finnish man from the countryside had a teenage son who was born mute. One day, as the two were working the land, the boy's plough broke. To his father's astonishment, the son started swearing angrily at the land.*

*"Son!" shouted the father, "I did not know you could speak. Why didn't you say anything until now?"  
"I couldn't find the right moment" answered the boy as he started fixing the plough.*

This Swedish joke is probably one of the first things I ever read about Finland as a kid. The second thing I discovered was its large output of metal music with a melancholic twist.

### **Silence is golden**

My wise-looking Finnish teacher at the University of Helsinki liked to stress the Finnish uniqueness in being appropriately quiet. Feisty and always with a perfect timing for her jokes, Miss Silfverberg taught us that, in Finland, silence is golden, and one must learn to listen if he – or she, as she always emphasized – wants to truly communicate with Finns.

Scientists agree. Finnish silence is something real and one will probably avoid active discussions and passionate arguments in a meeting. According to Michael Berry[1], an American academic who studies Finnish speech culture and communication norms, Finns prefer listening in silence rather than doing small talk. This scientific research is backed by Ms. Silfverberg, as she believes that we may break the ice with Finns by talking about the weather, but "we will find some very cold water underneath".

One stereotype which is usually associated with quiet people is that they are not friendly. That is not true. While Finns may not be the ones initiating the discussion, they will be very happy to give you an answer. You should, though, be prepared for straightforwardness. Rather than going around the bush with fancy euphemisms, Finns tend to give short, straight and very logical answers. I remember being lost once in Helsinki so I went with a map to two young men who were chatting on the street. I asked if they could help me and their answer was – "No". After what seemed like some very long five seconds of really uncomfortable silence they added that they did not know the city that well themselves. Miss Silfverberg applies the same critical thinking to personal relations. She logically prefers having acquaintances, as keeping friends can be very demanding...

Business wise though, one great thing about communicating with Finns is that they have a very good command of English, probably even of Swedish (which is an official language, next to Finnish). This is great because, as I have personally experienced, their mother tongue is tough to learn, arguably one of the toughest in the world.

### **Equality for all**

Whether in business, government or in a school classroom, equality is one of the things that Finns value the most. Coming from Romania, a country which is based on top-down hierarchical systems, I was astonished to observe how Finns look at social relations, even from an early age. As a volunteer in a Finnish high school for students aged 14 to 18, I had no reply to the 15-year old who told me, straight-faced, that "teachers have to earn their respect in front of the students" and that there is no need to call anybody Mr. and Mrs. Their English language teacher nodded approvingly as she distributed sheets with "acceptable and unacceptable swears in English" ("c\*\*\*" and "f\*\*\*" words included).

Stemming from a visible sense of duty towards the others, the Finns are quite vocal about the Nordic social welfare system. With the idea of not leaving anybody behind, Finns invest in quality services for all[2]. If you go to Finland you'll be surprised by the high prices of, well, pretty much anything, the price of a high wage, high tax economy that invests in free education for everybody.

Those involved in EU projects know that the issue of gender equality is highly important in developing a proposal for funding. And Finland takes gender talk seriously. It has one of the highest rates of female political participation: 42.5% of Finnish parliamentarians are women. It was also one of the first countries to give a female minister (Miina Sillanpää, 1927).

On a personal note, I know when a country is serious about gender equality when it is also men talking about it in the media. While small pay gaps still exists – women earn 80% of what men do for the same job[3] – the Finnish authorities have official goals to gradually reduce these gaps.

And, since we are on the horizontal issues topic, let me just add that copy-right is sacred. From pillow design to pop songs, Finns protect and respect their and other's property. And they are also passionate about branding. Most of us have heard of Nokia, Angry Birds and, why not, Santa Claus. Some of you, about Marimekko and the Moomins. Finns are proud of their own products and they are learning fast how to market them. If you walk around Helsinki, you will see Angry Birds games, Angry Birds toys, Angry birds mugs, Angry Birds anything...

### **Passionate about innovation**

The Finns are keen on new things and innovation and don't just rely on seasonal tourism to Santa Claus Park in Lapland. According to a 2013 special report by the Economist[4], Finns are turning entrepreneurship into a lifestyle. Partly due to the government initiative to promote innovation but also due to the giant Nokia's rapid decline, Finns have embraced innovation as a means of helping the economy and, of course, themselves.

Perhaps one of the most visible proofs of their commitment to innovation, Finland has made broadband internet a legal right for all its citizens. Even though the majority of its population did have access to these services, in 2010 the government concluded that it was time to look at the internet not as a means for entertainment but as a fundamental right.[5]

As an extracurricular activity next to my studies, I took part in a pilot project initiated by the Demos think-tank together with the University of Helsinki aimed at promoting the entrepreneurial spirit among young people. Some of the chosen projects have actually succeeded. To give just an example, one of the ideas incubated turned into a small company which produces some of the coolest open - air events in the whole of Finland.

Regardless of their focus, most of these endeavours shared the idea of a common good. One essential element of this common good is nature. Beginning with family gathering and ending with official meetings (you might have heard about the Sauna-diplomacy, negotiations led my Finns with the Soviets during the Cold War), Finns will always love to retreat for a moment of silence (!) in a cottage by one of the country's many lakes. I am not saying that, for instance, when you will do business with Finns, you will automatically be handed a towel and invited to a sauna in the woods, but don't be surprised if does happen or you hear about it from others. Finns love nature and are interested to invest in it because they appreciate the role it plays in their well-being.

### **Finnishing remarks**

Most of what I have written here comes from my personal experience. I do not claim that all Finns are the way I just described them but I do want to offer a flavour of my connection to this remarkable Nordic country. While a discussion on silence and metal music may not directly say much about business opportunities in Finland, I still believe it can serve as a base for a thorough analysis on what sort of opportunities one may find in Finland. At first look, success in marketing heavy metal bands abroad and a free iPhone game about birds shot at pig's heads might not appear to say much about Finland. But in actual fact they are symbolic of a country which takes time to find unexpectedly creative ways to respect and preserve the things it values.



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