

# eurodoc Newsletter

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The Official Newsletter of  
*The European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers*

For more information on Eurodoc visit [www.eurodoc.net](http://www.eurodoc.net) or make an inquiry at [board@eurodoc.net](mailto:board@eurodoc.net)

Dear Readers,

we are pleased to present you with Eurodoc's newsletter, aimed at informing Eurodoc members and other interested parties about recent activities proceeded by the Eurodoc community.

The last period was marked by several events related to PhD candidates and the career development of junior researchers, in which Eurodoc participated to highlight the need of improvements in junior researchers' working conditions and training, in order to improve the recognition of PhD in various professional contexts.

In this issue, positions taken and initiatives conducted by several NAs are presented, from Germany, Serbia, Poland and France. Please note also information about the upcoming Eurodoc's conference!

Edited by the Board of:

*The European Council of  
Doctoral Candidates and  
Junior Researchers*

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## Contribute to the newsletter and promote your activities!

The Eurodoc Newsletter editorial board welcomes any contribution from our member associations and from partner associations or external organizations. We especially encourage our members to send us short reports on events organized by their associations or any national news that may be interesting to others.

If you are organizing an event or taking part in discussion/actions concerning PhD candidates and junior researchers in your country, please write a story about it and get the whole Eurodoc community familiar with your activities!

## **From precariousness to perspective? Latest attempt to make Germany's research system attractive to early-stage- researchers still awaits proof of efficacy**

While the German research system has gained further international reputation in the past years due to political programs such as the Excellence Initiative and a relatively high percentage of GDP invested in research, other political activities have continuously decreased Germany's attractiveness for early stage researchers (ESRs).

One of these activities being a law that was put into practice in 2007 and which, other than in the rest of the labour market, allows employing ESRs and other non-professorial research staff on repeated short-term contracts. The effective use of this special law resulted in nearly 90% of this research staff at universities and research institutions being on temporary contract with 50% of them having a contract for less than one year. Consequently, numerous doctoral candidates start their research not knowing whether they will have a contract until they finish their doctorate. Postdocs are not much better off, with most of them being on repeated fixed-term contracts as well for several years. Though tenure track is a concept that appears in the political debates more and more frequently, it is barely found in practice in the German research system. Hence, after approximately 12 years of working under precarious conditions (the maximum years that this law allows ESRs to be employed on fixed-term contracts) many postdocs will fall prey to the prevailing motto in or out. Since there are barely other unrestricted positions besides the professorship, the only alternatives they have are leaving the research system - even if they are very well qualified for research - or leaving the country.

After growing protest by junior researchers, the German government has finally presented a new bill at the end of 2015. The new law will become effective in spring 2016, but whether it will bring a substantial change to the system is still questionable. One important change is that the timeframe of a contract now has to be tied to the time necessary to achieve the qualification goal which is given as reason for the temporary employment. However, it is neither defined how exactly this timeframe should be determined nor what kind of qualifications are included.

While most people would assume that for early career researchers the first goal is to be awarded the doctorate, the law explicitly states that other qualification goals are equally valid for a short-term employment at this career stage. One example given for such qualifications is project management. Hence, one has to conclude that ESRs might be employed at higher education institutions (HEIs) on fixed-term contracts with a defined goal to qualify in project management. What timeframe results for a contract from such a goal remains a secret : one that might be lifted in the coming years by the labour courts.

For the next couple of years this law file will be closed until employment statistics will show us how effective the change of law has been to reduce the number of ESRs with precarious employment conditions.

*Thesis.  
(Claudia Dobrinski, Anna Tschaut.)*

## Doktoranti : ESR Journal Announcement



# ESR Journal

We are excited to announce launching an Early Stage Researchers journal.

The ESR Journal is created by young researchers with the aim of improving the way important scientific results are presented and shared. ESR stands for Early Stage Researchers Journal. This name was chosen because we think that nowadays universities, research institutes and publishers do not pay enough attention to young researchers when they encounter the publication process for the first time. Many surveys of organizations that represent young researchers in many countries show that most of them know very little about scientific research publishing. Many young scientists are doing top quality research with exciting scientific results, but are frequently ill-

prepared for publishing these results. Many young scientists have experienced negative, sometimes even rude feedback from editors at major journals in their field. Finding this to be very discouraging behavior, our aim is to provide support and quality feedback for all authors who submit their manuscript to ESR Journal. While young researchers are our target group, we also welcome articles from researchers at any stage of their careers that meet the journal's technical and ethical standards.

The ESR Journal follows the highest publishing and ethical standards. We have modeled our submissions and review process on the standards, procedures and software developed by the Public Library of Science and eLife and freely shared with the scientific community. The open-access ESR journal has the aim to make science publishing more effectively benefit science and scientists. Why have we chosen Open Access? Because we strongly believe that "Open Access truly expands shared knowledge across scientific fields. It is the best path for accelerating multi-disciplinary breakthroughs in research."\*

For more information, please visit the ESR Journal web site: [www.ESRjournal.org](http://www.ESRjournal.org)



## Representing Eurodoc

**Eurodoc was officially  
present at these events:**

*International Conference on the Doctorate (CID)*, Paris, November 11 (Sanjin Marion – keynote speaker for Eurodoc; Anis Amokrane – for CJC; Carole Chapin – attending)

*Lumen conference*, Warsaw, November 23 (Iryna Degtiarova, Ewelina Pabjańczyk-Wlazło)

"KRD - 10th Anniversary of establishment", Warsaw, November 21-22th (Miia Ijäs - keynote speaker for Eurodoc, Ewelina Pabjańczyk-Wlazło - attending).

*MSCA Conference*, Luxembourg, December 10-11 (Carole Chapin)

## Activation of doctoral candidates - the 10th anniversary of establishment of The National Representation of PhD Candidates in Poland

The National Representation of PhD Candidates in Poland (Krajowa Reprezentacja Doktorantów) in 2015 celebrated its 10th anniversary of establishment in 2015. KRD is an independent and self-governing organization, which is the supreme representative having the power to express opinions and take actions for the benefit of the general doctoral community in Poland.

It KRD elects leaders from amongst the doctoral candidates, and to achieve its statutory objectives can recruit, in an open recruitment, doctoral candidates willing to cooperate by voluntary work. KRD is also an advisory body to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in Poland, and as such, On daily basis, KRD conducts public consultation and, prepares reports and studies on a daily basis, which are then presented to the Ministry. and Thus, KRD has a direct impact on changes in the Laws on Higher Education in Poland. KRD also organizes trainings and awareness-raising workshops for PhD candidates/students in the field of law and soft skills. KRD also organizes trainings and workshops for raising awareness about relevant legislation or for developing various soft skills.

The main statutory objectives include :

- Representing the interests and defending

the rights of PhD Candidates in Poland;

- Helping to create and develop the self-governance of the doctoral candidates;
- Taking actions aimed at raising legal awareness in the area of science and higher education of doctoral students, as well as actions to promote mobility;
- Supporting initiatives aimed at developing scientific, educational, cultural, social and physical aspects of the doctoral candidates' community;
- Cooperating with centers of research and innovation, entrepreneurs, the mass media-massmedia and other stakeholders;
- Building social and cultural ties among the doctoral candidates' community;
- Expressing opinions and presenting proposals on matters of concern related to DCs
- Submitting legislative proposals to the competent state authorities of the state and expressing opinions on draft legislation concerning PhD candidates.

KRD bodies are the Convention of Delegates, the President of KRD, the Board, and the Audit Commission. They also include and the DCs' Ombudsman, who defends the rights and interests of doctoral candidates in case of violation of the law, and the principles of coexistence and social justice. by acts or bodies, organizations and institutions obliged to respect and implement these rights with respect to doctoral candidates.



*The Board – term of office 2015, from the left D. Jeziorowska, T. Dobosz, J. Kicielińska, M. Gajda, W. Stodółka, M. Nowak, E. Pabjańczyk-Wlazło*



*The Board and Auditing Committee-term of office 2016 from the left :  
N. Chodkowska, G. Augustyn, A. Pryżyńska, Ł. Hnatkowski, M. Zorychta, M. Gajda, E. Wyraz, W. Sobczak, A. Zaleszczyk, J. Kicielińska, W. Stodółka, N. Kępczak*



One of the major projects in 2015 was the organization of the Conference with the title "X-anniversary of the self-governance doctoral candidates community - Whence? Where? Which way? " (Warsaw, November 20th, 2015). During the Conference, participants were familiarized with the history and an analysis of the situation of doctoral candidates in Poland in from the perspective of the last 10 years. Actively involved doctoral candidates from across the country came together to discuss the problems and challenges for the upcoming years.

The second flagship event was the organization of the Conference "Model of Functioning of PhD Training - How to create an innovations in the frame of doctoral programs?" (Warsaw-Falenty, November 21-22th, 2015) where the models of PhD training in the EU countries and the European Charter and Code for Researchers were presented. An important element that emerged in activity in the 2015 term of office was promoting the development of physical culture among PhD candidates, according to the adage "a healthy mind in a healthy body". Many sporting events were thus organized, which attracted much a lot of interest and numerous a number of participants e.g.:

- Water Sports Workshops (September 25-27th, 2015)
- Indoor Football Championships (March 10th, 2015)
- Squash Championship (October 16-18th, 2015)
- Indoor Volleyball Championship (October 24th, 2015).

Apart from sport events, every year KRD organizes a competition for the most "pro-doctoral" University - „PRODOK" and the most "pro-doctoral" Institute of Polish Academy of Sciences - PROPAN".

The aim of the competition is to select the university and institute, respectively, that is the most friendly towards PhD candidates, university and institute and to promote and strengthen good practices.

KRD was also involved in many others events, supporting the doctoral candidates' community in Poland e.g. the co-organization of a training camp for soft-skills such as trainings: teamwork & effective team communication, 2nd Academic Entrepreneurship Workshops, "Financing of science for doctoral candidates" etc. It was a remarkably busy year for all doctoral candidates in Poland.

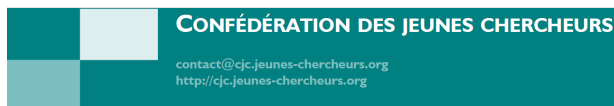
KRD was also involved in other activities supporting the doctoral candidates' community in Poland. As such, it co-organized a training event for the development of soft skills, including workshops on teamwork and effective team communication, but also subjects such as academic entrepreneurship and financing of science for doctoral candidates. Overall, it was a remarkably busy year for all doctoral candidates in Poland.

*Elżbieta Wyraz, Iwona Sulowska,  
Ewelina Pabjańczyk-Wlazło  
Krajowa Reprezentacja Doktorantów :  
[www.krd.edu.pl](http://www.krd.edu.pl)*

Krajowa  
Reprezentacja  
Doktorantów



## CJC involves in promoting the Human Ressources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)



In France, only two institutions have implemented the Human Ressources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) and received the label "HR excellence in Research" [1].

Considering that this situation can be greatly improved, the CJC (Confederation of the early-stage researchers, French member of Eurodoc) published a document to inform about the label "HR excellence in Research" and the process of obtaining it in November 2015 [2].

The HRS4R aims at helping research institutions, both public or private, to implement the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (Charter and Code). The Charter and Code describe good practices for both researchers and employers. The HRS4R is an enhancement process and allows to acknowledge the organisations providing an attractive and supportive environment to researchers [3].

### Getting the label

Four steps are required of an institution to get the label. First, an internal analysis must describe the institution's policy towards the 40 Charter and Code principles. These principles are divided in four areas, namely 'Ethical and professional aspects', 'Recruitment', 'Working conditions and social security' and 'Training'. Second, the institution has to propose actions to enhance its

alignment with the Charter and Code. These actions must be summed up in a public document. Third, it applies for the label and the European Commission checks that there is indeed a HRS4R process. At this stage, the research institution gets the label. Last but not least, the institution regularly evaluates improvements.

Every four years, an external evaluation has to be undertaken. This process, as much as a summary of the Charter and Code principles, is detailed in our file



### PhD candidates in the HRS4R

For CJC, one of the main interests of the HRS4R is its acknowledgement of PhD candidates as early-stage researchers, with all the rights and duties it implies. Improving their work conditions can be part of the actions undertaken to align with the Charter and Code. It could also be beneficial for junior researchers without permanent position, who should benefit from the same conditions than their colleagues. We offered some ideas on the subject.

- [1] <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/strategy4ResearcherOrgs>
- [2] <http://cjc-jeunes-chercheurs.org/positions/CP-11-11-15.pdf>
- [3] <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/strategy4Researcher>

**1 -** Assuring decent working conditions implies the existence of a contract between the PhD candidate and its employer. Both are then protected, including stability of employment and intellectual property. The employer gives access to the young researcher to digital, material, human and financial resources. This allows good conditions for work and collaboration for the success of the research. In return, the employee warns his employer when the situation requires the establishment of specific arrangements in relation to the regulation between them.

**2 -** The importance of transparent procedures for a fair recruitment, which is stressed by the Charter. Indeed, this is the only way to ensure that the job is open to all potentially interested persons, including and especially those outside the network of the laboratory, and that choices are made on objective criteria. Furthermore, transparency of recruitment naturally helps in the fight against discriminations in hiring.

**3 -** Facilitating career pursuits of the young researchers. Encouraging detachments and mobility during the contract period and organizing the reception of co-workers prepare young researchers to a globalised working environment. Scientific work takes advantage of strong interactions and collaborations, including international ones. On the other hand, to clearly present different possible career pursuits, and thus reduce job insecurity, increases the attractiveness of institutions.

See more examples (in fr.) on :

<http://cjc.jeunes-chercheurs.org/positions/CP-11-11-15.pdf>



<http://cjc.jeunes-chercheurs.org>



**Highlight on:**  
**The MSCA - COFUND Conference 2015**  
**(Luxembourg, December 2015)**

[The MSCA 2015 Conference](#) focused on one of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions' specific scheme: COFUND.

The conference topic was the opportunity to address several issues related to human resources strategies for researchers, regulations, initiatives and evaluations. All of them are crucial for researchers at the early stage of their careers: intersectoral mobility and employability, equal opportunity, including gender and diversity, career pathways, international mobility and recruitment processes. Working groups were organized in order to suggest and discuss concrete proposals for improvements, structural and legal changes at the European level.

In the session 3 on Career pathways, Eurodoc presented the results of the Survey I [1] and presented the project of Survey II. The initiative of the project was welcomed with enthusiasm by the participants of the working group.

The presentations of the Conference can be found on the conference website :

<http://msca2015.lu/conference-programme/>

[1] Eurodoc, *Eurodoc Survey I: The first Eurodoc Survey on Doctoral Candidates in Twelve European Countries*. Descriptive Report (Eds. Gülay Ateş, Karoline Holländer, Nadia Koltcheva, Snežana Krstić Filomena Parada), 2011.

## Highlight on:

## The International Conference on Doctorate (CID 2nd edition, Paris, November 2015)

**"The Doctorate in all its States :  
nature and perception of the doctorate  
worldwide"**

The doctorate is usually considered as the highest internationally recognized diploma. It concludes a research experience, of variable duration depending on the country and field of research. The doctorate also has different designations depending on the country. The "Ph.D." (Philosophiæ doctor) is typically used in North American countries such as the USA and Canada. Apart from duration and designation, the doctorate may correspond to different realities depending on the country (...): funding of doctoral program (...) PhD training-career transition, academic labor market, PhD status in Industry and career path.

From 1997, the Lisbon Agenda attempted to unify doctoral education and training in Europe. The Bologna conference (and the 29 signatory countries) officially recognized the doctorate as the third qualification of a three stages higher education system comprising the Bachelor, the Master and, finally, the Doctorate. Nevertheless, many differences still exist in Europe with respect to doctoral education practices and in its recognition.

The goal of this conference [was] to compare the situation of doctoral candidates and doctorate holders and their evolution in France and in other countries, to review

studies made worldwide on these questions and to derive perspectives for the evolution of the doctorate in a national and international context.

The conference ambition is to consider the doctorate from a scientific point of view and in its different dimensions: cultural, educational, professional, etc. From the communications that will be presented during the conference, we will try to draw up good practices and ways to currently promote the doctorate.

The conference was organized according to three main sections:

1. "Doctoral education : practices, experimentations and added-value of doctoral candidates in the global research system"
2. "Professional opportunities, mobility and recognition of doctorate holders competencies in the employment market."
3. "Good practices for researchers' career in EU: impact of the Charter and Code ten years on"

Eurodoc was invited to introduce the section 3, with a key-note speech : « The Charter and Code: Ten years of Status Quo? », where Eurodoc's member CJC also presented a paper.

Source :  
Conference presentation  
by the organizers  
(Adoc Talent Management, Docteo, Doc'up)

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All videos from the event in French and English will be soon available on the CID's website : <http://cid.docteo.net>





### Eurodoc Conference 2016

The Eurodoc Conference 2016 is approaching!

It will be held on 20-21 of April in Luxembourg.

This year's event, organised by LuxDoc, will focus on "Doctoral training: which future?". Through several stakeholders presentations and NAs contributions, the conference will present innovative ideas and good practices regarding the topic of doctoral training in Europe.

Check the complete programme and register now by following this link!

<http://www.eurodoc-lux2016.org>

# eurodoc

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