

Eurodoc 2007 Conference

Eurodoc is pleased to announce its annual conference to be held on 15-18th March in London. The aim of the Eurodoc conference is to provide the framework for young European researchers to meet with European political and economical leaders and to engage in fruitful discussions on the construction of the European Research and Higher Education Areas. Moreover, given the participation of young researchers from all over Europe and from multiple disciplines, the Eurodoc conference constitutes a unique occasion for interdisciplinary communication and networking. The Eurodoc conference is open for all young researchers.

Contribute to Eurodoc's activities

Add a European aspect to your PhD and postdoc time! A new page on eurodoc.net describes how young researchers can get involved in Eurodoc as individuals. See more on:

<http://www.eurodoc.net/articles.php?lng=en&pg=771>

Doctoral programmes in the Bologna process

In the course of the Bologna Process, the "Doctoral Programmes Follow Up Project" was initiated by a mandate of the ministers responsible for higher education by the EUA (European University Association) in cooperation with EURODOC, ESIB, Austria and France. In the last half of 2006, there were two events in this project:

- Eurodoc's participation at a workshop in end of October in Brussels dealing with issues regarding so called doctoral/research schools and the link between Master and PhD cycle was attended by Eurodoc's President Raffaella Öckinger and Wolfgang Eppenschwandtner.
- Eurodoc's point of view about doctoral/research school was delivered by Raffaella, who focused on the need of clear outcome-based structures and the even more urgent need for this to be accompanied by adequate finances. Money raised to run a research school should be settled not only to give its structure solid foundations but even to cover the PhD candidate's expenses and salary. All PhD candidates enrolled in a doctoral/research school should be entitled to competitive income covering among others social security and parental leave.

Doctoral/research schools should promote an open-mind environment and offer activities not only to the PhD candidate enrolled but even to other researchers interested in a particular subject. The need of quality supervision and quality control of a supervisor's skills was one more issue raised.

Last but not least Eurodoc advocated transparency and fairness in the admission procedure where the requirements for admission should be clear stated in advance and the PhD candidate judged by an external commission.

In his presentation "From Predoc to Postdoc" Wolfgang Eppenschwandtner, member of the council of Eurodoc, urged that

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universities should provide more information for prospective doctoral candidates on doctoral programmes. He concluded that fortifying the link between Master and PhD is desirable, but the Master should still be the main route to the doctorate.

Please see also the related Eurodoc Statement of standards in the assessment, expectations and outcomes of doctoral programmes in Europe (adopted in 2006)

http://www.eurodoc.net/file/0706_ed_descriptor.pdf

Finally, from 7-9 December, major stakeholders convened to the Bologna Seminar "Doctoral Programmes in Europe" in Nice, France. Thanks to financial support of the Eurodoc project "Doctoral Programmes in Transition" by the Socrates Programme of the European Commission, Eurodoc was able to send 1-2 persons from each member country to this event. In the opening plenary session, Eurodoc president Raffaella Öckinger gave an overview on the developments and key issues that emerged since the last ministerial meeting in Bergen from the perspective of young researchers. In the session on funding during the Nice seminar Eurodoc vice president Tine Ejdrup gave a presentation pointing out a few key issues for early stage researchers regarding funding - the main points were that the funding should be guaranteed for the planned duration of the doctoral programme, also that it is very important that the early stage researcher received all the benefits of any professional while in the doctoral programme such as parental leave and health insurance.

In general the audience seemed to agree that it was important to treat the early stage researchers decently both in the context of the European Charter and Code, but also in order to keep attracting the most talented graduates into the doctoral programmes.

European survey in the pretest stage

In its ambitious aim to conduct the first ever Europe-wide comprehensive survey on doctoral researchers, the Eurodoc Survey Workgroup has reached a major step. In end of November, the pre-test was launched.

The Eurodoc survey will collect comparable data on conditions of young Researchers in Europe, on career paths, funding, training and supervision, working conditions, research activity, mobility and future prospects of doctoral researchers. The results of this survey will help EURODOC provide evidence in effort to improve the research and training conditions of doctoral researchers by interacting with other stakeholders in research and higher education policy. 48 doctoral researchers and 13 experts in higher education research policy from 24 countries participated in the pre-test. Their comments and the data of the pre-test will feed into a final revision of the questionnaire.

Partners for the survey are still cordially welcome - especially for the implementation of the survey, Eurodoc members would appreciate the cooperation and support of universities and ministries. Please contact us at [surveywg\(at\)eurodoc.net](mailto:surveywg(at)eurodoc.net) for any comments or questions.

New Projects

We are pleased to announce that Eurodoc will participate in two recently started projects in European research and higher education policy:

- *DOC-CAREERS - From Innovative Doctoral Training to Enhanced Career Opportunities.*

The increasing uptake of doctoral programmes in Europe has also seen a change in the career destinations of many doctoral graduates being that of sectors other than academia. Likewise DOC-CAREERS, a project coordinated by the EUA, is seeking to understand the needs of sectors outside academia to provide greater career opportunities to the researcher.

- *Doctoral Programme Project in Ukraine*

Eurodoc is pleased to announce the successful application to the TEMPUS programme from the European Commission of a project on doctoral programmes in Ukraine for which it is a partner. Initiated by the Ukrainian university of Kiev-Mohyla Academy, the project "Training for the Implementation of the European Higher Education Area Third Cycle in Ukraine" will be conducted in partnership with university Pierre et Marie Curie (UPMC, Paris - France), university of Bergen (Norway), university Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain) and the International Charitable Fund for the Renaissance of Kiev-Mohyla Academy (Ukraine). The project aims at reforming doctoral programmes in Ukraine along the lines outlined by the Bologna Process discussions and will take stock of Eurodoc's unique expertise on doctoral research and training in Europe.

The members of Eurodoc

Presently, Eurodoc has 26 members, all being organisations of young researchers and a further growth can be expected in 2007. A list of all members of Eurodoc can be found at <http://www.eurodoc.net/articles.php?lng=en&pg=16>

The members of Eurodoc come from different backgrounds, are different in size, have different approaches and priorities. As

organisations for early stage researchers, run by early stage 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.

>>> ÖH (Austria, member)

Giving a voice to doctoral candidates in Austria is the mission of the initiative "doktorat.at - ÖH Doktorat". Despite being researchers, Austrian doctoral candidates are registered as students during their doctoral training. Thus, by this legal definition, around 16,000 doctoral candidates are represented by the Austrian National Students Union (Österreichische Hochschul-Innenschaft, ÖH), which responded to this mandate in 2004 by establishing "doktorat.at - ÖH Doktorat" as a platform by doctoral candidates, for doctoral candidates, but also for young researchers in general, including post-docs.

The activities of doktorat.at - ÖH Doktorat can be structured along the triad "information - networking - representation of interest". In more detail, this means:

- Providing information for doctoral candidates in fields like mobility, financing, etc. and promoting the transfer of information from research and higher education policy to doctoral candidates and their representatives at Austrian universities.
- Promoting scientific communication among young researchers, including interdisciplinary and inter-university dialogue, establishing a networking platform for doctoral candidates to overcome traditional isolated apprenticeship-like relations and dependencies.
- Introducing the interests of doctoral candidates in national and European research, science, university and education policy as well as pointing attention to problems concerning doctoral candidates, suggesting solutions and offering expertise to improve the practice at Austrian research institutions.

To encompass all these activities into a common form, the webpage <http://www.doktorat.at/en> was launched as an open platform for a diverse target group including doctoral candidates and junior researchers, Austrian research and education policy makers and media. See more also in the Article "Giving Young Researchers Their Due" published in bridges, the journal of the Office for Science and Technology, Embassy of Austria in Washington, DC.

<http://www.ostina.org/content/view/1396/602/>

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