

Eurodoc Ambassador Programme for Values and Democracy in European Research and Higher Education (ValDem)

The aim of the ambassador programme is to enable academics—particularly Early Career Researchers (ECRs)—in European higher education institutions to understand and explore the role higher education and research play for democracies in Europe and to become ambassadors for democracy within their institutions, their research communities, as well as in society. Particularly in this moment when both democracy and many of the fundamental values, such as academic freedom and autonomy, are under threat across Europe, it is crucial to ensure that we as the academic community have a concrete, shared understanding thereof to strengthen and safeguard both higher education and democracy.



The programme consists of three parts:

- PART I – THE DEMOCRATIC CONTEXT OF RESEARCH AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE
- PART II – EHEA FUNDAMENTAL VALUES
- PART III – INSTITUTIONS, LEGISLATIONS, AND QUESTIONS OF ALIGNMENT

The first part situates research and higher education in Europe in a democratic context: As an actor and key part of civil society. It highlights the connection between the democratic values of the CoE and the values of higher education and zooms in on the multiple roles that academic researchers can occupy, both in their professional role and as private citizens. It is concluded with a session that situates the right to education and science in a human rights context.

The second part zooms in on the six fundamental values of the EHEA. An introduction to the mission and vision behind the Bologna process will be followed by a deep-dive on each of the values and their connection to the democratic mission of HEI.

The third part will focus on the three international institutions (UNESCO, CoE, and EU) that structure the EHEA and the ERA and thus provide the frameworks for research and higher education in Europe.

Each part will be concluded by an online workshop held in real time to ensure that the ambassadors are provided a platform to articulate their own role regarding the democratic mission of HE, reflect on tensions between the different expectations, and at the same time become part of a network of peers.

The goal of the “Eurodoc Ambassador Programme” is to move the research community closer to fulfilling the ‘democratic mission’ of higher education as formulated by the Council of Europe and to implementing the fundamental values of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

This course is designed for academics on all career levels (PhD candidates onwards) and from all disciplines. It will not require any prior knowledge of higher education and research governance, philosophy of science, or political science.

Last updated: March 09, 2025

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PARTICIPATION

We will offer two tracks for participating:

- (1) **Ambassadors (Track 1)**: Those, who are committed to be **certificated as future Eurodoc Ambassadors** of democracy and the fundamental values in academia. Spots for this track are limited (application procedure). The workload requires: attendance of the lectures (min. 50% IRT for each part, watch the others); completion of the reading and answering the short quiz for each lecture (pass/fail); attendance of the seminars (three; IRT) after each part – mandatory attendance with active participation; completion of 3 homework tasks
- (2) **Observers (Track 2): Open to all interested**. Those who do not wish to become European ambassadors or do not have enough time to commit can **join the online presentations** without any commitment.

Registration form: <https://forms.gle/rn5fUfuRW7o5Sp4L9>

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us: valdem@eurodoc.net

The deadline for **registering for Track 1 is March 5, 2025 with participation numbers limited to 80 people** to ensure the quality of the seminar sessions. Final confirmations for participation in Track 1 will go out before March 10, 2025. Should a spot in Track 1 not be allocated to someone, they will be automatically moved to Track 2.

Track 2 (attending the lectures) has no participation limits, meaning that if you registered for Track 2 your participation is confirmed.

The most up to date programme will always be available here:

<https://eurodoc.net/news/2025/valdem-registration>

We will send an e-mail with access to the course platform and the final information for the course by March 10, 2025 (one week before the start).

STRUCTURE of modules

Structure for lectures:

- Approximately 50 min online lecture plus 30 min discussion (some are a bit longer). The lecture will be recorded.
- Material provided: 2 page 'concept notes' and 1 article as mandatory reading, suggestions for further reading; 3 - 5 multiple choice questions for each lesson for examination

Structure for seminars:

- 4 hours (including breaks)
- 3 homework tasks (one for each seminar)
- In-depth discussion and group work, so participants can apply the knowledge gained from the expert lectures and connect it to values and skills

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SCHEDULE

Date & Times (CET!)	Module name and description	Speaker
17.03. 16:00-17:30	[0] Introduction	Pil Maria Saugmann, Hannah Schoch, Norbert Bencze
PART I – THE DEMOCRATIC CONTEXT OF RESEARCH AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE		
24.03. 16:00-17:20	<p>[1.1] Institutions for Democracy in Europe</p> <p>The starting point of the course is a lecture that maps the institutional context for democracy in Europe, its core principles, institutions, and processes. We will begin with a brief presentation on the three main institutions and its bodies: the European Union (EU) (European Parliament, European Commission, European Council, Council of the European Union, Court of Justice of the European Union); the Council of Europe (CoE) (Council of Ministers, and the European Court of Human Rights); the United Nations and in particular United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The session will conclude with outlining steps for strengthening the resilience of European democracies so they can better withstand and adapt to challenges, threats, and crises.</p>	Gerhard Ermischer (Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe)
24.03. 17:40-19:00	<p>[1.2] Experts in Democracies</p> <p>The goal of this session is for participants to gain an understanding of the role they and their research can play in society while supporting the values of democracy. The lecture addresses the logics of democratic politics versus that of research and higher education, and the respective roles and responsibilities of researchers and politicians in democracy. After the lecture, the participants have an understanding of their roles as researchers/experts in society and the challenges and opportunities for integrating experts in democracies.</p>	Lisa Herzog (University of Groningen)
31.03. 16:00-17:20	<p>[1.3] The EHEA and the Democratic Mission</p> <p>In 2007, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe formulated the recommendations for the public responsibilities for higher education and research noting that HEIs should strengthen the values of democratic and equitable societies. This lecture explores in detail what the ‘democratic mission’ of HEIs entails, how HEIs can become a space where democratic values are aligned and where active citizenship is strengthened, including the increased focus given to the ‘democratization of science’. The</p>	Paola Mattei (University of Milan)

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	goal is to gain a clearer understanding of democracy, the European democratic values and how they relate to higher education and research.	
31.03. 17:40-19:00	[1.4] Higher Education and Civil Society The goal of this session is for participants to gain an understanding of the civic mission of HE, the role of HEIs in civil society, and the importance of civil society for democracies. The lecture addresses what it entails to view higher education as a public good in democracy and especially what the role of the HEIs and higher education is in protecting and developing the values of democracy in order to strengthen civil society.	Ronaldo Munck (Dublin City University)
03.04. 17:40-19:00	[1.5] Higher Education, Research, Culture and Human Rights The lecture introduces the participants to the core cultural human rights (the right to education, the right to culture, the right to science as well as author's rights), established in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and repeated in the United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966). The focus will be on the right to science and on the vision behind the Covenant and its implication for the role of universities, research, and researchers in (democratic) societies. It will also address the work of UNESCO to ensure the right to science.	Helle Porsdam (University of Copenhagen)
14.04. 16:00-20:00	LIVE SEMINAR (4 hours)	
	PART II – EHEA FUNDAMENTAL VALUES	
24.04. 16:00-17:20	[2.1] Academic Freedom Academic freedom plays a fundamental role in promoting and protecting democratic principles and institutions. The goal of this session is for participants to gain an understanding of what academic freedom entails – its scope and its limitations –, how it has developed in the context of Europe and what structures are in place to enable it, as well as why it is a fundamental value in EHEA and its importance to democracy.	Liviu Matei (King's College)
24.04. 17:40-19:00	[2.2] Institutional Autonomy and the Role of Public Authorities The goal of this session is for participants to gain an understanding of the role of institutional autonomy in the context of academic freedom, the importance of institutional autonomy in keeping and ensuring the broad knowledge base and independent	Peter Maassen (University of Oslo)

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	<p>research and education scope for democratic societies. At the same time, public authorities are also required to take an active role in ensuring that HEIs can and do meet the multiple expectations and objectives of society while reflecting the values of the (democratic) society.</p>	
<p>28.04. 16:00-17:20</p>	<p>[2.3] Academic Governance and Representational Rights The session aims for participants to understand the role of academic governance and how it links to participatory democracy. It will introduce the participants to different types of academic governance in Europe. They will thereby be able to grasp the importance of representational rights within higher education systems, as well as how through academic governance and representational rights of the academic community (to be understood as students, researchers/ academics, as well as technical and administrative staff) the values of the HEIs can find alignment with the values of democracy.</p>	<p>Bjørn Stensaker (University of Oslo)</p>
<p>28.04. 17:40-19:00</p>	<p>[2.4] Ethics, Integrity and other Societal Expectations of Research(ers) This lecture will provide participants with an understanding of the importance of accountability frameworks: The research ecosystem has crucial checks-and-balances in place to foster ethics and integrity and hold its users accountable for breaches of any kind. We will discuss the distinction between the two concepts and how both are fundamental to the quality and trustworthiness of academia. Research ethics refers to the obligation to comply with laws, regulatory frameworks, as well as guiding principles in order to prevent or minimise harm to a research subject's welfare and dignity. While research integrity is concerned with preventing harm to the knowledge base or literature. The lecture will furthermore look at national and discipline differences, providing an overview of the many expectations, such as ABS/Nagoya Protocol, Research Security, Lab animals and Dual Use. Despite such differences, however, expectations of integrity and ethics are important in all disciplines and all national research systems. The goal of this session is for participants to gain an understanding of the importance of research ethics and integrity both for furthering science but equally for ensuring and preserving public trust in research and HEIs.</p>	<p>Tom Lindeman (ENRIO)</p>
<p>05.05. 16:00-17:20</p>	<p>[2.5] ALLEA Code of Conduct This lecture looks in detail at the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and offers participants an understanding of current practices of research integrity as well as the actual tools in</p>	<p>Maura Hiney (ALLEA)</p>

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	place to make self-monitoring by the academic communities possible in the first place. It will conclude by mapping out the importance of research integrity for the societal and political context within which academic institutions exist and the vision for HEIs in democracies thereby purported.	
05.05. 17:40-19:00	[2.6] Higher Education in Europe: The Bologna Process and the EHEA Fundamental Values The goal of this session is for participants to gain an understanding of the history, vision, and mission of the Bologna Process and of the EHEA fundamental values. It will specifically zoom in on the connection between the Bologna process, the EHEA fundamental values, and democracy as well as on the question of how the values can be fully implemented, strengthened, and protected across Europe.	Sjur Bergan (independent education expert and former Head of the Council of Europe's Education Department)
19.05. 16:00-20:00	LIVE SEMINAR (4 hours)	
	PART III – INSTITUTIONS, LEGISLATIONS, AND QUESTIONS OF ALIGNMENT	
22.05. 16:00-17:20	[3.1] The ERA and the EU Institutions and Legislations for Researchers The goal of this session is for participants to gain an understanding of the European Research Area (ERA), the EU institutions, and EU legislation and frameworks concerning the research and innovation sector. The aim is to provide the participants with an overview of how the ERA and how the EU regulates the conditions of research and researchers.	NN
22.05. 17:40-19:00	[3.2] The Legislation for Academic Freedom The goal of this session is for participants to gain an understanding of how the safeguarding of academic freedom is legislated in the EU and in the member states. The aim is to provide the participants with an overview of the different approaches in doing so in order to equip them with a better understanding	NN
26.05. 16:00-17:20	[3.3] The Council of Europe In this lecture, the participants will learn about the history of the Council of Europe and its role when it comes to HEIs, research, and education. We will look at the current major foci of the institution and go over its recommendations and declaration for	Jelena Drca (Council of Europe)

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	HE (e.g. The Cultural Convention, The Lisbon Recommendation and the 2007 Recommendation). The lecture ends with looking at how citizens and researchers respectively can interact with the Council of Europe.	
26.05. 17:40-19:00	[3.4] UNESCO The goal of this session is for participants to gain an understanding of the role of UNESCO in advocating for equitable access to education, cultural participation, and the right to scientific advancement, especially in the context of HEIs and research. Participants will receive an overview from the basic principles of the United Nations Convention on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1966) to contemporary challenges, which leads to the main current objectives at UNESCO and the ways the inclusion of citizens and researchers respectively can be strengthened.	Noah Sobe (Section for Higher Education, UNESCO)
02.06. 16:00-17:20	[3.5] Doctoral Education in the Bologna Process and the Salzburg Recommendations	NN
12.06. 16:00-20:00	LIVE SEMINAR (4 hours)	

The organisers reserve the right to change the programme schedule.



Eurodoc, the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers, is a grassroots federation of 26 national associations of early career researchers (ECRs) from 24 countries across Europe. Eurodoc was established in 2002 and is based in Brussels. As a representative of doctoral candidates and junior researchers at the European level, Eurodoc engages with all major stakeholders in research, higher education, and innovation in Europe.



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- understands the role of higher education in and for democracies in Europe
- understands their own role as academics and citizens in Europe
- understands their own role and responsibilities in the higher education and research environment, as well as other stakeholders' roles and responsibilities
- knows and understands the 'democratic mission' of higher education and the six EHEA fundamental values as formulated by the Council of Europe
- understands the legislative and governance context in which research and teaching at HEIs take place
- understands the key frameworks of the EU and the EHEA and the European Higher Education Policies, especially the democratic principles, and is familiar with the respective policy documents
- understands the difference of the global/European role of higher education and local contexts
- understands the current challenges higher education and research

skills

- is able to advocate effectively for democratic principles and values-based higher education policies and governance
- is able to analyse local circumstances and find local solutions and interacting points
- is able to communicate EHEA values and principles effectively and in an understandable and engaging manner
- is able to mobilize others to participate in advocacy and local solutions

values

- is committed to democratic principles and the human rights
- is committed to academic freedom, academic integrity, and institutional autonomy
- is committed to diversity, intercultural dialog, respect, equity, and equality
- is committed to ethical standards and the elimination of discriminatory practices
- is committed to student and staff participation in higher education governance
- is committed to public responsibility for higher education and public responsibility of higher education
- respects different practices that are grounded in fairness, democratic procedures, and the democratic rule of law

**Eurodoc Ambassador Programme for Values and Democracy
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The “Eurodoc Ambassador Programme for Values and Democracy in European Research and Higher Education (ValDem)” has been conceptualised by Pii Maria Saugmann and Hannah Schoch. The course has been organised by Pii Maria Saugmann, Hannah Schoch, and Norbert Bencze. The seminars are taught by Pii Maria Saugmann, Hannah Schoch, Norbert Bencze, and Karl Kilbo Edlund.

Pii Maria Saugmann

Pii Maria Saugmann is the president of the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (Eurodoc). She holds a PhD in theoretical physics from Stockholm University. Her current research centers on the role of higher education in society as well as research ethics and integrity in the light of digitalization. She represents Eurodoc in the Council of Europe’s conference of International NGOs and in the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU). She is a member of the Bureau of CDEDU as a representative of the academic community. She contributes to Eurodoc’s policy and advocacy work on a wide array of topics including academic freedom.

Hannah Schoch

Hannah Schoch is the secretary on the board of the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (Eurodoc). She contributes to Eurodoc’s policy and advocacy work on a wide array of topics including academic freedom and represents Eurodoc in the Council of Europe’s Steering Committee of Education (CDEDU). She works for a non-profit organization that facilitates knowledge exchange between politics and science in Switzerland and is currently finishing her PhD in American studies on narrative fiction and democracy. She has experience developing courses for and teaching at all levels (BA, MA, as well as further education courses for faculty) at university.

Norbert Bencze

Norbert Bencze is a General Board Member at European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (Eurodoc) and a Presidential Commissioner responsible for the Ambassador System at the Association of Hungarian PhD and DLA Candidates (DOSZ). He completed his PhD in Applied Linguistics focused on educational development. Besides policy making processes, he participates in academic programme assessment as evaluation specialist of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee. He is committed to the development of international communities and to equitable opportunities in academia.